

# Abergavenny

Placemaking Plan Consultation Summary Report

May 2025



## Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide a summary on the consultation on the Abergavenny Placemaking Plan held between the 4<sup>th</sup> April and the 5<sup>th</sup> May 2025.

The consultation process was designed to gather views from residents, businesses, and others interested in the future of Abergavenny on the vision and interventions for Abergavenny town centre proposed to be included in the Abergavenny Placemaking Plan.

It specifically presents analysis of both face to face consultation and also digital feedback received.

## How People Had Their Say

Opportunities for community consultation included the following:

- The local community was signposted to Monmouthshire's Let's Talk website and engagement where they could register and find out more information on the Placemaking Plan process;
- Two days of face to face community drop in sessions were held at the former Timothy Oulton store, Mill Street, Abergavenny which involved:
  - A physical display that presented background, key issues and analysis, a draft vision and a series of draft proposals;

- Opportunities for the local community to identify other issues and ideas;
- Completion of a paper copy of the community feedback survey or provided with an A6 postcard with survey link.
- After the two day consultation, the graphics were displayed in the shop window for a period of 3 weeks allowing passers-by to read and be signposted to the online survey;
- Ability to download and view the proposals through Monmouthshire County Council's Let's Talk website and to provide feedback through an online survey;
- Obtain paper copies either at the community drop in sessions or from the Community Hub on Cross Street with completed copies returned to these offices or to the Town Council's offices;
- Email the County Council's regeneration team with comments;
- Abergavenny Town Council also hosted a stall at the Abergavenny Spring Fayre on the 24<sup>th</sup> April which promoted the survey and spoke to the local community on issues and ideas for the town centre.

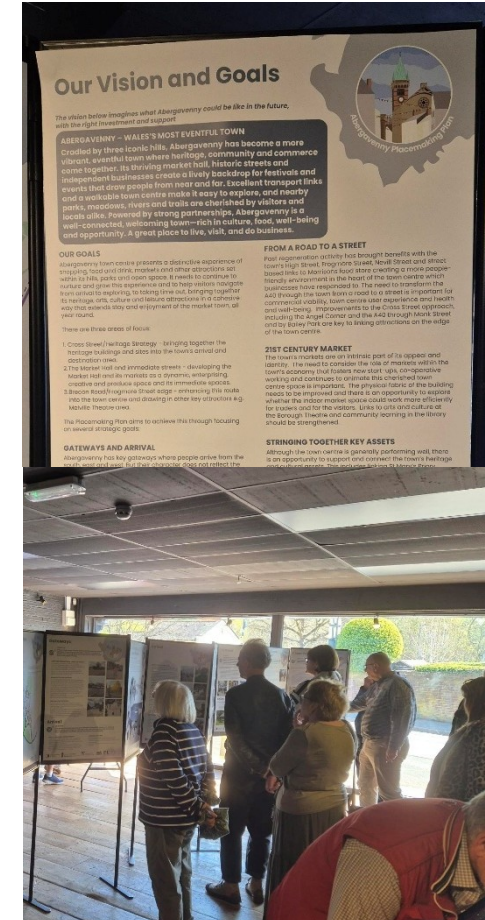
The full placemaking plan document can be viewed at: <https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/placemaking-and-regeneration/>

