

CONGESTION FREE CHEPSTOW - CFC

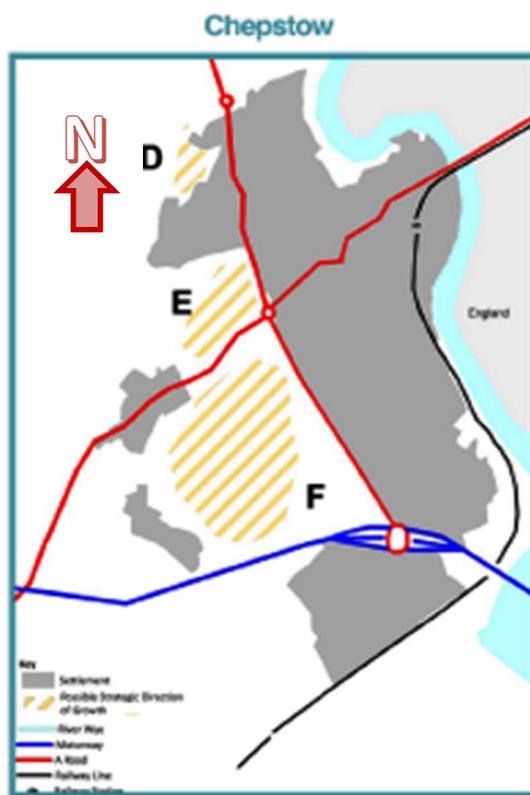
Why Transition Chepstow's CFC initiative has a Short Term focus

Based on public objections on the Monmouthshire County Council (MCC) website regarding proposed new housing developments there are large numbers of local residents with strong concerns about the following types of current infrastructure being inadequate:

1. roads (particularly regarding traffic congestion and air quality in rush hours);
2. public transport – bus and rail services, including integration, frequency, time and cost issues;
3. schools (availability of decent schools with good reputations and performance track records);
4. doctors and dentists (e.g. being able to get a face to face appointment with a doctor).

In particular the consistent reasons to object to new development include:

5. the above local infrastructure is currently inadequate in many basic ways;
6. there are no known plans to significantly improve related infrastructure in the shorter term;
7. there are tremendous amounts of new developments in the Chepstow area, either proposed or in the 'pipeline' that will only make the problems much worse. For example see below:



Proposed Growth Areas in Chepstow

Chepstow Candidate Sites for Development and Redevelopment, February 2019

D – Land north of Bayfields Estate

E – Land between Bayfields Estate and the A48 west of High Beech Roundabout

F – Land between A48 and M48, to the west of the A466 Wye Valley Link Road

For more detailed maps of the proposed Candidate Sites for Development and Redevelopment in the Chepstow area, see <https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/app/uploads/2019/02/Chepstow-1.pdf>

Note that there is a November 2020 Second Call for Candidate Sites, see <https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/planning-policy/candidate-sites/>

The kind of infrastructure solutions that might offer some relief, that are also included in reviews like the current **Arup transport study** (<https://virtualengage.arup.com/chepstow-transport-study>), are all confidently expected to be much too far into the future, i.e. over five years and probably nearer 10 years away. These include:

- Dramatically improved and integrated public transport (rail and bus) with out of town Park & Ride, tempting prices and good frequency, stand a good chance of encouraging commuters out of their cars; particularly to and from Bristol and Cardiff; there are plenty of 'visions' for the future but nothing significant that would make a real difference in the shorter term, i.e. in the next 3 to 5 years.

- A Chepstow Bypass that efficiently joins up with the M48 - the current proposal in the Arup study is totally inadequate at the M48 junction and at Thornwell - it just transfers the HBR congestion to the M48 end of the Bypass; it is optimistically 10 to 12 years away but more realistically is 15 to 20 years from completion with funding delays; it is totally useless for Chepstow area residents in the short to medium term, i.e. while current elected representatives are in post; a Bypass 'kicks the can down the road' and has been talked about now for over 30 years.

- There are currently no known meaningful and confident shorter term solutions being proposed by the different levels of government in Wales to the current inadequate infrastructure services (1 to 4 above); however, TCTG have made relevant short term suggestions, particularly regarding reducing traffic congestion and air pollution.

An example MCC website link with many hundreds of local residents objecting to further new development is <http://planningonline.monmouthshire.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=neighbourComments&keyVal=PKRGG0KYL1Z00&neighbourCommentsPager.page=1>

Chepstow is increasingly a dormitory town with lots of residents commuting east towards Bristol and beyond, or west towards the commercial conurbations of Newport and Cardiff. Also Chepstow has a lot of Gloucestershire traffic passing to and from the same destinations. Most of this traffic congestion could probably be eliminated if first class public transport served these routes to a similar standard to that enjoyed in south east England and particularly in Greater London.

TCTG understands that most local residents want and would use good local public transport but think it is not likely to be achieved in the next 5 to 7 years, at least. Lots of residents also think that the planning approval process is rigged against local interests and in favour of developers, with lip service paid to objectors. The quantity of potential new local development in the next 7 years is so large that by then the current infrastructure failures will have become truly horrendous.

TCTG put forward two short term proposals, **white paint** (<https://www.transitionchepstow.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/High-Beech-Paint.pdf>) and **more complex** (<https://www.transitionchepstow.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Major-Modifications-High-Beech-Roadabout.pdf>) to greatly reduce traffic congestion in 2018 and have held well supported public meetings in 2019 and 2020 to explain the proposals. There are encouraging words from Welsh Government representatives suggesting that TCTG proposals could still form the basis for short term schemes being implemented. Local residents are encouraged to urgently discuss related issues with their current and prospective elected representatives.

Finally, TCTG have recently helped achieve some minor improvements to white lines at High Beech Roundabout and regarding the T7 bus service to and from Bristol.