

Maindee Shops



Appraisal of Maindee District Centre

December 2014



Introduction

This appraisal looks at current trading and environmental conditions at Maindee District Centre in Newport.

Current issues, opportunities and options for improvement for the Centre are discussed. It is intended to be used to inform the development of a strategy for the district centre. It also serves as a snapshot to measure progress against in future.

The appraisal has been produced by Maindee Unlimited as part of the Welsh Government Funded Town Centre Partnerships initiative.

It is based on local knowledge drawn from a survey of residents and traders together with the views of experts in high street regeneration.

Maindee Unlimited is a new community led organisation which is spearheading the regeneration of the area. It is supported by a partnership of local organisations, businesses, Newport City Council to revitalise Maindee through collaborative working.

Maindee District Centre has not, to date, benefitted from any significant regeneration investment. However Maindee Unlimited has recently attracted over £400K of funding, including £38K specifically for retail development in the District Centre. More will follow, so this is an ideal time for the community, local retailers and service businesses to get involved and work together to give Maindee District Centre the economic lift it needs and deserves.



Aerial view of Maindee District Centre

Vision

We want to reverse the sharp decline that Maindee District centre has experienced over the last 5-10 years by:

- Increasing footfall
- Reducing commercial vacancy rates
- Improving the streetscape and shopping experience

1. Baseline indicators

In order to measure change over time, the following baseline indicators are being used:

Indicator	December 2014
Vacancy Rate	25%
Footfall (1 hour sample period x 2 locations)	387
Number of vehicles entering Chepstow Rd car park (1 hour sample period)	94
Percentage of traders and residents who think the street /trade is better than a year ago¹	7%
Proportion of people rating the look and feel of the street to be good or very good.	12%
% of businesses VAT registered²	66.67%
Total number of people employed	60 F/T + 85 P/T

¹ Sample of 71 traders and residents

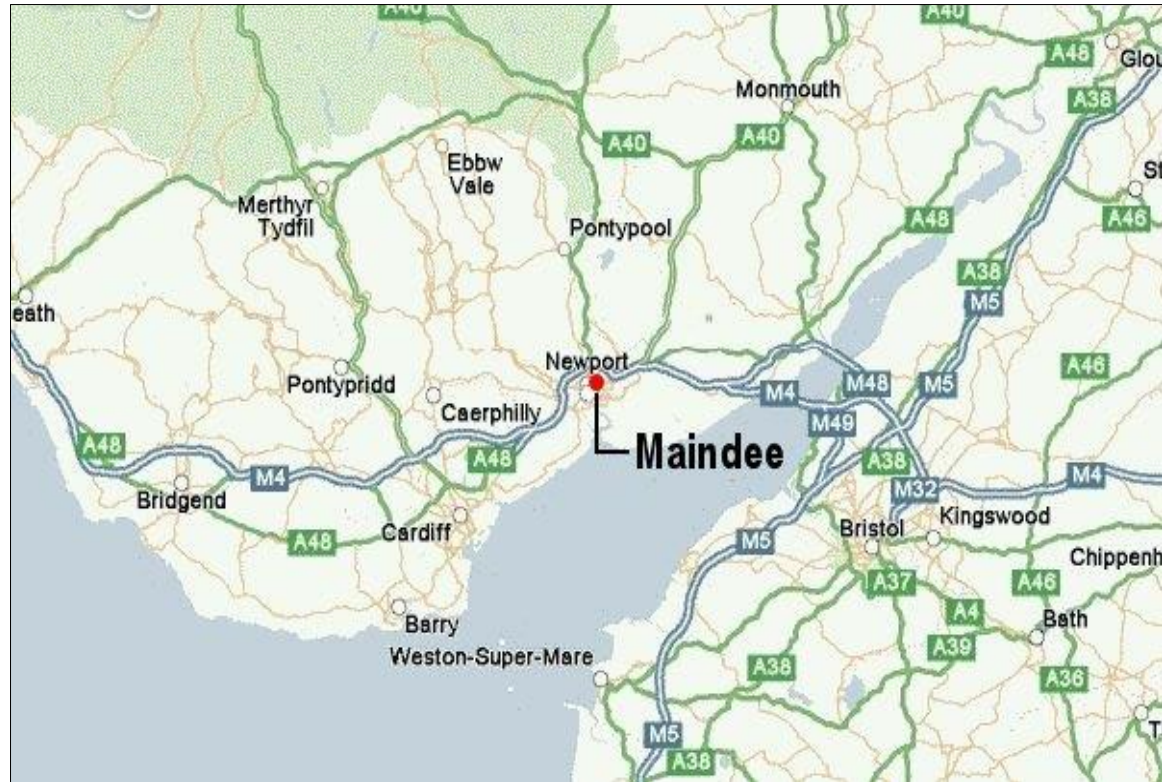
² Data on % VAT registered and Total employed are drawn from sample of 30 Traders surveyed

