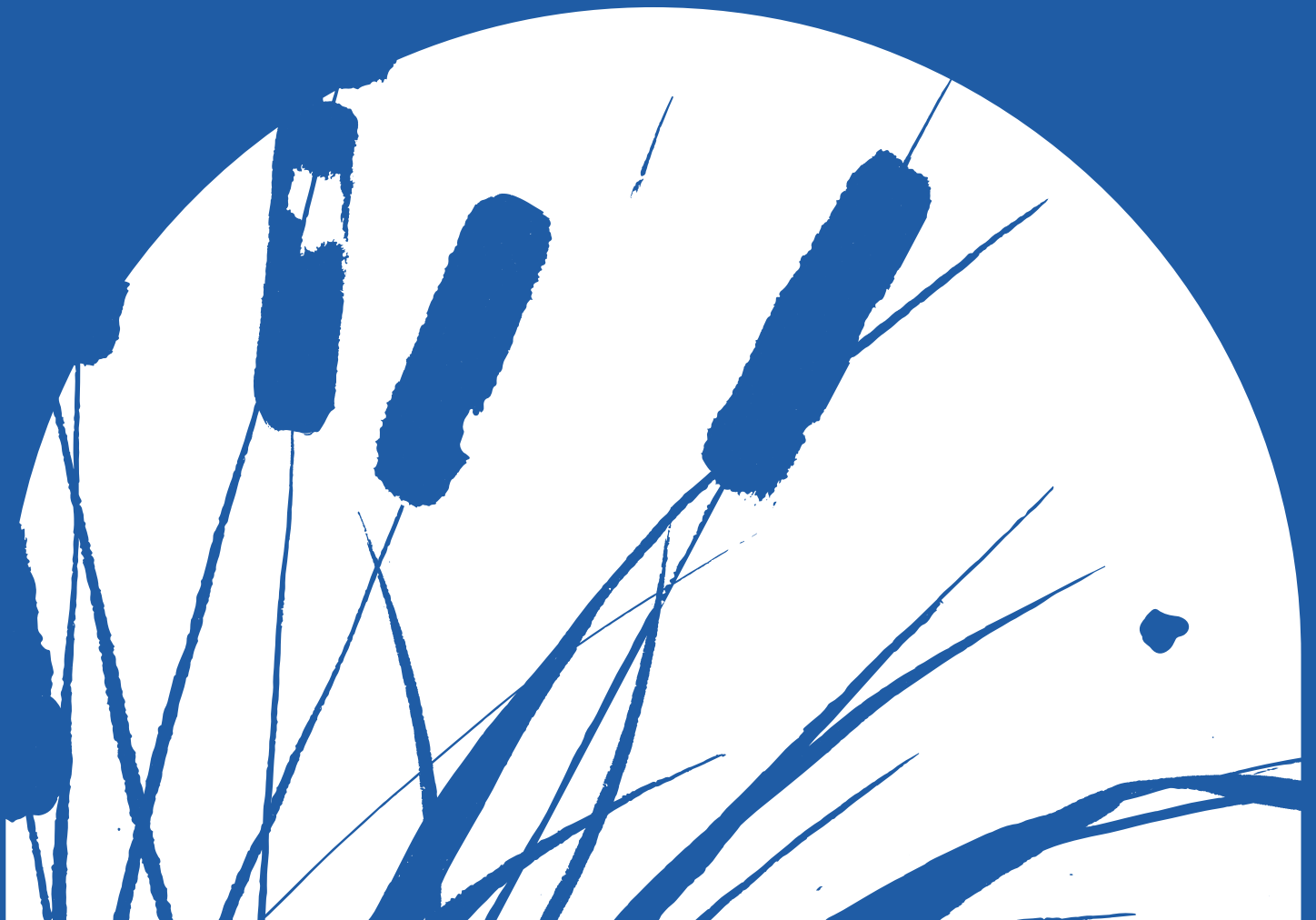


Chippenham Avon Project Masterplan

A plan developed by the
Chippenham Town Centre
Partnership Board



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Introduction

This document is a result of the ongoing One Plan initiative for Chippenham, aimed at creating a masterplan for the town centre. The One Plan consolidates several plans and strategies into deliverable projects, with the enhancement of the river being one of them.

