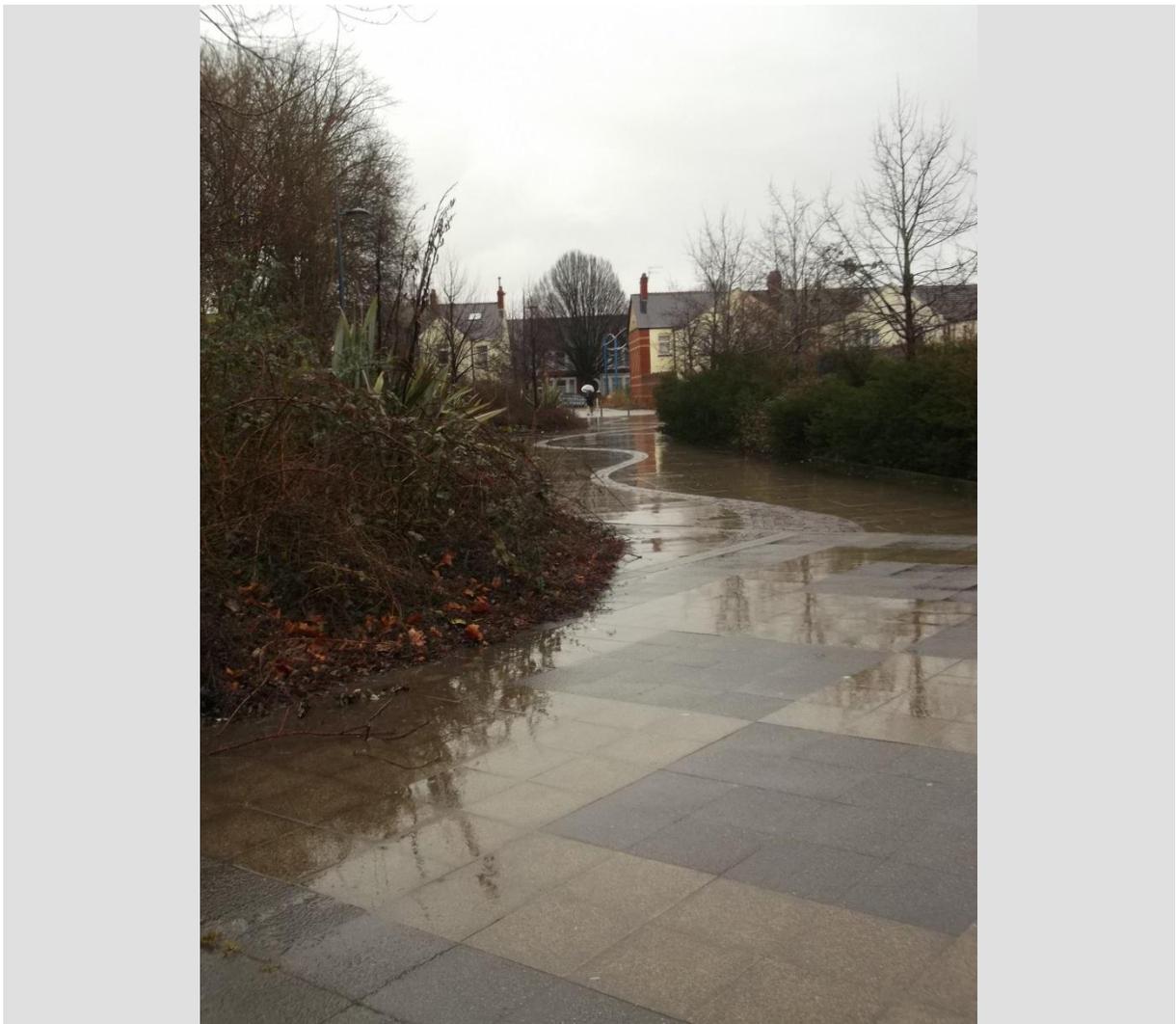


Maindee Community Street Audit

A Community Street Audit
Maindee, Newport

Commissioned by Newport City Council



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Introduction

Living Streets

Living Streets is the national charity that stands up for pedestrians. With our supporters we work to create safe, attractive and enjoyable streets, where people want to walk.