2. Context

Overview of Maindee

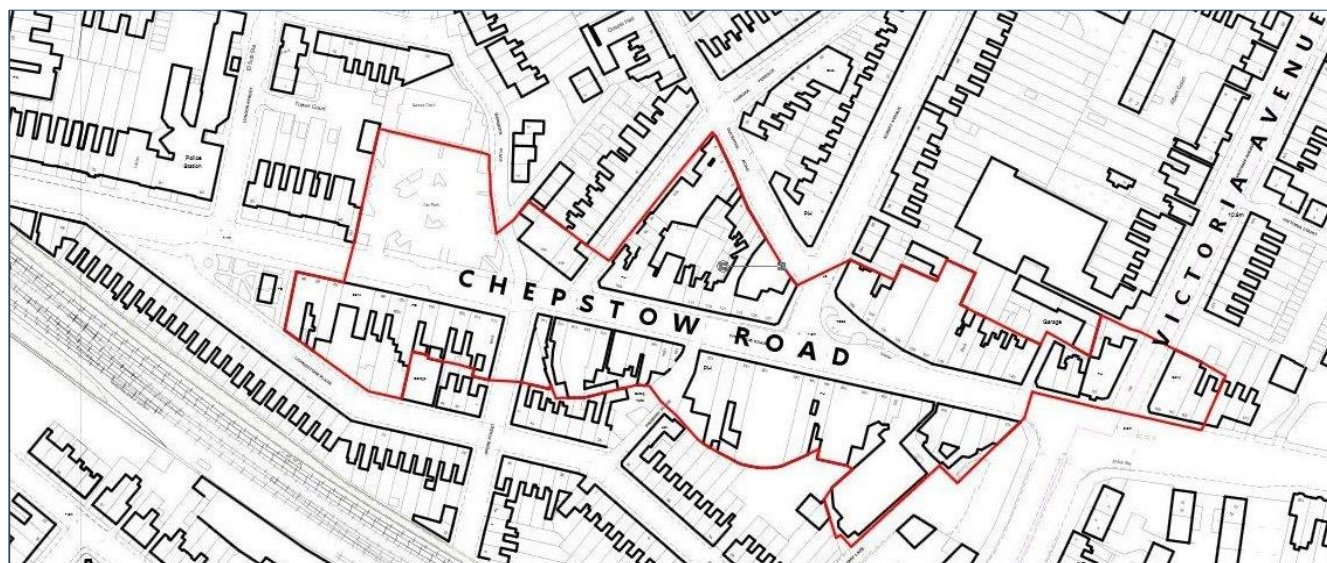
Maindee District Centre is located one mile east of Newport City Centre. It lies within Victoria Ward and the western edge of Beechwood Ward.

Victoria Ward is characterised by dense Victorian terraced housing dissected by trunk roads and railway lines. It became a Communities First area in 2013, illustrating a period of general decline over the last 5-10 years. It suffers from higher than average unemployment (approximately 8%) and about a quarter of working adults are welfare claimants. Crime has decreased recently but the number of community safety incidents has markedly increased.



All of Victoria Ward's Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) scores rank in the top 7% "most deprived in Wales" on the measure for physical environment. By a significant margin, Victoria Ward has the least amount of recreational space of any Ward in Newport.

Overview of the district centre



The District Centre runs along Chepstow Road from the railway bridge at the intersection with Hereford Street down to a major junction at Wharf Road. It also incorporates a handful of businesses based on residential roads branching off the main road. It serves a catchment population of approximately 10500 people.³

The District Centre is the central hub of Victoria Ward. It consists of two or three storey buildings with a range of commercial and non residential uses on the ground floor. The district centre consists of 82 units of which 21 are currently empty or derelict. There are a number of successful and long standing businesses on the street as well as a number of new start ups emerging. However there is a feeling that Maindee has been left to deteriorate and is in gradual decline. This trend must be urgently addressed and reversed.

³ The population of 10,500 is an aggregation of the populations of Victoria ward and Beechwood 1 and 2-the LSOAs in Beechwood ward closest to the district centre.

4. Access and movement

Pedestrians

The District Centre lies on a former arterial route in and out of Newport. As such it is dominated by a wide road with narrow pavements. Traffic passes through too quickly. This results in excess noise and a hostile environment for pedestrians and



Road design in Hennef, Germany. An option for Maindee?

cyclists. Large sections of the street are lined with pedestrian railings which may force deviation from desired routes. This particularly inhibits choice of crossing points. This is of questionable safety value and limits a sense of movement and may be responsible for reduced footfall to some businesses.

The intersection with Wharf Road/ Victoria Avenue at the easternmost end of the district centre is very busy and controlled by traffic lights. There is no pedestrian crossing point across Chepstow Rd at this end of the district centre.

The District Centre would benefit by narrowing Chepstow Road to reduce traffic speeds and associated noise. This could include the widening of pavements and introduction of a distinctively designed central strip in the road to allow pedestrians to move more freely.

A scheme such as the one in Hennef, near Bonn, shown here, could work well on Chepstow Road.

A large proportion of the southern catchment area is disconnected from the District Centre by the main London railway line. There are two circuitous routes into the Centre for these residents, both of which require passing under gloomy, dirty and potentially intimidating bridges. These could be made safer and more welcoming with a dedicated lighting project to increase pedestrian usage.

Cyclists

There are no cycle lanes in the district centre or cycle stands for parking bicycles. This together with high traffic volumes and speeds makes for a hostile environment for bicycle use.

Public transport

Maindee is served by frequent bus with connections to Newport city centre, Chepstow and the residential areas of Alway and Ringland. There are modern bus shelters at Livingstone Place and Maindee Square, to serve both directions of travel, which are in good condition. There is also an uncovered bus stop mid way along the centre in front of Jim Oliver butchers which is well used but poorly maintained with no timetable information at the time of inspection.

Bus Service	Peak frequency	First service	Last service
# 6 City- Maindee-Alway -Ringland	Hourly	05.31	23.40
# 8a and 8c City-Maindee-Ringland	5 per hour	04.36	23.30
# 74 Newport-Chepstow	Every 45mins	06.24	22.30

Train station

The district centre is 1 mile from Newport station. A train line runs from the city centre through the heart of Maindee district centre but there is no station.

Taxi Provision

There is a taxi rank at the eastern end of the district centre.

Parking and delivery

The District Centre has a dedicated 40 space car park owned and managed by NCC which is accessed from Chepstow Rd. This provides the only discounted local authority parking provision in Newport (10p for first two hours). There are areas of designated on street parking spaces along the length of the District Centre. In spite of this many people feel parking is a problem with some people reporting to be put off by the inconvenience of the pay and display system. Traders in particular call for the introduction of short stay free parking to capture visits by passing through traffic. This may also help alleviate the blocking of loading bays for deliveries, which are often unavailable due to parked cars. Insufficient parking is also cited as a key reason why supermarkets can not be attracted back to the large empty anchor stores. An additional small car park is located to the rear of former Co-op supermarket at 138-142 Chepstow Rd, accessed from Glebe Street. Parking options on side streets on this section of Chepstow road are limited as these are mostly residents only. A number of traders called for a reassessment of the times of these restrictions and for them to be relaxed during trading hours.