## Abergavenny Placemaking Plan- Summary Report of Consultation

Image 1 - Images from Community Consultation



Source: Chris Jones Regeneration



## Key Messages from the Consultation

### Draft Vision

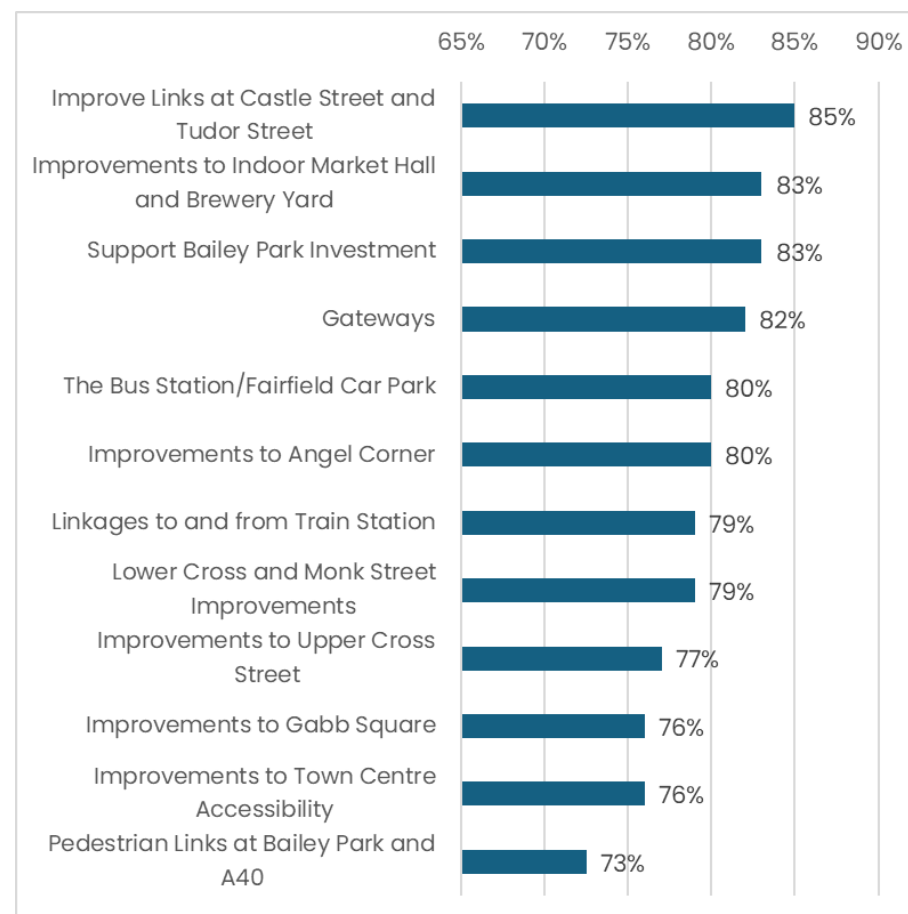
- **Level of support:** The Vision received good support with 71% of respondents agreeing (combining “totally agree or agree”) while 10% disagreeing and 18% remaining neutral.
- **Key feedback messages:** Some respondents have commented on the need to not focus on the events of the town but on the broader town centre offer. Some specific comments have centred on the need to address environmental sustainability.
- **Implications for the placemaking plan:** The need to recognise the broader day to day offer of the town and for sustainability to be a cross-cutting theme.

### 6 Goals

- **Level of support:** The six goals were strongly supported with 80% either totally agreeing or agreeing with them all.
- **Key feedback messages:** Some greater clarity on what is meant by a 21st Century Market town is mentioned in comments.
- **Implications for the placemaking plan:** None arising.

## The Proposals

Figure 2 – Ranking of Proposals by Levels of Agreement



Source: Let's Talk Monmouthshire survey n=368

### Gateways

- **Level of support:** Strong level of support with 82% agreeing with the need to improve first impressions into the town centre from all approaches, with a mixture of signage, trees, landscaping and features which emphasise the town's identity. Only 6% disagree with the proposals.
- **Key feedback messages:** Main areas of discussion range from lack of current maintenance and need to address basics first, to enhancing and presenting the town's identity, especially on Monmouth Road and from Llanfoist. The physical improvements includes implementing improvements to accessibility standards on footways and at road junctions.
- **Implications for the placemaking plan:** To identify quick wins that address maintenance and simple measures to announce the town alongside accessibility audits and future route improvements.

### The Bus Station/Fairfield Car Park

- **Level of support:** Strong levels of support with 80% agreeing with the need to improve the general appearance of the bus station and Fairfield car park areas.
- **Key feedback messages:** There is a real lack of greenery within the central area of the bus station,

and access between the bus stands and the car park is convoluted and undefined. The need to include Swan Meadows within this area also needs consideration in relation to play and linkages. Fairfield car park lacks landscaping and legible pedestrian routes.

- **Implications for the placemaking plan:** Comments support proposals with the need to include Swan Meadows area within improvements.

### Improve Links at Castle Street and Tudor Street

- **Level of support:** Strong levels of support with 85% agreeing with the need to improve links between these car parks and the inner town centre and to enhance the Royal Mail site. 3% disagree with the proposals.
- **Key feedback messages:** The relationship of the Royal Mail building within the town centre is subject of many comments. This includes façade improvements, as well as aspiration to redevelop the site for complementary uses. The design of new buildings such as the proposed mini-hub needs to work with the character of the town and link into a design brief for the sorting office. Proper consideration on accessibility standards across

Castle Street and Tudor Street is identified, with the present arrangement perceived as below standard.

- **Implications for the placemaking plan:** For Monmouthshire County Council to work with the Royal Mail on a design brief for the sorting office site which ties in other developments. To consider specific needs of shopmobility in terms of parking and access.

