

SUBJECT:	ABERGAVENNY, MAGOR WITH UNDY AND MONMOUTH PLACEMAKING PLANS
MEETING:	PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE:	6 NOVEMBER 2025
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	ABERGAVENNY, MAGOR WITH UNDY, MONMOUTH

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to facilitate scrutiny of the Abergavenny, Magor with Undy and Monmouth placemaking plans, and to invite the Place Scrutiny Committee to endorse the plans and associated proposals prior to them being considered by Cabinet.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1. That Place Scrutiny Committee scrutinises the Abergavenny, Magor with Undy and Monmouth placemaking plans and endorses:
 - 2.1.1. The proposed adoption of the plans by Cabinet.
 - 2.1.2. The proposed establishment of joint placemaking plan delivery groups with the three relevant town councils. These groups will consider in collaboration with Monmouthshire County Council how and when projects will be delivered according to resources and funding opportunities such as Transforming Towns Placemaking Grant and the Pride in Place Impact Fund.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1. The Abergavenny, Magor with Undy and Monmouth placemaking plans have been coproduced by the county council and the three relevant town councils. Focusing primarily on the three town centres, the plans are each the outcome of a community-led process in which the vision, goals and priorities have been shaped and directed by the views of local stakeholders and communities.
- 3.2. The Welsh Government promotes placemaking as an approach which involves “working collaboratively across sectors and disciplines to comprehensively consider the future development of distinctive and vibrant places” (Design Commission for Wales, *Placemaking Guide 2020*). Planning Policy Wales states that placemaking is:

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

- 3.3. Placemaking plans are strategic regeneration documents for a town or city which consider what placemaking means for that place. Developed collaboratively with a broad range of stakeholders, placemaking plans typically set out a vision for a place, consider the challenges and opportunities it faces, and propose actions and interventions to realise the vision and address the identified challenges and opportunities.
- 3.4. It is a prerequisite of Welsh Government Transforming Towns funding for town centre regeneration that appropriate placemaking plans are in place or being developed. However it is envisaged that placemaking plans can also be used to help lever in or allocate funding to support delivery from a wide range of sources.
- 3.5. The development of placemaking plans for Abergavenny, Magor with Undy and Monmouth is an action in the council’s Community and Corporate Plan 2022-2028. Placemaking plans or equivalent documents are already in place for Chepstow and Usk. In Caldicot, work has begun on the development of a placemaking plan to replace the Town Centre Regeneration Strategy which was produced in 2018.
- 3.6. The Abergavenny, Magor with Undy and Monmouth placemaking plans were commissioned in May 2024 jointly by the by the county council and the three relevant town councils. Their development has been overseen by steering groups established for each of the three towns, comprising elected members from the town and county councils as well as representatives from other key stakeholder organisations. A team of consultants led by Chris Jones Regeneration and including Roberts Limbrick (architects and urban designers) and Owen Davies Consulting was awarded the contract to develop the three plans following a competitive tender process.
- 3.7. In each town, the process of developing the placemaking plan has followed five key stages:
 - Understanding the place:
 - Review current policy, strategy, programmes and projects
 - Understand the character of the town centre
 - Analyse data and statistics
 - Walk and talk with stakeholders around the town centre
 - Share findings with local stakeholders
 - Visioning and visualising:
 - Visualising strategic direction and outcomes
 - Development of regeneration project ideas
 - High level concept design for physical projects
 - Placemaking plan proposals
 - Stakeholder workshop – vision and proposals review
 - Community consultation
 - Promotion and publicity for proposals

- Community drop-in sessions
- Community survey – online/hard copy
- Targeted sessions with key stakeholders and groups
- Draft plan preparation
 - Review of consultation findings
 - Prepare placemaking plan documents and supporting information
 - Feedback to placemaking plan steering groups
 - Revision of documents
- Delivery of final placemaking plan documents

Stakeholder and community participation

3.8. Engagement with local stakeholders and communities has been central to the development of the three placemaking plans. The three steering groups have played a vital role as representatives of their local communities, whether as elected members or town or county councils or as nominees from key stakeholder and community organisations. More broadly the development of each plan was informed by:

- Workshops with stakeholders focused on coming to a shared view of challenges and opportunities, and on shaping the visions and goals for the plans
- Town walkabouts with stakeholders, to consider challenges and opportunities on the ground
- Wide range of discussions one to one and with smaller groups, to understand specific needs and priorities and ensure broader representation
- A substantial community consultation exercise in each town, with drop-in sessions in community venues, an exhibition of ideas and proposals (available to view in the town as well as online) and community survey (online as well as with paper copies available at multiple locations in each town centre)

3.9. The three plan documents include summaries of feedback from stakeholders and an overview of the consultation process and key messages from responses – including highlighting the ways that community feedback shaped the final plan and its priorities. Each plan is supported by a detailed report of consultation as well as a short consultation summary report: these are provided as appendices to this report.