We have been the national voice for pedestrians throughout our 85 year history. In the early years, our campaigning led to the introduction of the driving test, pedestrian crossings and 30mph speed limits. Since then our ambition has grown. Today we influence decision makers nationally and locally, run successful projects to encourage people to walk, and provide specialist services to help reduce congestion and carbon emissions, improve public health, and make sure every community can enjoy vibrant streets and public spaces.

Living Streets works with local authorities and partners to assess streets and spaces with a view to improving the walking environment and encouraging a healthy and active approach to travel.

Community Street Audits

A Community Street Audit is a tool developed by Living Streets to help create better streets for pedestrians, as part of a safe, attractive and enjoyable environment for all users.

Living Streets has audited walking routes in major cities, busy town centres and residential areas. The resulting report has successfully helped to secure funding for short term improvements and also contribute to masterplans for longer term projects.

Community Street Audits are a way to evaluate the quality of streets and spaces from the viewpoint of the people who use them, rather than those who manage them. We involve small groups of local residents, traders, councillors and officers to assess a route on foot, following which a report is produced with recommendations. It is a facilitated approach where people are asked to discuss their experiences (based on the walkabout, but more importantly on everyday knowledge of the area), and notes are taken by facilitators. People are also asked to find solutions for issues raised, as well as focus on positive elements, as well as the negative.

Notes are pulled together under the 'Findings' section of the report across several criteria, and a pragmatic approach to solutions is made in the 'Recommendations' section, based on what is achievable to create better streets and spaces given the particular context of the area and partners.

Working in Newport

Living Streets has been commissioned by Newport City Council to run a Community Street Audit in Maindee. The audit looks both at how the neighbourhood is operating at the street level as well as how it is currently integrated into Newport as a city as a whole, including how easy it is for local people to travel in and out of Maindee.

Methodology

On 16th December 2014, the audit leader attended the 'Physical Activity in the Environment Working Group' at Newport's Civic Centre. The group discussed the Community Street Audit approach and preferred locations where one could be undertaken. After the meeting, Maindee was confirmed as the neighbourhood to benefit from the approach. Maindee is a disadvantaged neighbourhood, located close to Newport City Centre. Within the neighbourhood, Maindee suffers from a range of issues such as a high proportion of vacant retail premises, high levels of unemployment and a high proportion of residents that do not stay in Maindee for a long period of time.

Whilst Maindee is located in walking distance of Newport City Centre and the amenities it offers, the neighbourhood is held back because it is poorly integrated into the wider city. The B4237 Chepstow Road is a busy arterial route taking vehicles in and out of Newport City Centre. The River Usk also provides a significant boundary for residents whilst there is the footbridge and the B4596 into the City centre.

The Place Coordinator for Maindee took the lead in making arrangements for the date of the audit itself. He also took the lead on promoting the audit to relevant local stakeholders. A pre-audit risk assessment was undertaken to identify and mitigate against any foreseen dangers.

The actual audit took place on 19th February, between 11:00 – 13:00. 6 participants attended – the majority of these were residents though organisations such as Cynefin, Newport Mind, Maindee Action Group, Maindee Unlimited, Maindee Festival Association and Ashianna, were represented. The weather on the day was poor as it rained throughout the audit. It was a testament to the commitment of these attendees to Maindee that they participated in this context.

Audit Route

The audit started and finished at Community House on Eton road in the heart of the Maindee neighbourhood. It then proceeded from Eton road onto Marlborough road, Harrow road and then on to the B4237 Chepstow road. The route then turned onto Wharf road and then into Jeffrey Street, Oriel road and Malvern road. Crossing Corporation Street, the route then took the walkway to the riverside before returning to Eton road via the walkway in front of the school.



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Audit Findings

Eton Road and Marlborough Road

Eton Road and Marlborough Road are two predominantly residential roads in the heart of Maindee. Footways on both of these roads are narrow in relation to the wider carriageway here.

There are locations on both of these roads where there are double yellow lines that are not being enforced. As a result, cars are regularly parked on double yellow lines and this has an impact on safety for pedestrians. Specifically, cars parked on double yellow lines on the corner of the junction of Marlborough Road and Harrow Road significantly limits visibility for pedestrians crossing at this point.