#### **Pedestrian Links at Bailey Park and A40**

- **Level of support:** 73% of responses generally agree with this proposal, however this has the lowest ranking amongst the suite of wider physical proposals.
- **Key feedback messages:** Whilst people agree that the current pedestrian route does not follow the desire line towards the Market Hall tower, there are some members of the community who have reservations as to whether highway works would cause more problems with current traffic flows at Morrisons and Hereford Road traffic lights. Nevertheless, there is a need to review how the whole junction area operates and the opportunity to re-enforce linkages.
- **Implications for the placemaking plan:** The proposal is not ranked as a high priority but there could be

some simple ways to reinforce routes into the town centre that are safe and cost-effective.

#### **Linkages to and from Train Station**

- **Level of support:** Whilst not core to the town centre, the importance of the train station to Abergavenny is recognised by most respondents with 79% agreeing with the need to improve links to and from the town centre. 7% disagree with the proposals.
- **Key feedback messages:** The area outside the station frontage needs continued investment post footbridge improvements, with additional parking, taxi information/rank and clear waymarking to the town centre. A number of existing routes either direct you to Monmouth Road or through the quieter Holywell Road link, but better signage, wider pavements and maintenance of landscaping is suggested as part of the improvements. There is almost unanimous support for a hoppla bus service that links the train station with the town centre that also connects it to other key destinations and community assets in the town centre.
- **Implications for the placemaking plan:** Feedback generally supports the objective of providing clearer and more accessible links to and from the train station. Some simple, quick fixes are suggested.

### Lower Cross Street and Monk Street Improvements

- **Level of support:** 80% of respondents strongly agree with the need to improve the experience within Lower Cross Street and Monk Street, with 11% of people indifferent and only 5% disagreeing.
- **Key feedback messages:** An over-riding message is the need to address pavement parking, through a co-ordinated approach with residents and local businesses that looks to off-street provision. The need to address buildings, public realm and carriageway is welcomed by most with this part of the town centre feeling “unloved”.
- **Implications for the placemaking plan:** Comments amplify the need for a co-ordinated plan that links gateways, footways, public realm, parking/servicing provision and ways to introduce greenery.

### Improvements to Angel Corner

- **Level of support:** There is a good level of support to improve The Angel Corner with 80% agreeing with the need to make improvements, 9% indifferent and 6% disagreeing.
- **Key feedback messages:** A strategic case for de-trunking the A40 and re-routing HGVs and through traffic onto the A465 and A4143 is made by respondents which will then lead to greater levels of

improvements for pedestrian and town centre users at this corner. Comments also range from accessibility details, timings on the existing pelican crossings as well as choice of materials. How this corner leads into Lower Castle Street and presents a priority to pedestrians is also raised.

- **Implications for the placemaking plan:** To provide some strategic objectives on the wider road network and ways to turn off through traffic through this area of the town centre.

### Improvements to Upper Cross Street

- **Level of support:** 77% of respondents either totally agree or agree with these proposals, with 10% indifferent and 8% disagreeing.
- **Key feedback messages:** The need to improve this area of the town centre is overwhelmingly supported with degrees of improvement suggested. This ranges from full pedestrianisation across the whole week to maintaining the 10am to 4pm closure and to also extend the improvements through the upper section of Market Street so visitors are drawn further. Whilst respondents have valued the presence of the cabin structures, most agree they are past their shelf life, and that new outdoor seating and shelter needs considering. Specific comments on materials, use of

colour, play and the means of closure are also suggested.

- **Implications for the placemaking plan:** Extension of improvements into upper Market Street including signage needs to be included. Consideration on ways to implement some physical improvements whilst not impacting on future, larger scale capital investments.

#### Improvements to Indoor Market Hall and Brewery Yard

- **Level of support:** The second highest ranked proposal has the agreement of 83% of respondents with only 3% disagreeing and 13% indifferent.
- **Key feedback messages:** There is an overwhelming love for the market hall and its immediate space, with respondents asking to respect its heritage while finding ways to broaden its appeal through its range of events, markets and activities. Variety across the week and into the evenings is mentioned, alongside improvements that respect the internal space and address accessibility, lighting, event management and curation of the market experience. The role of young people is mentioned as an opportunity to explore further.
- **Implications for the placemaking plan:** Further detail on proposals that respect the Market Hall's

character but takes it forward in terms of its operation, small infrastructure improvements, broadens its appeal and use and how young people can engage in enterprise and activity.

#### Support Bailey Park Investment

- **Level of support:** 83% strongly agree or agree with the need to support Bailey Park improvements with 13% neither agreeing or disagreeing and only 3% disagreeing.
- **Key feedback messages:** The feedback centres on park management and maintenance, provision for young people and families and the recent campaign to bring back the outdoor lido. Improvements to side entrances into the Park are also suggested.
- **Implications for the placemaking plan:** More details on how to improve the park for young people, including safe space for young people to hang out and participate in sports and activities. Support for the Friends of Bailey Park group is also identified.

