

Chippenham Vision Consultation Event 3rd / 4th February 2011 - Report

Methodology

The Chippenham Vision set out to consult with 300 randomly selected local residents. MSS Research, a market research company based in Bristol were asked to recruit 300 local residents to agree to attend one of the 4 events. Attendees were randomly selected from within the community area (plus some crossover into surrounding areas as postcode areas were the only mechanism to create a control area). MSS were provided local population statistics from Wiltshire Council and used these to set quota controls by such factors as Ward, gender, age group and ethnicity. MSS obtained residential telephone listings from a reputable data base for the area

It did however prove difficult to recruit in the 18 to 24 age group.

Of the 317 people recruited 140 actually attended.

Four separate sessions were held. Attendance at each session ranged from 28 to 40.

Counts Respondents	Total	Record gender	
		Male	Female
Base	317	157	160
Please may I ask which age bracket you fall into? READ OUT			
Under 18 - SEE NOTE	-	-	-
18-24	6	3	3
25-34	29	10	19
35-44	48	25	23
45-54	96	46	50
55-64	64	35	29
65+	71	37	34
Refused	3	1	2

The gender distribution was roughly similar to the local area.

The age bias for over 60 was again reasonable given that under 18s were not asked to attend. (Wiltshire Council is holding separate events with local school children to ascertain their views)

It did however prove difficult to recruit in the 18 to 24 age group.

While this process still allows for a degree of self-selection (i.e. a bias towards those predisposed to be interested, socially engaged and able to attend) efforts were made to reduce barriers to attendance – provision of crèche facility, travel assistance for mobility impaired and accessible venue.

Voting

Attendees were provided with a voting handset (Wiltshire Council use this system at various community consultation events) and presented a series of questions about different aspects of the town. (See attached powerpoint)

The responses from the first three questions were not significant as they were used as 'practice' questions to familiarise attendees with the voting handset system.

Question 2 was a deliberately simple question, 1 answer only, 5 options, no wildcard and it was the second question to be asked to ensure respondents had some familiarity with the system. Total responses = 134

Total event attendees = 140

Therefore we have used 134 as the base attendance figure.

Attendees were invited to vote on what they felt were the two most important priorities/preferences to them. The purpose was to 'smooth' out the responses. The option of offering participants to put all their responses in order of preference was considered but rejected as being too time consuming.

The Stakeholder Workshop in September 2010 produced a report which identified a set of aspirations for the town. We attempted to review all those aspirations throughout the series of questions.

Results

Because two choices were allowed an answer can only achieve a maximum of 50% apart from Question 2 where only one response was allowed. (There was an error with Question 16 where the system only recorded one response for the first couple of sessions until it was identified and corrected)

1.) Q1: Most important causes of change?

Climate change

Changes in agriculture and use of the land for resources other than food

Towns and cities becoming more dependent on each other

Young adults continuing to be educated in cities

Further development in technology

Some people continuing to be more disadvantaged than others

Environmental migrants, economic migrants and refugees making areas more culturally varied

The global economy

An ageing population

	Responses	
	(percent)	(count)
Climate change	5%	13
Changes in agriculture and use of the land for resources other than food	19.23%	50
Towns and cities becoming more dependent on each other	5.38%	14
Young adults continuing to be educated in cities	8.08%	21
Further development in technology	13.08%	34
Some people continuing to be more disadvantaged than others	6.92%	18
Environmental migrants, economic migrants and refugees making areas more culturally varied	10.77%	28
The global economy	17.31%	45
An ageing population	14.23%	37
Totals	100%	260

2.) Q2: How confident do you feel that Chippenham will be a better place to live in the future?

Very confident

Confident

	Responses	
	(percent)	(count)
Very confident	2.99%	4
Confident	32.09%	43

Not very confident	50%	67
Pessimistic	11.94%	16
Very pessimistic	2.99%	4
Totals	100%	134

3.) Q3: Why I live in or near Chippenham

	Responses	
	(percent)	(count)
It is a friendly town	8.40%	20
It costs less than living in Swindon, Bath or Bristol	6.30%	15
It has good schools / college	9.66%	23
It feels safe and is relatively crime-free	12.61%	30
I enjoy the environment – river, green spaces, town centre etc	22.27%	53
I like the shops and the leisure facilities	1.68%	4
It is convenient to travel to my place of work	13.45%	32
My job brought me here	16.81%	40
I have a different view from the above (make a note of it for later discussion)	8.82%	21
Totals	100%	238

4.) Q4: Your main concerns about the town?