The placemaking plans

3.10. Each of the plans includes a vision statement, developed in collaboration with local stakeholders and the steering group, which imagines the town centre in the future following the successful implementation of the placemaking plan. The vision statements are supported in each plan by a number of delivery goals and supporting objectives. Finally, the placemaking plans set out clearly prioritised proposals for a wide range of projects by which the vision and goals will be realised.

3.11. The placemaking plans are provided as appendices to this report. The vision and delivery goals for the three plans are set out below.

3.12. The vision for Abergavenny is:

Cradled by three iconic hills, Abergavenny has become a more vibrant, eventful town where heritage, community and commerce come together. Its thriving market hall, historic streets and independent businesses create a lively backdrop for festivals and events that draw people from near and far. Excellent transport links and a walkable town centre make it easy to explore, and nearby parks, meadows, rivers and trails are cherished by visitors and locals alike. Powered by strong partnerships, Abergavenny is a well-connected, welcoming town – rich in culture, food, well-being and opportunity. A great place to live, visit and do business.

3.13. The plan sets out five delivery goals for Abergavenny:

- ***Making a welcoming gateway:*** Abergavenny has key gateways where people arrive from the south, east and west. But their character does not reflect the town's special identity, and they don't clearly announce or direct visitors into the centre. In addition, some spaces on the edge of the town centre have the potential to contribute positively to the experience for locals and visitors, but lack investment. Stronger links between the town's train station, bus station and the town centre need to be developed as part of the roll out of the town's active travel network.
- ***Creating people-friendly streets:*** Past regeneration activity has brought benefits with the town's High Street, Frogmore Street, Nevill Street and street-based links to Morrisons food store creating a more people friendly environment in the heart of the town centre, which businesses have responded to. Changing the A40 through the town from a road to a street is important for commercial viability, people's experience of the town centre and health and well-being. Improvements to the Cross Street approach, including the Angel Corner and the A40 through Monk Street and by Bailey Park are key to link attractions on the edge of the town centre.
- ***Building a 21st century market town:*** The town's markets are an intrinsic part of its appeal and identity. There's an important need to consider the role of markets within the town's economy and that fosters new start-ups, co-operative working and continues to animate this cherished town centre space. The physical fabric of the building needs to be improved and there is an opportunity to explore whether the indoor market space could work more efficiently for traders and for visitors. Links to arts and culture at the Borough Theatre and community learning in the library should be strengthened.
- ***Connecting our heritage and culture:*** Although the town centre is generally performing well, there is an opportunity to support and connect the town's heritage and cultural assets. This includes linking St Mary's Priory campus, Plas Gunter Mansion and the castle and museum as a cluster of heritage attractions that reflect the town's history and offer a potentially important draw in the lower part of the town centre. The focus for arts and culture is on the combined offer of the Borough Theatre, the Melville Arts Centre, local galleries and performance venues as well as events and festivals.

- *Future-ready and well-managed*: Equip Abergavenny to thrive for future generations by using smart, sustainable technologies that enhance everyday life. Make it easier for people to walk, cycle and explore the town with better digital wayfinding and real-time visitor information. Support local businesses and events through digital tools, while using smart systems to improve cleanliness, maintenance and environmental performance. Prioritise green infrastructure and nature-based solutions to help the town adapt to future needs in a changing climate

3.14. The Magor with Undy vision is:

Magor with Undy is a community known for its welcome in the Gwent Levels. Centred around its village square, local people meet for a coffee bumping into visitors who are exploring Magor Marsh and its lanes that lead down to the Severn estuary. Destination shops and eating places attract people from outside the area, with the village known for events, festivals and social gatherings. Its recently opened Magor with Undy walkway train station has made the area accessible to all, with its diversity of homes attracting people of all ages due to the open space and range of community activities that bring residents together.

3.15. The Magor with Undy plan includes four delivery goals:

- *Gateways*: Announcing the village centre from the two entrances on the B4245 is critical to first time visitors finding the heart of Magor Square. The community feel and location on the Gwent Levels are intrinsic to its identity and any associated gateway elements such as signage, landscape and how road junctions are treated should reflect this identity. For those coming by car, parking needs to be easily found, especially coming in from the western side, before stepping out into the village centre. A new entrance into the community will also be from the future walkway train station with the need for passengers to walk and cycle through a series of improved links and community spaces that lead you into Magor Square.
- *Arrival in the Square*: Magor Square and its neighbouring streets have a charm and character that needs to be recognised and brought to the fore. Pedestrian links into the Square from neighbourhoods, car parks and rural lanes need to be enhanced in a way that promotes a series of people friendly spaces and places and supports local businesses by creating a safe, pleasant and communal environment. The Square needs to be event proof for larger, annual events through to smaller pop-up activities. It also needs to be welcoming for walkers, cyclists and other visitors with cycle facilities, seating, water points and other facilities.
- *Heritage and the Levels*: The location of Magor with Undy on the Gwent Levels is an untapped product that the village centre needs to maximise in terms of the story of the Levels and a base to explore from. The Magor boat, Procurator's House/Priory, St Mary's Church and Magor Marsh are just a few of the places and finds that visitors need enhanced interpretation that is physical and digital and rooted within the village centre offer. How Magor with Undy links into other nearby communities through active travel and public transport is important for an integrated Gwent Levels experience.
- *Community life*: The role and function of Magor with Undy as a place to live needs to be supported by a range of local services and facilities which meet the needs of