Summary of current access and movement

- The wide road leads to a hostile environment for pedestrians
- Railway bridges disconnect residents living on South side of main railway line.
- The district centre is well served by public transport
- Parking provision, charges and restrictions need reappraising

Access and movement improvement options

- Conduct comprehensive pedestrian movement pattern study to better understand key routes and access points.
- Reconfigure the road and traffic management system on Chepstow Road to align it with its change in designation.
- Narrow the section of Chepstow Road passing through the District Centre to reduce traffic speeds and noise.
- Widen pavements and introduce distinctively designed central strip in the road to improve pedestrian movement.
- Remove unnecessary pedestrian safety barriers to improve pedestrian movement.
- Improve the pedestrian experience of walking under the bridges leading into the district centre, starting with a pilot project to clean, improve lighting and renovate the underside of the railway bridge by Hereford Street.
- Introduce dedicated bicycle lanes through the District Centre and install cycle parking stands.
- Pilot well-signed, free parking in Maindee car park to encourage through-traffic to stop.
- Emphasise dedicated parking provision for 138-142 Chepstow Rd when approaching potential tenants.
- A long term vision to campaign for a train station in the heart of the centre.

(See **Appendix A** for full improvement list)



5. Footfall & car park use (December 2014)

A	# pedestrians entering district - eastward direction	135
A	# pedestrians leaving district – westward direction	85
B	# pedestrians - westwards at 138 Chepstow Road	91
B	# pedestrians – eastwards at 138 Chepstow Road	76
C	# vehicles entering Chepstow Road Car Park	94



The data on the table above highlights greater footfall⁴ at the western end of the district centre. It also demonstrates that the car park is well used. 94 cars entered the car park over a one hour period. This is a forty space car park meaning the average stay is significantly less than thirty minutes thus supporting the supposition that the district centre has low dwell times.

Summary

- There is greater footfall at the western end of the district centre
- The car park is well used
- Visitors using the car park do not stay long.

Footfall Improvement options

- Focus must be placed on finding ways to encourage visitors to stay longer in the district centre

⁴ “Footfall” (the number of people using an area in a given period), is an established measure of activity and health of a high street. The marked locations on the map were used to collect data on pedestrian footfall at points A and B. Drivers’ use of the main Chepstow Road car park was also measured at point C. The data shown in the table below was captured over a 1 hour period between 13.30hrs and 14.30hrs on Monday 15th December 2014. Weather conditions were cold, dry and overcast. Comparative data will now be captured at 1.30pm on Mondays at future intervals to build up a picture of changes in footfall and car park use over time.

6. Quality of the Built Environment

The shopping district centred on Chepstow Road is characterised by a range of two and three storey buildings in varying states of repair. There is little uniformity to the character of the frontages of the businesses or to the buildings above.

A quick glance upward reveals a number of attractive clusters of buildings built in a variety of styles. There are also less attractive clusters.

Visual assessment ratings (*very good* to *very poor*) on the appearance of shop fronts, upper storeys and general condition of the building were made on all commercial premises within the District Centre:



These businesses demonstrate the impact of a clean and well designed facade

Shop / building facade	%
Very Good	2
Good	39
Fair	34
Poor	16
Very Poor	9
Total	100

Building Condition	%
Very Good	1
Good	26
Fair	52
Poor	15
Very Poor	6
Total	100

This assessment provides some encouragement as most buildings were considered to have fair or good frontages with similar findings for the condition of buildings.

However residents and traders all felt the street would benefit from general improvements to maintenance to the buildings and the shop fronts in particular. A number of traders report that they can not afford to this work and have had little success when requesting landlords to do so. A dedicated scheme to maintain, repair or renovate shop fronts and the building as a whole could, therefore, have a big impact and start to erase the “run down” image of the District Centre.

The empty units look neglected and accentuate the sense of decline. Some, such as the old Poundstore which stands in a prominent position overlooking Maindee Square, is virtually derelict.

The former Maindee Pools lies just outside the boundary of the district centre. This cavernous art deco building is in a state of disrepair. However this Grade II listed building has the potential to be a catalyst for wider regeneration if an appropriate, innovative new use can be found



Building condition summary

- The condition buildings and appearance of shop fronts in the district centre is mostly fair to good.
- There is a consensus that buildings would benefit from some improved maintenance and renovation
- There are a large number of empty buildings which are a blight on the streetscape

Building Quality Improvement options

- Find innovative new use(s) for Maindee Pools.
- Work with interested traders to renovate shop fronts and decorate buildings.

7. District centre uses

There are a total of 82 units within the district centre of which 21 are currently vacant. Vacant units are interspersed along the length of the street but there is significant clustering at the far western end of the street between the railway bridge and just beyond Livingstone Place. There is also a cluster of empty units around the 2 empty anchor stores and former Poundstore. The priority is to return these units to commercial use to widen the offer on the street. Where this is not possible, new temporary uses for these units should be found to bring back a sense of vitality and increase footfall. A number of respondents when surveyed put forward this as a solution but also stressed the need to window dress or decorate boarded up/ neglected units.



Commercial use is almost exclusively confined to the ground floors of units. Upper storeys are either empty or give way to storage or residential use.

Use Class	#	% of total
Vacant	21	25
A1: Shops	24	29
A2: Financial and professional services	11	13
A3: Restaurants and Cafes	6	7
A4: Drinking establishments	6	7
A5: Hot food takeaways	7	9
D1: Non-residential institutions	2	3
D2: Assembly and leisure	2	3
Sui Generis	3	4
TOTAL	82	

The area between the car park and Maindee Square, on both sides of the road, has fewer empty units and these are predominantly A1 and A2 businesses. In total 42% of units are class A1 or A2 and there still remains a range of goods and services on offer.