	Responses	
	(percent)	(count)
Lack of arts facilities	4.56%	12
Road condition and road works	8.37%	22
Not enough for young people to do	17.49%	46
Parking – charges and/or availability	14.07%	37
Poor use is made of the River	12.93%	34
Lack of good shops and restaurants	28.52%	75
Insufficient police presence	3.42%	9
Too much litter	3.04%	8
Traffic congestion	7.60%	20
Totals	100%	263

5.) Q5: What do you value about the town

	Responses	
	(percent)	(count)
Cleanliness of the town	1.16%	3
Good transport services and links to other places	17.76%	46
Good schools and College	18.53%	48
Neighbourliness and community spirit	3.47%	9
Countryside, wildlife, beauty, rural location, peace & quiet	31.27%	81
Relatively safe and crime-free	16.22%	42
Good hospital & medical services	10.04%	26
I have a different view (make a note of it for later discussion)	1.54%	4
Totals	100%	259

6.) Q6: Some ideas for a distinctive identity

	Responses	
	(percent)	(count)
Chippenham should be known as a 'Festival Town' with its Folk, River and Beer festivals.	12.31%	32
Chippenham's main asset is its river and its future identity		

should be as a riverside town	16.54%	43
Chippenham should become a centre for the environmental economy, and be known for being clean and green	2.31%	6
Chippenham is a nice-sized attractive town in rural surroundings which should be preserved against unsuitable development	20.77%	54
Transport links and the beautiful countryside make Chippenham a natural hub for tourism	7.69%	20
Chippenham is an 'M4 Corridor' town, and is suited to being Wiltshire's commercial hub	10%	26
Chippenham should concentrate on providing better shopping, eating and leisure activities	29.23%	76
I have a different view (make a note of it for later discussion)	1.15%	3
Totals	100%	260

7.) Q7: Chippenham's Past – how important for the future?

	Responses	
	(percent)	(count)
Chippenham's history should define the town. Buildings and heritage should be preserved even if it restricts new development	13.13%	34
History is important and we must preserve the best heritage buildings, but we also have to look to the future	39.77%	103
I don't think that history or heritage has any relevance for the future of the town	1.93%	5
The old must make way for the new	1.93%	5
New development must be designed to reflect the town's heritage	32.82%	85
Chippenham should develop its own look – new development should be modern in design not a copy of the past	8.49%	22
I have a different view (make a note of it for later discussion)	1.93%	5
Totals	100%	259

8.) Q8: The River

	Responses	
	(percent)	(count)
The river should be more developed for recreation – walking, cycling, canoeing, fishing, sailing, informal boating etc	29.07%	75

The river should be more part of the town centre eg. with lively cafés, footbridges and better lighting	31.40%	81
The river should be a source of green energy	7.36%	19
The natural habitats of the river should be preserved to protect wildlife	15.12%	39
New developments should make the most of the river to create quality spaces	12.79%	33
Housing overlooking the river will make Chippenham a more attractive and desirable place to live	3.49%	9
The river should be used for green public transport to Monkton Park	0.39%	1
I have a different view (make a note of it for later discussion)	0.39%	1
Totals	100%	258

9.) Q9: Chippenham on foot

	Responses	
	(percent)	(count)
I would like to see the High Street pedestrianised	6.90%	18
I would like to see New Road, the Western Arches and some of the shop fronts cleaned up and made more attractive	28.35%	74
I would like to wander around town in my leisure time, not just to shop	13.03%	34
Priority should be given to people on foot, even if it means inconvenience to cars	5.75%	15
It is too difficult and impractical to walk to the shops, I only want to go by car or bus	6.51%	17
I would like to see the weekly market improved, Chippenham is a market town after all	34.87%	91
I want to feel safer walking around Chippenham	4.21%	11
I have a different view (make a note of it for later discussion)	0.38%	1
Totals	100%	261