The One Plan is developed by the Chippenham Town Centre Partnership Board, an unincorporated voluntary partnership formed to coordinate the regeneration of Chippenham town centre. The Board's overall strategic purpose is to deliver a step change in the economic vitality and growth of the town, identifying and enabling delivery of key strategic projects. The Board is advisory with a commitment of Board members to work together to shape Chippenham going forward.

The Board consists of the principal civic, community and commercial stakeholders with a shared interest in the economic success and vibrancy of Chippenham town centre. These include:

- Local MP
- Wiltshire Council
- Chippenham Town Council
- Wiltshire College & University Centre
- Chippenham Borough Lands Charity
- Chippenham Chamber of Commerce
- Chippenham Civic Society
- Chippenham Community Hub, Town Team
- Acorn Property Group, Owners of Emery Gate Shopping Centre
- Evolve Estates, Owners of Borough Parade Shopping Centre
- Environment Agency



1 The vision

The Chippenham Avon Project will be a lasting legacy of riverside green space and urban wildlife habitat for the people of Chippenham and its visitors to enjoy well into the future.

It is therefore proposed that a Chippenham “River Green Corridor” should be created that provides better flood mitigation and improves the public realm through the town centre as well as providing a focal point for the town.

The Chippenham Avon Project aims to enrich the river’s ambiance and enhance its overall quality, whilst implementing essential flood risk mitigation measures to safeguard both current and future residents and businesses. This initiative is designed to build resilience against the impacts of climate change. It will also improve walking and cycling links north/south through Chippenham and improve access to and from the town centre.



Explore feasibility and opportunities for a multifunctional performance space in the Island Park area, maintaining ecological assets and encouraging public use for festivals and events



Island Park to be protected, enhanced, and managed as a focal point for public use, events and enjoyment



Temporary uses and kiosk concessions to be facilitated and encouraged



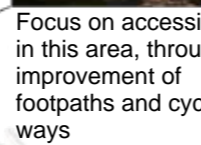
Encouragement of public use and connectivity to new facilities, events, and public open spaces each side of the river



Creation of new food and drink based attraction with outside dining overlooking Island Park



Radial gate removed and replaced with rock cascade, weir and wider footbridge in its place



Focus on accessibility in this area, through improvement of footpaths and cycle ways



River to be enhanced for both ecology and amenity through use of small weirs or similar structures



River Corridor Interface Zone, where new building or alterations to existing will be required to demonstrate how they can meet the objectives of this masterplan

2 Context

The River Avon and its surroundings are one of Chippenham’s greatest amenities, yet they are not fully utilised. There is a need to improve access to the river to unlock its full potential. Chippenham Avon Project forms one of the central pillars of the wider strategy for the regeneration of Chippenham’s town centre, as set out within the Chippenham Site Allocation Plan, the Neighbourhood Plan and now prioritised for delivery in the new One Plan, Town Centre Masterplan.

Chippenham Avon Project will create an improved green infrastructure link through the central area of Chippenham, establishing links to the river from existing parks/green space to the north east at Monkton Park south towards Pewsham. The Environment Agency has identified the need to replace the existing radial sluice gate within Chippenham, which is nearing the end of its life. The risk of it failing to operate is increasing, which could result in a increased flood risk to the town centre.

Chippenham Avon Project supports the aims of existing policy and feeds into the vision for enhancing the River Avon. As a defining and connecting feature in the revitalisation of Chippenham town centre, the project seeks to enhance the function of the river while protecting it as a significant asset ecologically. The corridor should also connect the north and south of the town by cycling and walking routes making the town more resilient to the climate emergency and supporting a modal shift away from the private car for local journeys.