Chepstow Road Train Bridge

Chepstow Road Train Bridge is a significant gateway point for people entering and leaving Maindee. Currently, its appearance is poor, and as a result, is not a space that people want to spend much time in. If the appearance of the bridge was improved, more people would want to visit Maindee improving the vitality of the neighbourhood.



Poor lighting and noise are the key features walking under the train bridge

Specifically, walking under the bridge is a noisy experience. The lighting is poor. The street audit was conducted in the middle of the day but there was very little natural light underneath the bridge and the existing lights were not bright enough. The guttering was dripping due to the rain and the brick sidewall was in need of industrial clean.

The brick sidewalls under the bridge could be coloured by local art, as a means to revitalise this key gateway into Maindee.

Public realm land and toilet block on Chepstow Road

From the train bridge, the street audit moved East down Chepstow Road. The group then encountered a small area of public realm and a toilet block opposite the Library. Currently, there is a triangular piece of land set back from the footway with some grass, bushes and a series of brick walls. This is adjacent to a toilet block that is in a poor state of repair. The public realm land and the toilet block hold a significant location opposite the Library and on the edge of Maindee's main retail thoroughfare.



Poorly used public realm land adjacent to public toilet block

As a result of this, there is a significant opportunity to make better use of this land as a means to regenerate Maindee's retail centre into a vibrant place to visit. It seems that there may be two options to explore here. To start with, a redesign of the existing public realm space would provide a more attractive space for local people. If it transpired that the public toilets were no longer needed, there would then be the opportunity of remove the block providing a sizeable plot of public realm land. Maindee,

as a neighbourhood, has a very low amount of green space. Green space is essential to enable residents to live more healthy lives. It would be prudent to consult with the local community in developing designs for this new public realm space.

Probert Place cut through between Livingstone Place/Glebe Street and Chepstow Road

Walking down Chepstow Road into the heart of Maindee's retail centre, pedestrians are confronted by the Probert Place cut through coming in from Livingstone Place and Glebe Street. The cut through is an unadopted road and, as such, does not provide the usual safety features such as a designated footway, road markings and sufficient visibility. Individuals taking part in the Street Audit stated that you walked through the cut through 'at your own risk'. The cut through is in the heart of the centre of Maindee and so a large number of pedestrians cross this on a daily basis.



For partially sighted people and for elderly residents, the cut through is a significant threat to their safety. If the volume of traffic is to stay at the same level, there is a real need that the cut through be included in the list of maintained roads so that features such as footways and road marking can be introduced.

Junction of Chepstow Road and Albert Avenue

The current design of the Chepstow Road / Albert Avenue junction favours motor vehicles, with wide exit and entry carriage ways. It is also a reasonably complicated junction with a number of roads meeting at one point. For people walking around or through Maindee's retail centre, the junction provides a significant obstacle to overcome. There is a lack of designated crossing points and the wide carriageways mean that it feels precarious for local residents to cross where they need to. There is also a reasonably large poorly maintained flower bed on the corner of the junction.



The railings that are present prevent people from crossing the road at points convenient to them. In addition, the section of the footway in front of the BETFRED shop between Chepstow Road and Duckpool Road is well used by pedestrians. As a result, there is a need for wider footways and designated wide crossing points of the carriageway.

There is therefore a need to re-design this junction to ensure the safety and enjoyment of local people using the retail shops. Re-balancing the use of the space available (carriageways, footways and other public realm such as the flower bed) will significantly improve the appearance of the retail centre. This will have a significant impact on the economic regeneration of the area. In addition, designated crossing points in the correct locations will help people to move around the area.