There are a number of long standing independent traders including a butcher, baker, men's clothes shop, card shop, DIY shop and florist. There is evidence of loyalty to local shops. The independent *Farmhouse Bakery* has survived whereas *Greggs* closed in February 2014. There are currently three

banks, a post office and a number of hairdressers. Aside from the banks, the only multiples are charity shops, bookmakers, a small *Boots* and a *Wetherspoons* pub.

Takeaways, pubs, restaurants and some specialist businesses, such as the busy *Martial Arts & Fitness Centre*, dominate the eastern end of the shopping district. In total 28% of all units are pubs, restaurants and takeaways.

Also falling within the district centre is Maindee police station and a public library. However at the time of this report there is growing speculation over the future of the library.

District Centre Uses Summary

- 42% of all units are A1/ A2 uses
- 28% of all units are given over to eating and drinking establishments
- Most traders are Independents many of which are longstanding.
- Upper storeys are mostly reserved for residential use, storage or are empty

District Centre Uses Improvement Options

- Encourage the return to use of empty units for commercial or meanwhile use
- Decorate boarded up / neglected units



8. Trader Profile

The December 2014 survey covered half of all commercial businesses in the District Centre. It was noted that 70% of those surveyed have been in business for over four years. Indeed there are a number of long standing businesses which have been on the street for 30 years or longer.



Employment

Of the 30 businesses surveyed there are a total of 60 people employed full time and 85 employed part time.

VAT Registered businesses

Two thirds of the traders surveyed are VAT registered

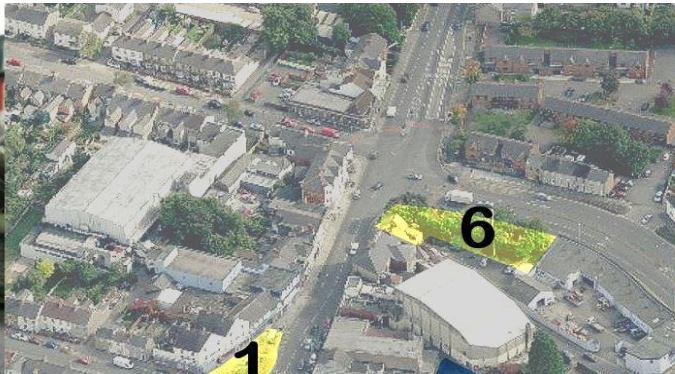
Trader profile summary

- Most businesses have been trading more than 4 years
- Two thirds of traders surveyed are VAT registered
- A total of 145 people are employed in the businesses surveyed (60FT/ 85 PT)

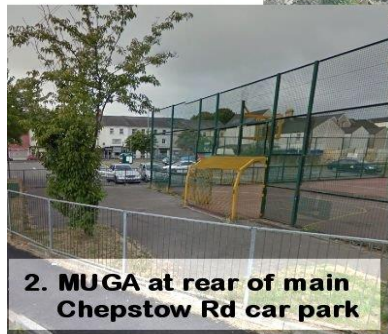
9. Public Realm



1. Cluttered public space at Maindee Square dominated by derelict 1960s fountain



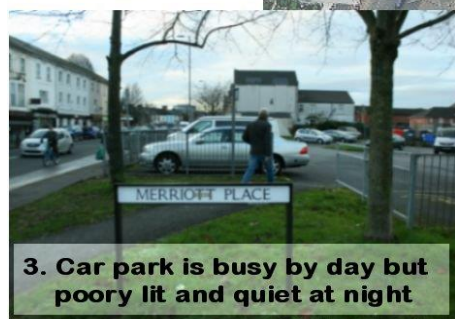
6. Prominent corner space is not designed for public use



2. MUGA at rear of main Chepstow Rd car park



5. Limited parking at rear of Weatherspoons



3. Car park is busy by day but poorly lit and quiet at night



4. Public toilet block and areas of public space divided by low walls and redundant plantings

Open space provision

Due to its former designation as an arterial route the district centre suffers from a shortage of pedestrian and social space. The poor quality built environment and busy road makes it an unpleasant place to hang out with resulting low dwell times.

The open space by Livingstone Place is very poorly designed and neglected. The area is difficult to navigate with a number of walls and shrubs dissecting the space. There are several mature trees on this site which could be preserved and the area around them enhanced.

The large planter (former fountain) in front of The Banc pub in Maindee Square dominates the space and looks tired. This is currently one of the few locations with potential for more outdoor seating to increase the vitality of the District Centre.

There is a small area of neglected green space adjacent to Wharf Road at the southeast edge of the district centre. This is dominated by a number of coniferous trees which limit light penetration. If redesigned, developed and maintained these three locations have the potential to help address the lack of social space the district centre is in need of.

Seating

Seating is available at Livingstone Place, Maindee Square and on the corner of Wharf Road. Additional provision and improved orientation of seating would encourage more use. Consideration should be given to how seating could be used to encourage greater social interaction and encourage greater dwell time.

Street trees and shrubs

There are trees and /or shrubs at Livingstone Place, Maindee Square and on the corner of Wharf Road. There is a nicely maintained shrubbery in front of Maindee police station and a number of trees and grass verges in Maindee car park. There is a neglected planting area in front of the library. There are no street trees along the district centre.

Pavement displays and A-frames

The narrow and cluttered roadside pavements leave very little space for shops to display produce in front of their shops or for cafes to have outdoor seating. Only the florist attempts this with flowers on display. This, and a number of A-frames in use along the street (8 in total), draws attention to the shop fronts and seems to enhance the street scene.

Signs

Encouragingly there are few street or traffic management signs in the main shopping area. Less encouraging is that most of those that do exist are either redundant, in poor condition or have no signs attached to them. Examples include:

- Three posts with no signs
- Parking restriction signs pointing the wrong way and covered in grime
- Disabled parking restriction signs x 2 by toilet block within 4 metres of each other stating the same information
- Bus stops with signs missing
- A sign placed in front of Maindee hotel pub, only serves to obscure this well-kept and key building.