10.) Q10: Transport, traffic and parking

	Responses	
	(percent)	(count)
We need a reliable public transport system that links well into the town centre	10.47%	27
The parking facilities need to be made more attractive and up to date	13.57%	35
Parking should be cheap and easy for residents, workers and/or visitors	35.27%	91
Traffic congestion is a big problem and must be sorted out	18.99%	49
The transport, traffic and parking are satisfactory	2.71%	7
Priority should be given to public transport and cycles over cars	6.59%	17
The entrances to the town and the main routes through it are poorly identified	8.14%	21

I have a different view (make a note of it for later discussion)	4.26%	11
Totals	100%	258

11.) Q11: Leisure

	Responses	
	(percent)	(count)
There is not enough to do in Chippenham in the evenings	15.77%	41
It is a priority for Chippenham to stop 'leaking' much of its leisure spending to nearby towns and cities	23.46%	61
We need a bigger and better cinema	22.31%	58
The Olympiad leisure centre should be improved (make a note of in what way for later)	5%	13
We need a better performance venue eg. for music, comedy and theatre	26.92%	70
We need better sporting facilities (note which sport for later)	1.92%	5
There is no need for more leisure facilities, it is better to go to a bigger town	3.08%	8
I have a different view (make a note of it for later discussion)	1.54%	4
Totals	100%	260

12.) Q12: Shopping

	Responses	
	(percent)	(count)
The problem with the town centre is there are not enough good shops and restaurants	23.66%	62
I would like to see more top national brands of shops	12.21%	32
It is a priority for Chippenham to stop 'leaking' about a third of its shopping to nearby towns and cities	15.27%	40
I would like to see a quality department store	12.21%	32
The problem with shopping in Chippenham is the traffic and the parking	8.78%	23
I would like to see more independent and individual shops in the town	19.47%	51
We should discourage out-of-town shopping that competes with the town centre	4.96%	13
There is no or little need for better shops in the town centre	1.53%	4
I have a different view (make a note of it for later discussion)	1.91%	5
Totals	100%	262

13.) Q13: Employment

	Responses	
	(percent)	(count)
We should make sure that good jobs are available within the town for residents	18.63%	49
Industrial sites should be located so that lorries don't come		

into the town centre	11.03%	29
There should be high-tech offices near the railway station, as in other towns along the main line	13.69%	36
The focus should be on creating local jobs for young people	25.86%	68
We need to identify more employment land, to retain and attract employers	13.31%	35
There is nothing wrong with living in Chippenham and going to work elsewhere	6.46%	17
Local jobs bring money into the local area	11.03%	29
I have a different view (make a note of it for later discussion)	0%	0
Totals	100%	263

14.) Q14: Chippenham's relationship to its neighbourhood

	Responses	
	(percent)	(count)
As an M4 town with fast road transport to London/Bristol and beyond	14.57%	37
By its railway - its history and connections as well as the way it creates a town of two halves	10.63%	27
By its valuable relationship with Bristol, Bath and Swindon	8.27%	21
As a Wiltshire town first and foremost	17.72%	45
As the gateway [to the A350 road] that links the M4 to Salisbury and the South Coast	6.30%	16
By the picturesque surrounding villages and countryside	29.53%	75
As part of a group of similar nearby towns - Corsham, Calne, Melksham and Malmesbury	12.60%	32
Something not mentioned above (make a note of your own view for later)	0.39%	1
Totals	100%	254

15.) Q15: what's your best image for the future?

	Responses	
	(percent)	(count)
A rural town	8.06%	20
A riverside town	34.27%	85
A railway town	0.81%	2
A dormitory town	3.63%	9
A festival town	10.89%	27
A market town	32.26%	80
A community town	6.85%	17
A commercial centre	2.42%	6
Other (please note your own view for discussion later)	0.81%	2
Totals	100%	248

16.) Q16: What's the right focus for action? (multiple choice)

	Responses	
	(percent)	(count)
Its shopping centre (including the market) and building more shops	15.38%	24
The river as a local asset and integrating it more with the town		

Environmental projects, services and businesses	35.90%	56
Local festivals, events and leisure facilities	3.21%	5
Offices, workspaces and employment land	17.95%	28
	6.41%	10
Better public transport and parking, reducing traffic congestion, exploiting the railway and its connections	10.90%	17
Developing links between the schools and colleges to create and attract new businesses	7.69%	12
A safer, more crime-free community	1.28%	2
Other (please note your own view for discussion later)	1.28%	2
Totals	100%	156

While the consultation sample was only 134 and the total population of the Chippenham Community Area is 43,880 it is still reasonable to conclude that the responses are fairly representative of the local population.