Green space plot on corner of Wharf Road and Chepstow Road

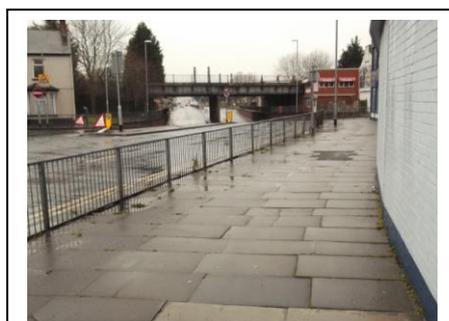
Turning from Chepstow Road onto Wharf Road, the Street Audit encountered a strip of green space that is poorly utilised. There is a short length of guard railing that serves no purpose and a series of trees with low hanging branches that significantly reduce the natural light for the space. Maindee has a limited amount of green space to offer to its residents and so it is important that each potential green space plot is maximised. If this strip of green space is re-designed, it would be more attractive for people to travel through and spend time in.



Poorly utilised green space plot on corner of Wharf Road

Guard rails on Wharf Road

The Street Audit identified numerous locations in the Maindee neighbourhood where guardrails are in place. There is a significant length of guard rails on Wharf Road. Elsewhere, there is some guard rails in front of the Pay and Display car park set back from Chepstow road in Maindee's retail centre. This particular section of guard rails serves no purpose as it is located between the edge of the footway and the car park and so is currently serving as street clutter and should be removed.



Guard rails line the footway on Wharf Road

Guard rails can be a useful tool to provide additional safety to members of the public. The long stretches of guard rails on Wharf Road do not make improve on safety and deter people from crossing the road where they may want to. Large amounts of guard railing can bring the appearance down for a road.

Green space plot on the corner of Wharf Road and Jeffrey Street

The green space plot on the corner of Wharf Road and Jeffrey Street is currently regularly littered with fly tipping. As previously stated, Maindee as a neighbourhood has a low amount of green spaces for residents. As a result, this green space offers real potential to be redeveloped into an additional space where people are happy to spend their time. Clarification with Newport City Council needs to initially take place on the ownership of the land and there are a number of electricity boxes on the plot which will restrict the use of the land. Nevertheless, the plot offers a local organisation with sufficient capacity the prospect of a shared community garden space for the future.



Green space plot that offers potential for renovation

Jubilee Gardens

Jubilee Gardens is the only designated green space currently in Maindee. In this context, it provides local residents and families with a place where people can spend time and where local children can play. The outer edge of the park is lined by fencing and participants on the Street Audit commented that the park would be more used and would be more welcoming if the fencing was not there. It would probably prudent if some detailed consultation was undertaken on this with local residents and local schools. It would also make sense to visit similar spaces in the local region to learn from other peoples' experiences.



Gated entrance to Jubilee Gardens

Walkway between Corporation Road and Riverside path

The Walkway between Corporation Road and the River Usk is a key access point to the local area. It enables Maindee residents to walk or cycle to the Riverside as an ideal route into the city centre. Street audit participants explained that wild flower seeds were planted last year in the verges to improve the appearance of the walkway. It would also be prudent to introduce curves in design at the beginning and end of the walkway to avoid desire lines eroding the grass verges. Curved lines would also improve the appearance of the walkway for pedestrians.



Corners of the walkway eroded by desire lines

Riverside Walk

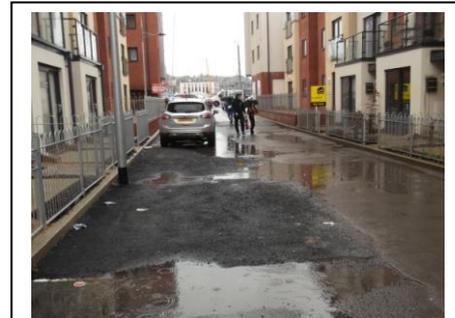
The Riverside Walk represents a key route for people walking or cycling between Maindee and the city centre. The walkway also offers residents with a pleasurable leisure walk alongside the River Usk. The walkway is modern and spacious but could benefit from some softer features such as signage that could encourage people to learn more about the local area.