an age balanced community. The village centre needs to retain and grow community assets that provide for places to meet, advice and outreach, health and well-being services whether this be through public/ private/community providers. Recreation and sports facilities need to connect with residents so that they are accessible and used with good pedestrian links that connect in with strategic active travel networks.

3.16. Finally, the vision for Monmouth is:

Monmouth has become more vibrant, colourful, and welcoming – a town where rich heritage shapes everyday life and where residents and visitors alike enjoy its lively atmosphere and strong sense of community. Celebrated as the “Jewel of the Wye Valley,” the town proudly showcases its historic charm, blending heritage with modern-day attractions. Historic sites host cultural festivals and artisan markets, reinforcing Monmouth’s unique identity, while green, welcoming streets offer thriving retail, diverse eating out, and entertainment. Weekly events, cycling routes, and a revitalised riverside create a dynamic, connected, and sustainable community, making Monmouth a leading destination for culture, leisure, and exploring the natural beauty of its surroundings.

3.17. Five delivery goals are proposed for Monmouth:

- *Creating a lively town centre:* Monmouth’s streets and squares will be welcoming, inclusive places where people want to spend time, with thriving businesses and regular activities.
- *Celebrating our history and rivers:* Monmouth will showcase its unique heritage and riverside identity, with well-connected historic landmarks and improved access to both rivers.
- *Building community spirit:* Monmouth will have a strong sense of community, with residents actively shaping the town’s future and inclusive spaces for all ages.
- *Making a better welcome:* Monmouth will be easier and more pleasant to arrive in, with attractive gateways and intuitive wayfinding that reflect the town’s character.
- *Future-ready and well-managed:* Monmouth will be equipped for future generations through smart sustainable approaches and coordinated management.

Delivery and funding

3.18. It is proposed that joint delivery groups, including (as a minimum) representation from elected members at county and town level, should be established to drive and oversee the delivery of the Abergavenny, Magor with Undy and Monmouth placemaking plans. Such groups are already in place in Chepstow and Usk, where placemaking plans have previously been developed and adopted.

3.19. The placemaking plan steering groups which have led the development of the plans would provide a suitable basis for these delivery groups, and it is recommended that they are re-established with this function. The county council’s regeneration team will provide the secretariat for these delivery groups. An early task for the delivery groups will be to review their membership and consider whether there are other stakeholders who might usefully

contribute to their work in delivering the plans. This could include, for example, local business groups or community organisations.

- 3.20. The Welsh Government Transforming Towns Placemaking Grant funding, which has been allocated to the county council for 2025/26 and 2026/27 to support the delivery of relatively small-scale regeneration and placemaking projects in town centres, will provide an opportunity to bring forward early priority projects in all six towns in the county. Monmouthshire was awarded £700,000 per year for each of the two years.
- 3.21. The Placemaking Grant funding was the subject of a report to Cabinet on 21 May 2025, when an indicative delivery plan for the use of the funding was agreed. This indicative delivery plan was informed by early priorities emerging at the time from the Abergavenny, Magor with Undy and Monmouth placemaking plans, as well as by priorities identified by the Usk and Chepstow placemaking delivery groups and by the steering group established to oversee the development of the new Caldicot placemaking plan. Delivery is already underway against this plan, focusing on small scale public realm schemes and grants for improvements to buildings in town centres as set out in the indicative delivery plan.
- 3.22. In addition to the Welsh Government Placemaking Grant funding, Monmouthshire has also recently been awarded £1.5m funding from the UK Government's Pride In Place Impact Fund programme for 2025/26 and 2026/27. The purpose of this funding is closely aligned with the placemaking agenda which has guided the development and delivery of placemaking plans in Monmouthshire. The three objectives of the Pride in Place Impact Fund are as follows:
- a. Community spaces: creating, extending, improving or refurbishing existing community facilities and enabling community organisations to take control or ownership of underused but valued local assets.
 - b. Public spaces: enhancing the physical environment in public spaces - examples of initiatives include new or improved green spaces or public squares, improved outdoor play, sports and leisure spaces, installing street furniture, public art or wayfinding.
 - c. High street and town centre revitalisation: making these areas more attractive and welcoming places where people congregate and which encourage economic activity. Examples of initiatives that could be funded are shop frontage improvements, adaptations that bring premises back into use, streetscape improvements, public art, trails and wayfinding, and creating or improving the infrastructure for regular markets.
- 3.23. This funding therefore provides a further opportunity for early delivery against priorities set out in the three new placemaking plans for Abergavenny, Magor with Undy and Monmouth, as well as the existing plans in Chepstow and Usk and emerging priorities to be identified as part of the process of developing a Caldicot placemaking plan.
- 3.24. Officers are currently clarifying details of grant conditions for the Pride In Place Impact Fund, including in relation to governance arrangements. However it is anticipated that the local steering and delivery groups which are already in place in Caldicot, Chepstow and Usk, and which are proposed to be reestablished in Abergavenny, Magor with Undy and Monmouth, will play a key role in advising on the allocation of both Placemaking Grant and