Alarmingly, signage into the District Centre is non-existent. The only sign directing to Maindee sits 1km away on Town Bridge, by the castle. There are no signs on the other two key entry points coming from George Street bridge or Beechwood. As a priority a sign for Maindee Shopping Centre should be installed on Clarence Place at the intersection with Chepstow Road. Further welcome signs announcing entry in to Maindee should be also be considered. Signage out of the district centre is limited to a sign for the M4 and The Royal Gwent Hospital on the corner of Wharf Road.

Paving

From the main shopping area to the railway bridge on both sides the paving mostly consists of bitmac and is generally in average to good condition. The paved areas (mostly of 12"x12" slabs) in the main shopping area on both sides are also in average to good condition with some poor patches outside key shops such as Farmhouse Bakery. Some tactile paving is in good condition and appropriately located and of decent quality.

Other street furniture

The street furniture is generally of low quality and poor condition and lacks any consistency in design. The street scene is punctuated by a series of railing at key junctions which are of low quality, in poor condition and of questionable safety value. There appears to be limited logic to the placement of street bollards which serve little purpose another than to 'clutter' the streetscape. There are also a large number of utility junction boxes of various sizes and colours. There is no assessment as to whether they are in use. However thought should be given to how these could be made to blend in to the streetscape more sympathetically.

Public art

There is currently no public art within the district centre.

Street lights

The street lights are typical for an arterial route. They sit high above the road and whilst they adequately illuminate the road, they sit too high to showcase the shops below them. This results in dimly lit footpaths and uninviting shop fronts after dark which impacts on perceived issues around public safety. Residents and traders expressed their concern about this and felt brighter lighting was a priority.

Public realm improvement options

- Remove "clutter"-unnecessary street furniture.
- Redesign the open spaces by Livingstone place and Wharf Road as a meeting places and gateways to the district centre.
- Reconfigure the junction at Maindee Square to increase and improve the public realm at this key location.
- Increase seating provision and re-locate/ re-orientate existing provision.
- Plant shrubs/ edible plants in redundant or underutilized planting areas e.g. in car park and in front of library.
- Install signage directing to and welcoming to Maindee shopping centre
- Install shorter, characterful street light columns to illuminate the roadside, not just the road.
- Explore options for better illumination of shop fronts.

10. District Centre management

The District Centre suffers from a number of local environmental issues.

There is insufficient provision for litter. There are not enough litter bins and the ones that do exist have limited volume. There is also a lack of quality and consistency in this provision. More thought is needed as to where bins need to be located. When audited one of the main bins on the street was overflowing. It is of concern the message poor quality, poorly maintained bins sends out.

The pavement is dirty and requires a thorough clean, including the removal of chewing gum. Pressure washing the pavement and removing chewing gum presents an opportunity for an immediate, low cost improvement.

There is graffiti along the street particularly on shutters, empty buildings and on side roads branching off Chepstow Rd which is detrimental to the local environmental quality. Graffiti needs to be removed and anti graffiti paint applied to prevent repeat offending. With local support, an authorised space should be selected for graffiti artists.



Badly maintained bins, rubbish, random bollards and pointless railings give an impression of a dirty, unattractive place to shop in. This has to change quickly.

Public Toilets

There are currently public toilets located in the open space at Livingstone Place. These are poorly maintained and at the time of this report are under consideration for closure. This presents a dilemma for the district centre. Public toilets are an asset and provide confidence for many potential customers and in particular the elderly. If these public toilets close it is essential for the district centre to provide an alternative provision. If an alternative permanent provision can not be met this may require the agreement of local traders to have an open door policy to people requesting use of their facilities. This is common in many countries where public toilets are rare. Without such a policy there is a risk that footfall will be further compromised.

District Centre Management Summary

- Litter provision is insufficient and of poor quality
- The pavement is dirty
- There is unauthorised graffiti particularly on shutters
- Toilet provision is under threat

District Centre Management improvement options

- Install new high quality litter bins in appropriate locations
- Clean graffiti, apply anti graffiti paint and consider providing authorised graffiti provision.
- Pressure wash the pavements and remove chewing gum
- Find alternative way to maintain toilet provision for public use

11. Business and marketing initiatives

There is currently no active traders' association within the District Centre. However a number of traders have expressed support for forming a partnership with other traders and local organisations to collectively manage the centre and lead on positive change. A number of traders report that they already help each other informally. However it is also felt that this used to happen more and these ties need to be strengthened and widened to include some of the newer businesses on the street.

There is currently no District Centre marketing or branding strategy and nowhere for information to be shared or disseminated. A unique selling point and identity for the street should be developed and marketed. This could for example build on the street's strengths as being a home to independent retailers and banks. It may also look to the diverse and expanding food offer. Alternatively a whole new image could be developed. This could build upon the heritage of the area or even a new a vision which encapsulates what Maindee wants to be going forward.

The District Centre does not have a notice board nor is there any online or social networking presence. A number of traders mentioned the need for an online presence when surveyed. Establishing a social networking site for the district in the first instance would be a no cost way to help traders share information and market themselves.

Further marketing opportunities arise with the empty shops on the street. As mentioned previously there are calls for decorating windows of empty units. Perhaps these could provide a canvas for some district centre promotion.

There is demand for some dedicated marketing and merchandising support for individual traders. When surveyed 12 traders expressed an interest in the help of a professional who could offer merchandising who could offer advice to attract more business by suggesting changes to shop fronts and shop layouts.

There are currently no organised events in the District Centre. Weekly and annual street events are an obvious way to increase attractiveness and footfall. Since December 2013, the Council and Maindee Action Group have erected a Christmas tree at Livingstone Place and organised a tree lights switch on event with carols. This tentative start should be encouraged

and further developed into a more regular programme. Traders should be actively involved so that every event can be clearly linked to trading and promotional opportunities.

Business and marketing Summary

- There is currently no traders association
- There is no area wide branding or marketing strategy
- There is minimal online presence
- There is demand for merchandising support from some traders

Business and marketing improvement Options

- Formalise a partnership of local businesses, local organisations, NCC and the community.
- Create a partnership of traders and local organisations.
- Erect a community notice board in the district centre.
- Establish a district centre social networking site and explore options to create a permanent online presence.
- Organise street events to promote businesses and bring footfall.