Riverside accessing Millennium walk into Newport City centre

Housing Development at Millennium Walk

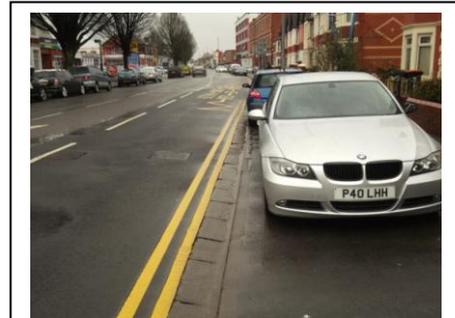
At the time of the Street Audit, a Housing Development was being completed on Millennium Walk. Due to the heavy rain that fell on the day, it was apparent that the road surfaces were of poor quality, causing the pooling of water. In addition, it seemed that there was no designated footway for people to walk through. Millennium Walk provides a key walking route between Maindee and the city centre and so, as such, this section is critically important. The problems identified may have been caused as the development had not been finished at the time. It will be necessary to consult with the Housing Developer and Newport City Council to clarify on these issues.



No footway and poor surfaces within the housing development

Corporation Road

Throughout the Street Audit, participants identified locations where double yellow lines were not being enforced. As a result, it seems that there is a general culture for people to park on the double yellow lines knowing that they will not be penalised. On Corporation Road the Street Audit identified a large number of cars parked on double yellow lines, but also parked on pavements next to double yellow lines. This practise makes Maindee's local streets more unsafe for its residents. The parking on pavements provides significant obstruction for people with mobility issues, sight impairments or buggies with children.



Pavement parking and double yellow lines

Recommendations

| No. | Location | Issue | Recommendation | Timescale |
|-----|--|--|--|-------------|
| 1 | Chepstow Road Train Bridge | Poor maintenance | Liaising with maintenance contractor to ensure regular cleaning and maintenance of guttering and brick work | Short term |
| 1 | Chepstow Road Train Bridge | Poor appearance and lighting | Liaising with relevant authority to improve lighting as well as exploring options on devising a community mural project to brighten the space | Short term |
| 2 | Public realm land and toilet block on Chepstow Road | Poor use of public realm space | Exploring ownership of toilet block to then begin devising plans for a redesign of existing space | Medium term |
| 3 | Probert Place cut through between Livingstone Place/Glebe Street and Chepstow Road | Poor pedestrian safety with no footways and poor visibility | Liaising with Newport City Council Transportation to assess viability of the cut through become adopted to improve safety | Long term |
| 4 | Junction of Chepstow Road and Albert Avenue | Poor junction design providing unnecessary obstacle for people moving in retail centre | Liaising with Newport City Council Transportation to propose new capital works to improve the design and balance of this junction as a means to improve safety | Long term |
| 5 | Green space plot on corner of Wharf Road and Chepstow Road | Lack of natural light due to tree branches | Liaising with Newport City Council to arrange tree pruning | Short term |
| 5 | Green space plot on corner of Wharf Road and Chepstow Road | Poor use of public realm space | Exploring ownership of land to then begin devising plans for a redesign of existing space | Medium term |
| 6 | Guardrails on Wharf Road and throughout | Overuse of Guardrails on Wharf road and on edge of car park on Chepstow road | Liaising with Newport City Council Transportation to undertake an audit of guard rails throughout the neighbourhood | Medium term |

| | | | | |
|----|---|--|--|-------------|
| | neighbourhood | | | |
| 7 | Green space plot on the corner of Wharf Road and Jeffrey Street | Poor use of public realm space | Exploring ownership of land to then begin devising plans for a redesign of existing space | Medium term |
| 8 | Jubilee Gardens | Fencing surrounding gardens deters people from using them and worsens its appearance | Undertake consultation with local residents and schools to find out views on removal of fencing and research similar parks in the region to learn from their experience | Medium term |
| 9 | Walkway between Corporation Road and Riverside | Design of walkway needs softening | Explore ways to soften the existing design of the walkway to avoid desire lines eroding grassed sections | Medium term |
| 10 | Housing Development at Millennium Walk | Poor appearance of roadway and lack of footway for pedestrians | Liaise with Newport City Council and Housing Developers to assess final plans and their progress in achieving these to ensure that residents will be able to move safely through the development | Short term |
| 11 | Double yellow line parking in Corporation Road and throughout neighbourhood | Double yellow lines are not being enforced | Liaise with Newport City Council to find out about enforcement resources in the city. Explore working with the team to deliver a short-term campaign in Maindee to enforce people to not park on double yellow lines | Short term |