Key points

The lack and range of shops and restaurants was clearly a key concern. The rural setting is seen as one of the most defining and attractive features of the town. The importance and potential of the river clearly gathered in significance as a result of the discussion sessions. There was a clear message about achieving the right balance between preserving and respecting important heritage and developing for the future. There was also considerable support for improving the market and making it a focus for the town. This was strongly echoed in the discussion and feedback session.

In all cases concern about crime levels and safety was a consistently low concern. It was very noticeable that Climate Change did not feature as a significant driver for change and this was consistently reflected in response throughout. Specific options that would mitigate against the effects of climate change had very little support. There was however general widespread support for the town being more self sufficient or self contained.

Interestingly although there was little support for 'green' actions, people did place a high value on the surrounding natural environment.

In many cases there was an opportunity for attendees to register 'Other' as a viewpoint if they felt the options did not allow them to express a particular point. This option was rarely exercised and the comments are captured in a separate document. Exceptions were Question 3 where a number of people stated that they had been born in Chippenham or the local area and remained here since. Question 10 also raised a few other issues including: accessibility improvements needed; link road/bypass needed; and various views on parking issues.

Discussion Session

Following the question and answer session participants were given 25 -30 minutes to discuss at their tables the question "*What do you think should be the distinctive identity for the town in the future and how should that drive any changes?*" Each table was asked to record comments and provide a short feedback at the end. Full details of the comments are available on request. The discussion echoed the results of the voting session. In particular there was a strong view that the town should 'build on what it's already got'.

One theme that emerged several times was that better communication was needed about events and activities and to improve the exchange of information between different groups. Another theme was that of providing better facilities and opportunities for young people. Better road links, in particular making a connection between the A350 and A4 to reduce traffic having to drive through the town, was also called for. The idea of the town being more 'self-sufficient' or people not needing to travel because Chippenham in the future would be able to provide the range, quality and choice that people want (shopping, jobs, education, leisure etc) was also discussed, 'Live Here, Work Here, Be Here', as one person stated.

The two themes that emerged most strongly however were the river and the market. The river should become much more integral to the town with more leisure activity, overlooked by cafes and bars and a focal point for cultural and arts events. It was felt that the town remained a market town and should be known for its market. The range and quality of the market should be improved and be a more integral part of the town.

Next steps

The following text was prepared by ATLAS as a result of the last stakeholder workshop. These statements have been mapped against the results of this consultation and the elements where there was strong correlation have been incorporated into a revised Draft Vision Statement set out further below.

1. Chippenham will strive to be self contained and will continue to be a working town surrounded by beautiful countryside and attractive villages. It will take advantage of its excellent rail and road links to London, Bristol and beyond and will strengthen its offer and role as a business, civic, cultural, leisure and retail location offering a high quality of life for inhabitants thereby retaining existing workers and attracting new ones. It will be recognised as a progressive and innovative place that meets the needs of businesses and provides opportunities for new employment floor space that supports high technology and 'green' industries that capitalise on its strong existing agricultural links.

2. Chippenham will recognise and enhance its natural assets. Much more will be made of its setting on the River Avon as a defining and connecting feature together with the historic town centre, pleasant parks and open spaces to create a thriving artery and evocative identity for the town. It will continue to have an attractive rural fringe that plays an important role in the success of the town through agriculture and providing access to the countryside for all sections of the community, with town and countryside connected by safe cycle and pedestrian routes. Chippenham will have an integrated approach to transport so that the town centre will have improved access by car, cycle and pedestrians whilst improved and affordable public transport will reduce overall dependency on the private car.

3. Chippenham will be a place where young people choose to stay to live and work, because of the excellent education facilities and the choice and quality of work, housing and leisure opportunities together with its fresh and creative approach to building design that makes a statement whilst meeting the highest practicable standards. Chippenham will ensure that it provides a sufficient range of homes to meet the needs of those who choose to make their lives in the town through sensitive development, regeneration and appropriate growth. It will be a place that has balanced, friendly and supportive communities with access provided to excellent facilities for all.

(Chippenham Visioning | ATLAS report on the visioning event)

Draft Vision Statement.