12. District centre safety

The mixed uses in the district centre mean it retains some vitality throughout the day and evening. Some report there being a bad atmosphere on the street and there are concerns about how safe it feels, especially after dark. Traders in particular identified safety concerns on the street. This ranged from a fear that the atmosphere would discourage customers from coming to the district centre to the regular occurrence of brawls in front of the pubs at night. There are some requests for CCTV to be introduced and for increased policing. It is widely commented that the lighting on the street needs to be brighter. This includes the car park which has no dedicated lighting.

Overall the number of Gwent Police recorded crimes has fallen by 16% over the last year in Victoria Ward and remained static in neighbouring Beechwood Ward. However the highest number of recorded crime offences for the ward is within the designated Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) of Victoria 3, where the district centre lies. This represents 35% of all recorded crime for the ward. Similarly crime in Beechwood 1 and 2 LSOA's which border the shopping district account for 54% of all recorded crime for Beechwood ward. Further, there was a 49% rise in reported community safety incidents between April 2013 to March 2014.

Safety improvement summary

- Crime has reduced in the area but community safety incidents have increased.
- Some people don't feel safe at night
- The pavements, open spaces and car park are dimly lit or not at all

Safety improvement options

- Work closely with police to create a strategy to improve perception of safety
- Improve the lighting of the pavements, open spaces, car park and shop fronts.

13. Current attitudes towards the district centre

Surveying was conducted to understand residents and traders views about the district centre. These views have helped to inform the issues, opportunities and options for improvement laid out in this report. The surveys also provide a benchmark on current attitudes that can be compared against in future to measure change. See **Appendix C1** for a copy of the trader survey and **Appendix C2** for the resident survey.

Traders were surveyed between 14 December-16 December. We were able to survey 30 traders which represents precisely half of all the commercial premises currently operating in the district centre. In addition a total of 41 resident surveys were conducted at various locations around the district centre during the afternoons of 15 and 16 December.

In both resident and trader surveys all responses regarding positive and negative characteristics of Maindee along with suggestions for change, were elicited from open questions. (It is supposed that the count on a number of these answers would have been much higher had a choice of responses been presented. However this adds weight to the consensus of key issues and opportunities which emerged.)

Attitudes towards the district centre

When asked what was good about Maindee shopping street, one third of traders and a quarter of residents could not state one positive aspect. “Nothing” was the highest recorded single response by traders and second highest for residents to this question, (behind the presence of banks). Quick win projects should be implemented to show signs of positive action to bring a return of confidence in the district centre.

How things compare to a year ago.

Two thirds of traders report business to be worse than a year ago. The most common reason for this is shop closures. Most also add that the decline started a few years ago with the closure of the anchor stores being the key catalyst.

The same proportion of residents report the district centre to be in a worse state than a year ago. One resident commented;

“It’s dead, it used to have everything , it used to be buzzing, there’s nothing here now.” Maindee resident

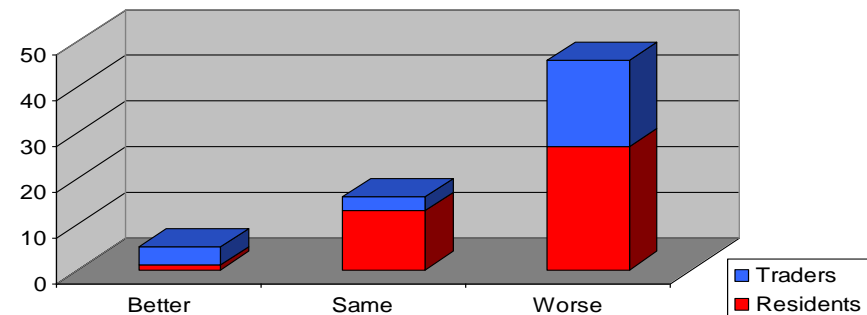


Fig i. Perception of the district centre/trade compared to a year ago

Key Issues Reported

There are three stand-out issues for residents and traders:

- The number of empty units
- The absence of a supermarket
- The centre looks dirty, scruffy and run down

The greatest perceived issue is the number of empty units and the resulting lack of offer on the street. People complain about the sense of decline, the lack of variety and drop in footfall. Traders shared this concern also rating it the biggest single issue facing the street

Attitude towards range of shops and services

When asked to rate the range of shops 46% of residents felt it was poor or very poor and just 17% rated it good or very good.

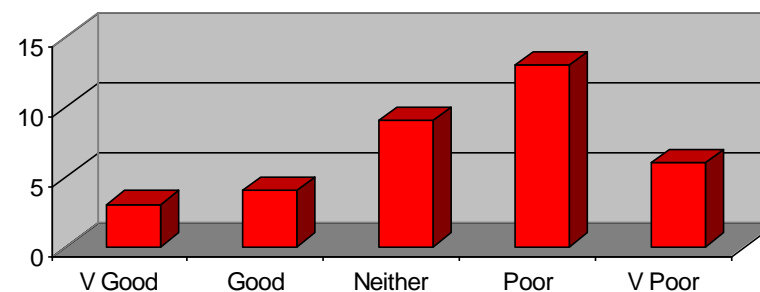


Fig ii. Rating of range of shops and services

The most significant problem regarding empty shops for residents is the need for a supermarket on the street. Three quarters of residents report a desperate need for a supermarket to return. There was a lot of affection towards Kwik Save, which closed a number of years ago, for being good value and having had a good range. However the key desire was for the return of affordable, fresh produce to the street. Asda, Sainsburys and Tesco or a “decent Independent” were all mentioned as desirable.

“Maindee really needs a food shop. Me and my neighbours really struggle with food shopping” -Maindee resident

Traders similarly recognise the need for a supermarket in order to increase footfall. One business owner commented,

“I wish I had the money to open one myself as I know it would make money, there are so many people who would use it”

-Maindee trader

In addition to a supermarket residents are keen to see a number of new types of shops return. Most prominent among those requested are a clothes shop and a new coffee shop/cafe. Where units couldn't returned to commercial use there was also support to dress the windows of empty premises or to encourage their use for projects.

