Dear Candidate Name,

**Subject: Congestion in Chepstow**

Congestion in Chepstow is an urgent issue and needs a short-term solution.

1. Irrespective of any decision about a Chepstow Bypass, to call on the Welsh Government (WG) and Monmouthshire County Council (MCC) to commit to supporting the implementation of urgent short-term and major redevelopment of the High Beech Roundabout (HBR) bottle-neck junction. <https://www.transitionchepstow.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Major-Modifications-High-Beech-Roadabout.pdf>
2. All new housing developments are matched by a corresponding financial contribution to the costs of the required public social infrastructure.
3. Improved and integrated public transport

I would be most grateful if you will urgently clarify your views on initial three points to help me decide how to vote in the forthcoming elections.

Yours sincerely,

Your Name

**Background**

9th April 2019 a public meeting was held at Chepstow Comprehensive School to discuss ideas for urgently reducing traffic congestion in the town. The event was organised by TCTG and about 260 people attended including David Davies MP, Nick Ramsay AM, WG and MCC representatives.

At the meeting and presenters explained that HBR at the junction of the A466 and the A48 is the main ‘choke point’ that causes excessive congestion and air pollution - a major hazard to health. Two carefully considered illustrated proposals intended to urgently and significantly improve traffic flows at HBR in the shorter term were presented.

* Peter Evans: A simple, rapid and low-costwhite line lane road improvement scheme at the HBR access road junctions. <https://www.transitionchepstow.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/High-Beech-Paint.pdf>
* Gerry Moss: A major redesign of HBR including the approach and exit roads, estimated at £3M to £4M and 3 to 4 years to completion. <https://www.transitionchepstow.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Major-Modifications-High-Beech-Roadabout.pdf>

With the help and encouragement of the then current MS Nick Ramsay, Ken Skates the Minister for Economy, Transport and North Wales agreed for the major proposal to be evaluated through the established Welsh Government (WG) WelTAG process for capital infrastructure investment, the initial report is due for consultation on 22nd March 2021.

On 16th January 2020, TCTG hosted a second follow-up packed public meeting to report on progress. Strong support for further addressing and implementing the transport needs of the town and environs was clearly and indeed vociferously expressed.

On 17th June 2020, white line lane road improvements as proposed by TCTG were implemented, but regrettably only on 2 of the 4 required access HBR road junctions.

During the last year, TCTG has greatly increased its FaceBook postings and website reports on all aspects of relevant transport issues. More recently the TCTG has been developing a related **Transport Vision and Strategy** to help the local community going forward. <https://www.transitionchepstow.org.uk/transport-group/chepstow-vision/>

In March 2020 the UK was hit by the Covid-19 pandemic and consequently all traffic congestion and transport issues has dramatically changed. The most optimistic related view being that it may have provided more time to properly resolve the traffic congestion issue in Chepstow.

In 2020 also, MCC commissioned a Chepstow Transport Study by international consultants Arup. TCTG were engaged as local stakeholders and it was noted that the study terms of reference did not appear to correspond with TCTG’s shorter term focus. Rather, the Arup study seems to have been set up to primarily justify a Chepstow Bypass option. A proposal over 40 years old and is considered to be at least 10 years away, and which essentially represents ‘kicking the can down the road’ option. This brings us to a critical issue at the heart of Chepstow’s urgent infrastructure needs, including traffic congestion, air pollution health hazards, and other transport needs. TCTG has concluded that WG and MCC desperately need to implement shorter term interim solutions for the town before any bypass. Mainly because the recent M4 Relief Road experience, a bypass seems most likely to hit encounter major delays relating to planning objections, funding and environmental issues.

There is one other key issue regarding shorter term traffic congestion in the Chepstow area, and that relates to new housing developments. In the last 20 or so years there has been a large number of developments both in south east Monmouthshire and in south west Gloucestershire with virtually no traffic related road improvements. There is a substantial new wave of planned developments either already approved or under construction.

Based on the number and nature types of recent objections to a recent new housing development proposal for Bayfields (north Chepstow), it was clearly identified that while unacceptable traffic congestion was the main issue, there are also numerous a lot of other infrastructure concerns about the provision of important additional infrastructure facilities, namely schools, doctors, dentists, etc.