#### Improvements to Gabb Square

- **Level of support:** 44% strongly agree with the need to make improvements to Gabb Square with 32% agreeing, 18% neither agreeing or disagreeing and only 4% disagree.

- **Key feedback messages:** Whilst there is consensus that the space needs to fulfil its potential and could complement a number of neighbouring businesses including the cinema (at the time of writing the report, the cinema was for sale and a potential community buy-out), there are some questions around prioritisation and value for money. Specific comments on material, greenery, maintenance, carriageway treatment and who would run activities within the space are made. Relationship to other sites and opportunities such as the former Richards building is also identified.
- **Implications for the placemaking plan:** The recent news on the cinema's future needs to be considered as part of the plan that could support its future viability.

#### Improvements to Town Centre Accessibility

- **Level of support:** 44% strongly agree with the need to make improvements to town centre accessibility with 32% agreeing, 18% neither agreeing or disagreeing and only 4% disagree.
- **Key feedback messages:** The introduction of a changing places facility is welcomed with its location and association to shop-mobility discussed within responses. Accessibility audit should be actionable

without requiring significant investment. Water refill points, bike hire/stands/shelters are mentioned as well as seating and benches that are accessible to all.

- **Implications for the placemaking plan:** Comments support placemaking plan proposals.

#### Improving how the town centre is managed and maintained

- **Level of support:** The greatest degree of agreement centres on targeting vacant properties for improvement with 92% agreeing (totally agree and agree) with this proposal. Following in second place, the need to ensure town centre organisations continue to work together on events, festivals, marketing etc is seen as important by respondents (89% agree), with building on digital and smart technology seen less important across these measures, albeit 72% either definitely or somewhat agree with the latter proposal.
- **Key feedback messages:** The state of some prominent buildings in the town centre that have been empty for some time or do not positively contribute to the street scene is identified.
- **Implications for the placemaking plan:** As already identified, plan needs to highlight areas for property

improvements that complement other place-making plan activities.

### **3 Most Important**

When respondents were asked to choose their top three priorities for the town centre, the three most popular choices were i) targeting vacant properties ii) an improved, safer pedestrian space at the Angel corner and iii) better routes between the town centre and train station.

### **What's Missing**

The consultation asked people to identify and areas or ideas that are missing from the draft plan. These included:

#### Bus Services

The quality, frequency, routes and timetable of bus services within the town centre, which connect to and from rural villages and also to key destinations such as The Grange hospital are mentioned by numerous respondents. The proposal for a bus service to and from the train station is welcomed.

#### Infrastructure

The future demands from an increase in the town's population on local services and on the town centre's infrastructure is seen as significant by some respondents that needs to be planned for.

#### Parking Strategy

The need to review parking across the town centre is identified by local residents and businesses, specifically the roles of specific car parks and users, charging and ways to recover parking fee when spending a certain amount in the town centre.

#### Reroute A40

The presence of the A40 in the town is identified as a key challenge across the whole consultation, with a large number of responses seeking a wider strategic review of the road network, specifically the re-routing/de-classification of the A40 which would help reduce some of the HGV traffic through the town centre. Linked to the proposed active travel proposals at Llanfoist Bridge, there is the need to route HGVs and through traffic over the A4143 Merthyr Road.

#### Supporting Small Businesses

A number of respondents point to the need to look at the financial pressures on small businesses, with the need to review and lower business rates to sustain existing shops and services and also attract new investments.

#### Young People

Current and future provision for young people is highlighted by numerous respondents. Ways to improve existing play provision and how could more be made of Bailey Park for

young people is raised in the consultation. Against the backdrop of an ageing town population, the town centre needs to appeal to families with younger children. Ways to provide spaces for teenagers that allow them to hang out or to engage in town centre life needs to be explored more.

#### Other Community Provision

Some specific mentions about Adult Community Learning in the town and ways to improve provision since it has moved away from its previous building. A building that brings the town together and could participate in wider events in the town e.g.: arts, writing, food festival, which is more than just delivering education, employability and leisure classes: this could be a safe place that brings together everyone in the community, with a particular focus on people with disabilities.

#### Housing

Opportunities to provide for in-town living, prioritising the provision of social rent housing is identified by a number of respondents as well as homes for younger people that is linked to town centre workspace.

#### Climate Change

The need to adapt to climate change is highlighted by a number of respondents.