This masterplan is one of the priority projects identified in the One Plan. The Chippenham Town Centre Partnership Board has produced the One Plan for Chippenham, which begins the process of bringing together existing plans and

proposals into a single plan specifically focused on making things happen. The One Plan draws on the Town Council's Neighbourhood Plan as well as work undertaken by the Town Team and other community stakeholders. It takes on board the aspirations of landowners and the town centre business community.

The One Plan has purposely focused on several key projects that would boost the economy and support the vibrancy and sustainability of the town centre. Many of these schemes are focused on features that make Chippenham such a wonderful place to live, work and play. .



3 Planning policy, background and strategic themes

The following summarises the key background, strategic themes and planning policy considerations that relate to the Chippenham Avon Project proposals.

Planning policy context and background

The starting point for making planning decisions is the adopted development plan, which in Wiltshire is the Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS) the Chippenham Sites Allocation Plan and the Neighbourhood Plan together with a number of saved policies from the former North Wiltshire District Local Plan (NWLP). Other material considerations include the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the planning practice guidance.

Core Policy 9 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy is key to the Chippenham Avon Project and sets a policy for the River Avon Corridor being enhanced for leisure and recreation uses in an environmentally sensitive manner, committed to developing an attractive cycle/pedestrian route connecting the town centre with the wider green infrastructure network, while conserving and enhancing its role as a wildlife corridor. This policy support is further developed through the Chippenham Sites Allocation Plan as well as the Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan.

As well as planning policy there is important ecology and there are a number of species that are protected in their own right that need to be considered. The following surveys should be undertaken to inform development of land around the Chippenham Avon Project where proposals have the potential to impact on protected species either during construction or

operation. All proposals should be accompanied by a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) to ensure that construction work considers aspects of environmental protection within the context of compliance with local legislation and minimisation of the impacts on humans and the environment:

- Badgers
- Bats
- Aquatic invertebrates
- Otters
- Beavers
- Reptiles
- Macrophytes
- Water voles (Note licences and receptor sites may be required).

- Breeding birds
- Fish, (specifically Atlantic salmon, Brook lamprey and Bullhead)
- Invasive plant survey

The outcome of such surveys will determine any mitigation and enhancement needed.

This draft masterplan has been developed in consultation with Natural England and Wiltshire Council Ecologist, taking account of the requirements under the Habitat Regulations in order to determine if there maybe any effects alone or in combination on any European nature sites. It identifies both areas to be mitigated and importantly large opportunities for habitat creation and enhancement.



Climate change

The Chippenham Avon Project Masterplan is set in the context of Wiltshire Council's and Chippenham Town Council's declaration of a Climate Emergency. Proposals for the Chippenham Avon Project have been designed to help support modal shift away from the private car, while also providing adaptation measures in response to the expected impacts of climate change through flood mitigation, aligning with the WCS strategic priorities for tackling and adapting to climate change, and para 152 of the NPPF.

Flooding

A flood defence scheme was constructed in the 1960s on the River Avon through Chippenham consisting of extensive re-construction of the river channel through the town centre and construction of the Chippenham Gate (radial gate with side weir and fish pass) to control upstream water levels. The purpose of the gate is to retain water levels during low and medium flows for amenity purposes whilst enabling high flows to pass through the structure, reducing the risk of flooding. The radial gate has however become increasingly unreliable and is nearing the end of its residual life. In

this current asset state, there is a risk that the structure will fail in a closed position.

The flood risk to Chippenham if the gate operates correctly is relatively low. However, if the gate was to fail to open in a flood event then the flood risk would substantially increase, especially at frequent flood events. This is a very real risk as the gate is increasingly needing manual intervention to allow it to function properly. There are also regular issues with the gate not closing fully after a flood event, leading to a drop in upstream water levels. This leads to visual, amenity, biodiversity and safety issues within the upstream river channel. Whilst there is an existing fish pass alongside the gate, this will not enable upstream migration of all fish species. The upstream riverine habitat is also heavily influenced by the artificially retained water levels. The replacement of the radial gate will reduce flood risk to the centre of Chippenham and reduce constraints on future growth and regeneration.