Chippenham will strive to be as self-sufficient as possible in terms of shopping and leisure provision and will continue to be a Riverside Market Town surrounded by beautiful countryside and attractive villages.

Chippenham will take advantage of its excellent rail and road links and its position on the high tech corridor between London, Bristol and beyond. It will strengthen its offer and role as a business location. It will improve the range and quality of civic facilities, leisure and retail providing a high quality of life for its inhabitants thereby retaining existing workers and attracting new ones.

Chippenham will recognise and build on its natural assets, its important heritage will be cherished. Much more will be made of its setting on the River Avon as a defining and connecting feature together with the historic town centre, the market, pleasant parks and open spaces creating a thriving artery and evocative identity for the town.

Chippenham will have an integrated approach to transport so that traffic flow will be more efficient and the town centre will have improved access by car, cycle and pedestrians whilst improved and affordable public transport will reduce overall dependency on the private car.

Chippenham will be a place where young people choose to stay to live and work, because of the excellent education facilities and the choice and quality of work, housing and leisure opportunities.

Appendix 1

Summary of statements from the Visioning events 3rd and 4th February 2011

Very significantly majority view

Q4: Your main concerns about the town?

6. Lack of good shops and restaurants

Q5: What do you value about the town?

5. Countryside, wildlife, beauty, rural location, peace & quiet

Q6: Some ideas for a distinctive identity

9. Chippenham should concentrate on providing better shopping, eating and leisure activities

Q8: The River

1. The river should be more developed for recreation – walking, cycling, canoeing, fishing, sailing, informal boating etc

2. The river should be more part of the town centre eg. with lively cafés, footbridges and better lighting

Q9: Chippenham on foot

2. I would like to see New Road, the Western Arches and some of the shop fronts cleaned up and made more attractive

5. I would like to see the weekly market improved, Chippenham is a market town after all

Q10: Transport, traffic and parking

3. Parking should be cheap and easy for residents, workers and/or visitors

Q14: Chippenham's relationship to its surroundings. *Its future identity should be defined:-*

6. By the picturesque surrounding villages and countryside

Q15: what's your best image for the future? *I think Chippenham should best be described as:*

2. A riverside town

5. A market town

(Other) most significant responses

Q1: Most important causes of change?

2. Changes in agriculture and use of the land for resources other than food
5. Further development in technology
8. The global economy
9. An ageing population

Q2: How confident do you feel that Chippenham will be a better place to live in the future?

3. Not very confident [however this was the middle option]

Q3: Why I live in or near Chippenham

4. It feels safe and is relatively crime-free
5. I enjoy the environment – river, green spaces, town centre etc
7. It is convenient to travel to my place of work
8. My job brought me here

Q6: Some ideas for a distinctive identity

2. Chippenham's main asset is its river and its future identity should be as a riverside town
4. Chippenham is a nice-sized attractive town in rural surroundings which should be preserved against unsuitable development

Q7: Chippenham's Past – how important for the future?

2. History is important and we must preserve the best heritage buildings, but we also have to look to the future
5. New development must be designed to reflect the town's heritage

Q10: Transport, traffic and parking

2. The parking facilities need to be made more attractive and up to date
4. Traffic congestion is a big problem and must be sorted out

Q11: Leisure

2. It is a priority for Chippenham to stop 'leaking' much of its leisure spending to nearby towns and cities
3. We need a bigger and better cinema
5. We need a better performance venue eg. for music, comedy and theatre

Q12: Shopping

1. The problem with the town centre is there are not enough good shops and restaurants
3. It is a priority for Chippenham to stop 'leaking' about a third of its shopping to nearby towns and cities
6. I would like to see more independent and individual shops in the town

Q13: Employment

1. We should make sure that good jobs are available within the town for residents
3. There should be high-tech offices near the railway station, as in other towns along the main line
4. The focus should be on creating local jobs for young people

Q14: Chippenham's relationship to its surroundings. *Chippenham's future identity should be defined:-*

1. As an M4 town with fast road transport to London/Bristol and beyond
4. As a Wiltshire town first and foremost

Q16: *I think Chippenham should best focus its efforts on developing*

2. The river as a local asset and integrating it more with the town
4. Local festivals, events and leisure facilities
6. Better public transport and parking, reducing traffic congestion, exploiting the railway and its connections