Attitude towards the look and feel of the district centre

Interconnected with the problem of empty shops is a perception that the district centre is dirty, scruffy and run down. One resident said, *“It's like war time,”* another commented, *“It's awful, it's an eyesore”*. It is felt that the area needs a thorough clean up and makeover to be made more attractive. Some commented on businesses needing anything from a lick of paint to a full makeover. There was also a call for more trees and greenery and for better maintenance of the green spaces that do exist.

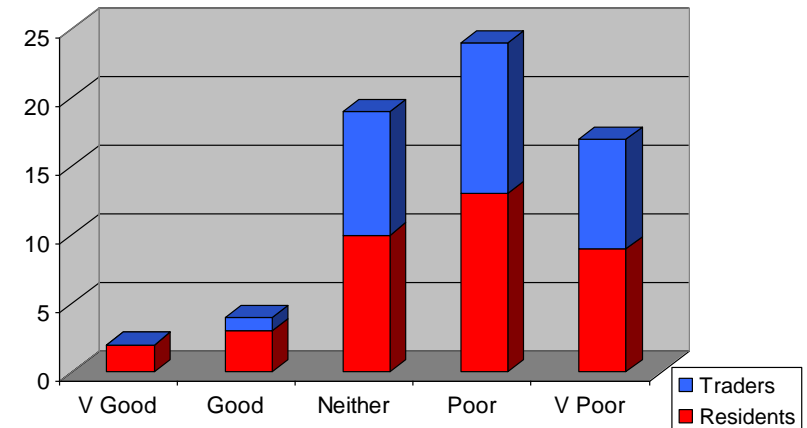


Fig iii: Rating of “look and feel” of the district centre.

When asked to rate the overall look and feel of the district centre over half said poor or very poor compared to just 12% who thought it good or very good.

Survey findings summary

- Opinion about the district is very low among traders and residents
- Most traders and residents feel things have got worse over the last year

- The number of empty units, absence of a supermarket and centre looking dirty, scruffy and run down were the biggest concerns
- Only 17% of residents feel the range of shops/ services is good or very good
- Only 12% of residents and traders rated the look and feel of the district centre good or very good

Survey findings improvement options

- Attracting a supermarket back on to the street is the highest priority
- The district centre should be thoroughly cleaned to provide an immediate sign of improvement

Conclusion

This findings, observations and suggestions in this initial appraisal of Maindee District Centre represent a starting point for further conversation, planning and actions. There is more to learn, further viewpoints to hear and plenty of room for new suggestions for action to be considered. The decline of the District Centre affects everyone in the community. Everyone has an interest in ensuring that it is revitalised and is made fit for future generations. It is now down to the proposed partnership for Maindee District Centre to invite everyone interested to get involved and to start the process that will lead to real change on the ground and renewed confidence in the District Centre.

Appendices

A. Complete list of possible improvement options

B. Directory of Use classes in the district centre

C1. Copy of Traders Survey questions

C2. Copy of Residents survey questions

Appendix A: Complete list of possible improvement options

Access and movement improvement options

- Conduct comprehensive pedestrian movement pattern study to better understand key routes and access points.
- Reconfigure the road and traffic management system on Chepstow Road to align it with its change in designation.
- Narrow the section of Chepstow Road passing through the District Centre to reduce traffic speeds and noise.
- Widen pavements and introduce distinctively designed central strip in the road to improve pedestrian movement.
- Remove unnecessary pedestrian safety barriers to improve pedestrian movement.
- Improve the pedestrian experience of walking under the bridges leading into the district centre, starting with a pilot project to clean, improve lighting and renovate the underside of the railway bridge by Hereford Street.
- Introduce dedicated bicycle lanes through the District Centre and install cycle parking stands.
- Pilot well-signed, free parking in Maindee car park to encourage through-traffic to stop.
- Emphasise dedicated parking provision for 138-142 Chepstow Rd when approaching potential tenants.
- A long term vision to campaign for a train station in the heart of the centre.

Footfall Improvement options

- Focus must be placed on finding ways to encourage visitors to stay longer

Building Quality Improvement options

- Find innovative new use(s) for Maindee Pools.
- Work with interested traders to renovate shop fronts and decorate buildings.

District Centre Uses Improvement Options

- Encourage the return to use of empty units for commercial or meanwhile use
- Decorate boarded up / neglected units

Public realm improvement options

- Remove “clutter”-unnecessary street furniture.
- Redesign the open spaces by Livingstone place and Wharf Road as a meeting places and gateways to the district centre.
- Reconfigure the junction at Maindee Square to increase and improve the public realm at this key location.
- Increase seating provision and re-locate/ re-orientate existing provision.
- Plant shrubs/ edible plants in redundant or underutilized planting areas e.g. in car park and in front of library.
- Install signage directing to and welcoming to Maindee shopping centre
- Install shorter, characterful street light columns to illuminate the roadside, not just the road.
- Explore options for better illumination of shop fronts.

District Centre Management improvement options

- Install new high quality litter bins in appropriate locations
- Clean graffiti, apply anti graffiti paint and consider providing authorised graffiti provision.
- Pressure wash the pavements and remove chewing gum
- Find alternative way to maintain toilet provision for public use

Business and marketing improvement Options

- Formalise a partnership of local businesses, local organisations, NCC and the community.
- Create a partnership of traders and local organisations.
- Erect a community notice board in the district centre.
- Establish a district centre social networking site and explore options to create a permanent online presence.
- Organise street events to promote businesses and bring footfall.

Safety improvement options

- Work closely with police to create a strategy to improve perception of safety

- Improve the lighting of the pavements, open spaces, car park and shop fronts.

