

Newtown Place Plan

Evidence Workshop (2nd Stakeholder Event)

10th October 2019, Elephant and Castle, Newtown 2pm to 5pm

Notes from session

“Facilities” group (Katie facilitating)

Facilities today

- Many facilities – especially sports are run by volunteers
- There is a need to connect up the various provision – physically and organisations (e.g. Park Run at Dolerw Park0)
- Regionally important facilities e.g. Theatre and Gallery
- High levels of deprivation in some areas funded outreach delivered by theatre
- Physical divides between communities e.g. west / east – deprivation linked
- No / poor bus service which can make access to facilities difficult for more deprived areas (a quarter of people in Newtown don't have access to a car – higher than national average)
- Good facilities range (better than other mid wales towns)
- River is an asset that should be more celebrated and connected into – signage etc
- Facilities dispersed and poorly connected
- Private leisure centre becoming expensive
- Important links between mental / physical health
- College of Further Education – area is poorly lit
- Decline in number of young people accessing sports
- There are 14 health service locations – health hub to co-locate in centre

Facilities tomorrow

- Bus provision – increased provision
- Train line – possible for a request stop at the college / theatre? Train station not well connected – town centre needs a stronger identity)
- New development needs to illustrate how it connects to existing facilities
- Linked to bus / train travel – a need to move away from the car
- Connectivity across the railway line – knitting together the old and the new
- Accessibility – is key – physical access and access for all social groups
- A need for accommodation – linked to regionally important facilities
- Pryce Jones building – an opportunity for Newtown
- New footbridge needed at Llanllwchaiarn across River for improved connections
- Long term parking needed

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“Business and Tourism” group (Zak facilitating)

Business and Tourism today

- Business rates too high
- Retail sector needs to develop – small and larger brands / spaces. There are not many large retail spaces. Footfall is declining
- Greater connectivity (non drive routes) for walking / cycling between activities and retail sites
- Not enough in town / pedestrian navigational signage to link things up
- Small incubator / business start-ups – do we know the need? Fit for the digital age. Accommodate Pryce-Jones.
- Not enough accommodation for visitor / business economy (extended stays etc) e.g. Control Techniques use Shrewsbury
- In town transport infrastructure – better links between rail station – bus station – walk and cycle routes
- Lack of defined / coherent product for the town (for the visitor market)
- Lack of regular medium / big scale events (across all themes culture/activity etc) - Food festival mentioned.
- Banking – a valuable resource – drawing people and business in.

Business and Tourism tomorrow

- Increase retail offer to 7 days a week (difficult for buses to maintain?) and cafes etc.
- Is there something that can be done to nurture independent retail on the high street – not necessarily big brands
- Creating growth pattern in town for new – development business (small spaces – bigger spaces)
- Improve Vastre industrial estate for digital business/ tech park – could be part of growth deal ?
- Brand for Newtown “Discover Newtown”
- Connectivity – active travel planning, funding and implementation
- In town signage – road and pedestrian – use to improve directional signage etc
- Utilise NPTC skills base (teaching at work experience) to run / work with a high-quality hospitality business (hotel / restaurant)
- Initiate a calendar of bigger focused events relevant to the existing product
- Create facilities for cycle lock up etc
- Can we think of a “Newtown Product”?
- Newtown as service centre / service industry / public service
- Theatre / arts / cinema culture
- Café / restaurant trade – needs to increase
- EV charger infrastructure for tourism - cars and bikes
- Use of roundabouts – advertising / tourism potential

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“Town Centre” group (Sorelle facilitating)

Accessibility

- Challenge to make historic buildings fully accessible
- Pavement condition, kerbs not enough dropped kerbs
- Parking on pavement- damage, obstruction
- PCC looking at Broad St. (High street has disabled places)
- Town Centre experience?
- Parking spaces- size and shape?
- Access- station – town centre/ bus centre – bus link?
- Safety at night- lighting?
- Taxi availability? Poor
- Seven St- used to be a taxi rank- new outside P.O (detailed access issued on map)
- Sign posting and lighting needed on town- station route.

Vacant Buildings

- What can they be used for?
- Owned by who? Pension funds.
- Business rate? Do not reflect current business realities.
- St David’s Church- most iconic building
- Old five station and New Road- has replied.
- Owners contracted- no replies
- Store 21?
- Restore listed buildings.
- Other action? Power? Buildings at risk
- CPO route?
- Get owner together- talk to each other?
- Pots of money to apply for- needs and use?
- What do other towns do?