Pride In Place funding against the delivery of projects and programmes at a local level. It is expected that the local MP and MS will also be engaged in this process.

- 3.25. Further stakeholder and community consultation will be carried out as part of the development of individual projects identified in the placemaking plans. This will be proportionate to the scale of the project.

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

- 4.1. An Integrated Impact Assessment (incorporating equalities, future generations, Welsh language and socio-economic duty) is attached at Appendix 10.

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

- Potential positive impacts on the protected characteristics of age, disability, pregnancy/maternity and sex.
- Potential positive impacts in relation to socio-economic duty arising from investment in town centres and benefits this may bring in particular to people in poverty.
- Positive impacts on all the well-being goals.
- The development of the proposal meets the sustainable development principles.
- No impact on safeguarding or corporate parenting.

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

- 5.1. An options appraisal is provided in the table below.

Options	Benefits	Risks	Comments/mitigation
Do nothing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No demand on resources of MCC or the three town councils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vision and goals of placemaking plans unlikely to be realised. Resources expended in developing placemaking plans will be wasted Loss of trust of those involved in development of placemaking plans Precludes access to Welsh Government grant funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not recommended
Adopt placemaking plans and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced demand on MCC and the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Duplication of effort by 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not recommended

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

6. EVALUATION CRITERIA

- 6.1. The section “Visualising Success for Our Town Centre” in each of three placemaking plans sets out outputs and outcomes which could form part of an evaluation of the impact of the plans and of the proposed projects and activities. These vary between the plans depending on the specific goals agreed for each plan.

- 6.2. Further evaluation criteria may be identified for individual projects within the plans as they are brought forward for development and delivery.

7. REASONS:

- 7.1. The adoption of the three placemaking plans will enable the county council to move forward with the delivery of the plans, and in particular the priority projects which it identifies. It is anticipated that the three town councils will also adopt the relevant placemaking plans, allowing the councils to progress implementation in partnership.
- 7.2. As noted, the placemaking plans are a prerequisite for the Welsh Government's Transforming Towns funding, which is expected to be a key source of funding for the delivery of the plans. Failure by the council to adopt the plans could therefore jeopardise access to this funding source.
- 7.3. The joint placemaking plan delivery groups, bringing county and town councils together with other key local stakeholders to oversee the implementation of the plan, as recommended here, will ensure there is an appropriate focus on delivery with input and oversight from elected members at town and county level.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 8.1. The establishment of a joint placemaking plan delivery groups will have resource implications for elected members and others who are members of the delivery groups. As noted above, it is anticipated that the county council's regeneration team will provide the secretariat function for the delivery group. This will be done using existing staff resources.
- 8.2. Existing Transforming Towns Placemaking Grant and Pride In Place Impact Fund allocations are expected to support the delivery of some priority projects in 2025/26 and 2026/27. However, implementation of further projects identified in the placemaking plans, and in particular of larger scale projects, will require additional funding, and further external grant funding is likely to be required to support delivery. It is anticipated that the county council's regeneration team will lead on securing this funding, working with other sections of the council and with the town councils as appropriate. Many grants will require match funding from the county council, town councils and/or others. This will be explored on a project-by-project basis.

9. CONSULTEES:

- 9.1. Consultation on the Abergavenny, Magor with Undy and Monmouth placemaking plans is summarised above in section 3 and described in more detail in the consultation reports provided as appendices. MCC officers were also consulted in the development of the placemaking plans

9.2. The following have been consulted on this report:

- MCC officers
- Cabinet member for sustainable economy
- SLT

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

10.1. The three placemaking plans, as well as consultation reports and consultation summary reports, are provided as appendices.

10.2. The Cabinet Report setting out the indicative delivery plan for the Council 2025/26 and 2026/27 Transforming Towns Placemaking Grant funding allocation is available [here](#).

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