Survey findings improvement options

- Attracting a supermarket back on to the street is the highest priority
- The district centre should be thoroughly cleaned to provide an immediate sign of improvement

Appendix B: Directory of Use classes in the district centre

Address	Business Name	Type	Use Class
Chepstow Road			
74	Unknown		v
78	Former Gift shop		v
80	Former Holbooks		v
82	Former D.G. Morgan		v
84	Alpha Security	Security Items	a1
86	Unknown		v
Livingstone Place			
	Maindee Fish Bar	Take away	a5
	Christopher Neil	Hair Dresser	a1
	Former Mess Hair and Beauty		v
	Taka's	Barbers	a1
Chepstow Road			
88	Empty		v
90	Ty Hafan	Charity shop	a1
92	Image on skin	Tattoo parlour	Sui Generis
94	Nat West	Bank	a2
98	Maindee Barber Shop	Barbers	a1
100	Perilicious	Takeaway	a5
102	Post Office & Premier	Convenience store/Post Office	a1
104	St Davids	Charity Shop	a1
106	Sen Bakery	Restaurant	a3
108	Life Style Express	Convenience store	a1
110	Lloyds Bank	Bank	a2
110	Petersons Solicitors	Solicitors	a2
Speake Street			
	Smiths shoe repair	Shoe repairer	a2
	Evolve hair	Hairdressers	a1
Chepstow Rd			
114	Cartridge world	Printers and stationery	a1
116	Cayzers	Menswear and hire	a1
122	Tamarind	Restaurant and Takeaway	a3
124	former menswear		v

124	former Electrical		v
126	Jim Oliver Butchers	Butcher	a1
128	Mind Charity shop	Charity Shop	a1
130	Farmhouse Bakery	Baker's	a1
132	former Globe		v
134	former Greggs		v
136	Boots	Chemist	a1
138	former Co-op		v
146	Friends / The Loft	Hairdressers / Gift shop/ Coffee shop	a1
148	Sen BBQ	Takeaway	a5
150	former Peacocks		v
156	The Chippy	Takeaway	a5
158	Godfrey Morgan	Public house	a4
162	Little Indian	Takeaway	a5
164	Koh-i-noor	Restaurant and Takeaway	a3
166	former River City amusements		v
168	Crystal Chicken	Takeaway	a5
170	Ozzys Barbers	Barbers	a1
172	Desi Grill	Takeaway	a5
Chepstow Rd (odd)			
163	Gita Stores	Convenience store	a1
159	Barclays Bank	Bank	a2
157	The George	Pub	a4
155	Nayaz Cribb	Barber	a1
153	Newport Minimart	Convenience store	a1
151	Bathroom Express	Bathroom showroom	a1
149	former Ladbrokes		v
147	former Idle Hands tattoos		v
145	former mortgage advice shop		v
143	Centric Recruitment	Recruitment agency	a2
141	Golden	Tanning studio	Sui Generis
139	Elite Physique	Gym	d2
137	Martial arts cafe	Cafe	a3
137	Martial arts centre	Martial arts centre/gym	d2
133	former Poundstore		v
129	The Banc	Pub	a4
127	Bet Fred	Bookmakers	a2
Duckpool Road			
138	Royal Albert	Pub	a4
	former Tai Ar		v
	former Moving Sounds		v

	Domestic appliance service	repair shop	a2
Chepstow Road			
123	Valentines	Patisserie and cafe	a3
119	Leonard D Morgan	Estate agents	a2
117	It's flowers	Flower shop	a1
113	Nimar Cards	Gift shop	a1
111	William Hill	Bookmakers	a2
109	Scrum Half	Pub	a4
107	Maindee Hotel	Pub	a4
Fairoak Terrace			
	Maindee Handyman	DIY shop	a1
	former hairdresser	Above part of Villa Dino	v
Chepstow Rd			
103	Vila Dino	Italian restaurant	a3
99	Sandwich shop	Sandwich bar	a1
81	Maindee police station	Police station	D1
79	Maindee Library	Library	D1
57	Malhurst	Esso garage	Sui Generis

Appendix C1 Trader survey

TRADERS SURVEY

Address and business name	
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We're from Maindee Unlimited and are part of a team who has got some funding to help improve Chepstow Road shopping street for businesses and customers. We are doing a survey today to find out what you think about this. Can we ask you some questions? It will only take a few minutes.

1	How long trading here?	>1 year	1-3 Years	<4 years			
2	Business compared to year ago?	BETTER	SAME	WORSE			
3	Strengths of this shopping street as a whole?						
4	Weaknesses of this shopping street as a whole?						
5	Rate the overall look and feel of shopping street?	V.Good	Good	Neither	Poor	V.Poor	
6	What sort of changes do you think would improve the street and improve trade?						
7	We have some funding to bring in merchandising support to give advice on how to attract more customers to your business. Is this something you would be interested in? Yes No Maybe						
8	Is there any other support you would like?						
9	Vat Registered?	Yes	No	12	How many people employed?	FT:	PT:
10	Can we put you on our mailing list to keep you up to date with what's happening :						
	Email:			Tel:			
11	Thank you very much...Any final comments ?						
Continue overleaf							

Appendix C2 Residents survey

RESIDENTS SURVEY

We're from Maindee Unlimited and are part of a team who has got some funding to help improve this Chepstow Road shopping street for businesses and customers.

We are doing a survey today to find out what you think about this. Can we ask you some questions? It will only take a few minutes.

1	What do you like about this shopping street?				
2	What don't you like about this shopping street?				
3a	How do you think the shopping street is doing compared to a year ago?	Better	Same	Worse	
3b	What has changed? (If better/worse)				
4	Rate the range of shops and services on the street.	V.Good	Good	Neither	Poor V.Poor
5	How many different shops/ businesses do you use?	0	1-2	3-5	6 or more
6	Which shop/business do you use most?				
7	What new shops/services would you like to see here?				
8	Rate the overall look and feel of shopping street?	V.Good	Good	Neither	Poor V.Poor
9	What sort of changes do you think would improve the street (and improve trade)?				
10	Can we put you on our mailing list to keep you up to date with what's happening :				
	Email:				Tel:
11	Thank you very much...Any final comments?				