Town Centre

- Boundaries on PCC Map- are they right?
- Central car park should be in it.
- Library should be in it.
- Rail station – outside boundary?
- Town Centre actually contracting? Dead Zones?
- Pedestrianisation? Part, time use
- Hybrid- move market to high Street (pedestrian in day)
- Stop through traffic?
- Through the Cross,
- improve experience,
- reduce Pollution- Highways to look at it
- Smoking ban outside- butts in gutters more pollution.
- Raised area High Street could be attractive / improved



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“Design and Character” group (Katie facilitating)

- Penyloddfa as very distinct / unique
- Natural ready-made entrance gateway in
- Targeted inward investment to create a town scheme area
- Create an attraction of its own but still a living place
- Valuable viewpoints / views outward
- Could help with sticky -spots
- Balance of pedestrians / traffic needs attention
- Balance by design
- Arrival gateways into town are poor and unattractive – need to draw people in
- River and green heart underutilised - unique
- Pryce-Jones also very distinct/ unique but poor visual appeal at a point of arrival with the station and Old Kerry Road

Additional comments:

- Green lined walk / cycle way from rail station toward town centre
- Built heritage – ensure they are looked after to preserve the character
- Ensure bridges are maintained and encouraged to become features - linking to the increased / product associated with the river
- “Green” the town – through planting – street scene and entrance / gateway routes
- Consistent colouring of street furniture
- Make Longbridge pedestrian or one way only and rethink traffic circulation within town centre

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“Treowen Site” group (Tanya Dearing – PCC facilitating)

Opportunities:

- Bungalows – housing for ageing population
- 2 – 2.5 storey max ?
- Community heating
- Private right of way – access – linkages – well-being
- Solar panels
- Possible small-scale mixed use e.g., café, launderette, shop, community hub
- Traffic calming

Needs

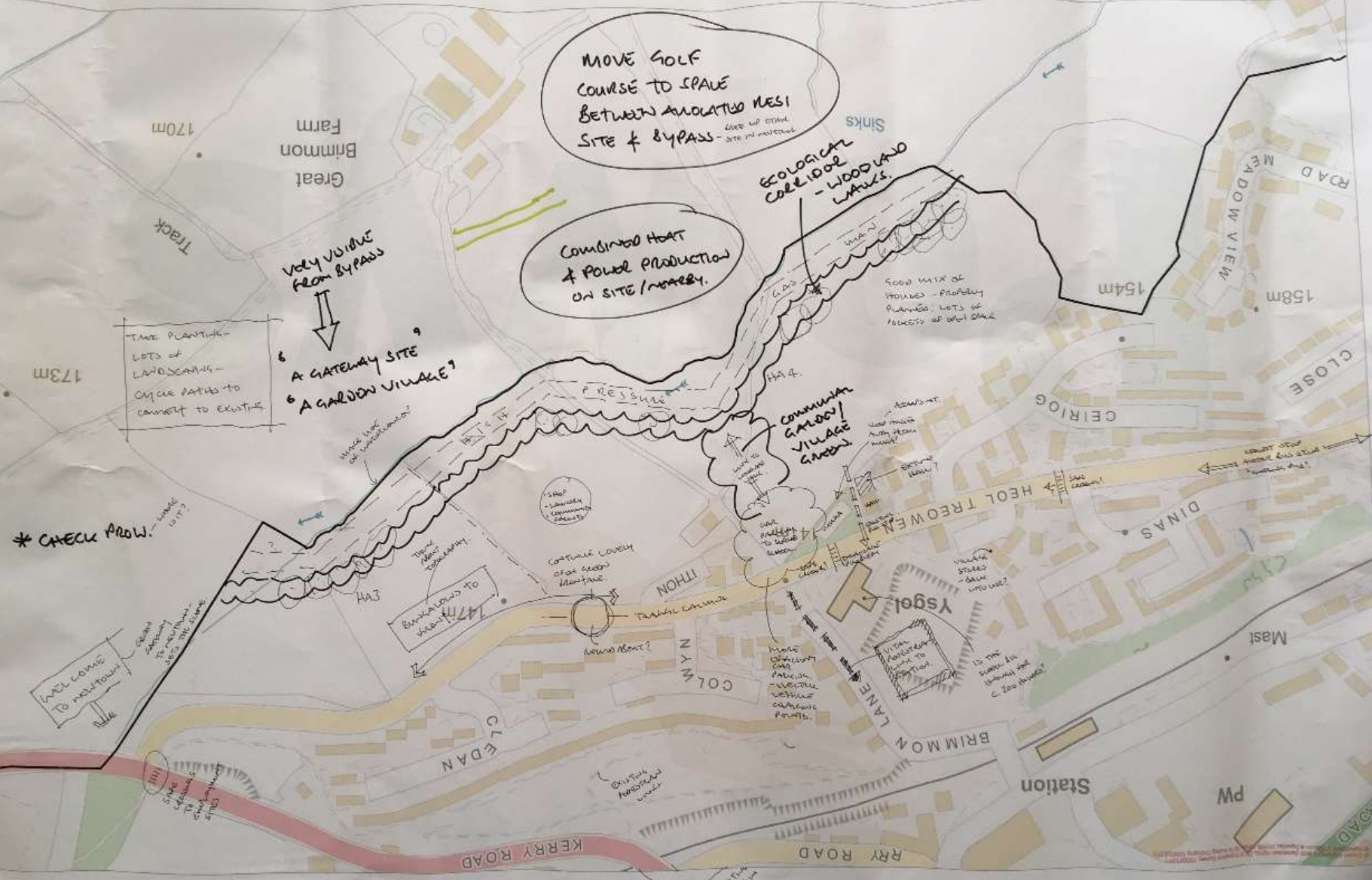
- Improved bus service
- Request stops (mobility issues)
- Improved parking (at school particularly)
- Mix of housing – affordable – it’s a low-income area
- Connectivity – not a separate “garden village”

Constraints

- Gas mains – sterilisation – HSE advice
- Private right of way – diversions? Incorporate into design
- Topography – restricts linkages

Risks

- Traffic implications- no opportunity to link to by-pass
- Drains and flooding from run off – current issue
- “island” of residential development at Heol Treowen – unless properly linked



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“Health Hub” group (Health Board facilitating)

A list of aspirations for the Health Hub in context of Place Plan

Bilingual

- Ensure “Active offer” is embedded

Multi-Storey

- Expect it to be more than one storey to accommodate the services

Bus and Train timetabling

- Need to be more coherent with each other

Will it include the primary care centre?

- E.g. Crossing road to and from GP practice, option of sharing facilities

Energy efficient

- Ensure building design incorporates energy efficient technology e.g. Solar panels

Lies / Place

- Gogledd / North Powys

Lean design

- Share facilities with school e.g. kitchen. To reduce costs and improve efficiency – public spaces and walk throughs to connect town centre and estates

Accessible

- E.g. Public transport – needs to stop here – whole site accessible for people with differing abilities

Technology

- Provide hi-tech facilities to reduce need to travel for outpatients

Changing population

- Will it meet future need e.g. Ageing population and new housing development

North Powys Wellbeing

Civic Pride

- Something we can be proud of

Reduce Travel

- Can I have treatments here instead of travelling to RJA, RSH etc

Homely / not too clinical

- Warm and welcoming
- Use furniture and colour that are warm and welcoming

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"Open Space, Play, Allotments" group (Karen facilitating)

Open Space /Play / Allotments - Today

- Some play areas have gone
- Some needs maintenance
- Some anti-social behaviour
- Lack of allotments – need to retain the current sites
- Young people use MacDonald's for Wi-Fi
- Open Newtown – doing work on play parks and allotments
- Trehafren has a low % of play areas but access to open space
- Allotment space has been reduced due to housing development

Open Space/ Play / Allotments – Tomorrow

- Working group to be set up – to carry on the conversation and take these themes through to the Place Plan
- Primary School age like No.14 play park in Newtown – could maybe lose some of the smaller play areas and concentrate on making better facilities such as No.14 9 (on the open spaces map)
- Street lighting needs looking at particularly Vaynor Park – unsafe
- Wi-fi hotspots needed for teenagers
- Need supervision / observation
- Larger and better maintained facilities
- Multi use play areas e.g. Belfast – has a 5k / 10k run track with multi-use outdoor gym – could this happen on Trehafren fields ?

**the open space map was marked up with further play areas that had been missed. These need to be added to the map*

Evidence Gaps

- Lack of evidence on allotment need in Newtown – are they needed?

"Footpaths / Cycle Paths group (Karen facilitating)

Footpaths / Cycle Paths – Today

- Lack of signage, lighting and maintenance
- The river and canal are assets
- Hedges often overgrown – problem for walkers and cyclists
- Lighting of riverside park – dark (issues with NRW if lit ?-)
- Safety – perceptions of lack of safety
- “Walking Newtown” has web pages and leaflets – but need to publicise
- Some cycle storage – but not enough
- Crossings needed – e.g. at railway station
- A major potential for modal shift – and behaviour change to cycle / walk
- Congestion around schools
- Vastre Industrial estate – poor connections to the North of the town – but need evidence on this!!!
- Buses don't align with train services

Footpaths / Cycle Paths – Tomorrow

- Infrastructure can be done with capital spend
- Need to make it easier to cycle on the road – 20mph speed limits
- Take out parking spaces and add cycle parking – town centres need to be social places
- This all links to health and wellbeing
- Lighting and safety are essential
- Charging of electric bike facilities
- More cycle storage
- Crossings needed e.g. The station
- Sensitive Lighting of riverside park
- Ongoing dialogue with the community / Open Newtown / Walking Newtown – set up an Active Travel committee or Working Group
- Improve cycle storage in flats near town centre as these don't require car parking spaces
- Require new development to link to cycle and walking routes
- Bilingual signage
- Accessible routes and well lit
- Treowen – lighting needed – uneven pavements
- Better alignment of train and bus services
- Promotion of cycle paths
- Bridge needed across the railway line – near Wynstay / Fire Station to connect up the town
- More recycling bins – have ordinary bins in town – but no Recycling options

Evidence Gaps

- Vastre Industrial estate – poor connections to the North of the town – but need evidence on this!!!

“Energy and Climate Change” group (Jeff facilitating)

The future

- Plant more trees especially on approaches
- River kayaking
- Water power