Reach 3 also has a valuable amenity and recreational value to a number of residential properties that have gardens directly onto the river bank. Many have taken advantage of this by constructing jetties to provide boat access/ recreational areas interacting with the water.

Water management

Removal of the radial gate will almost certainly have an impact on water levels throughout the river and it is acknowledged this could have a perceived detrimental impact on the residential amenity of these properties. Works to the radial gate are undertaken by the Environment Agency, and as such it is highlighted that the reduced water levels within the River Avon are not a town planning issue. However, the overarching principle of seeking to enhance Chippenham for all, and safeguard the residential amenity of residents, does fall within the scope of the Masterplan.

This Masterplan requires that, where feasible and viable, engineering solutions are sought which seek to minimise the impacts of reduced water levels.

It is outside the scope of this Masterplan to insist on replacement of the radial gate and its removal is supported in planning policy terms due to the conservation, amenity, ecological benefits and future maintenance responsibilities and costs.

A key driver behind the Chippenham Avon Project is to provide critical improvements to help mitigate flood risk in the town centre and its surroundings. The green river park area plays a key part in the strategy for reducing flood risk. The masterplan sets the framework for delivering essential flood risk management and green infrastructure in accordance with WCS Core Policies 67 (Flood Risk) and 52 (Green Infrastructure), and Section 14 of the NPPF.

Ecology

The area identified within the Chippenham Avon Project

incorporates a number of sensitive ecological species and is a designated Local Wildlife Site. In accordance with WCS Core Policies 50, 68, and 69, and the NPPF, the masterplan has a key objective to ensure that future detailed proposals promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats and ecological networks. This also includes identifying measurable net gains for biodiversity that can contribute to the delivery of the UK Government's 25 Year Environment Plan and the recent Environment Bill.

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal for the River Avon, south west of Town Bridge and land at Monkton Park was prepared to inform the Neighbourhood Plan, and recognised the River Avon as an important green corridor. It also identified the area downstream of Gladstone Road Bridge as an important area for wildlife. However, it notes that obstacles such as the radial gate weir and Town Bridge do currently inhibit movement of wildlife along the corridor. Solutions to improve movement through, under, or over these obstacles could improve the biodiversity of the corridor the management and maintenance of land bordering the river including rerouting or improving the Avon Valley Path to limit the risk from flooding around the area of Gladstone Road Bridge, replacement of fishing platforms, and removal or replacement of the radial gate weir.

The quality of the in-channel habitat of the River Avon through Chippenham is also impacted by the weir, downstream of Town Bridge. The weir is impounding the channel, resulting in deep water, sluggish flows and the interruption of natural process of fish passage



and sediment movement. The impacts of this extend upstream through Monkton Park. As a result of this impoundment, there is limited scope for in-channel habitat improvement works until the impoundment issue, as a result of the radial gate, is dealt with.

Landscape

The site has great potential for intrinsic natural beauty by way of its riverside frontages, and the Chippenham Avon Project seeks to enhance the landscape setting around the rivers through a series of measures. This includes removal of the concrete engineered structure of the radial gate and introduction of a comprehensive strategy for the improvement and enhancement of all areas of open space and green infrastructure, in accordance with WCS Core Policy 51.

Health and wellbeing

Delivery of significant enhancement to the town's green infrastructure links to support health and wellbeing is a key objective for the Chippenham Avon Project seeking to meet

the priorities under Section 8 of the NPPF. The Chippenham Avon Project will enhance and create new safe and accessible public spaces which will enable and support healthy lifestyles through exercise and active travel, and promote social interaction by creating shared spaces for the community and visitors to dwell and enjoy.

The Gladstone Bridge is also used as a graffiti wall and was the subject of a town council project in the past in exchange for not creating graffiti in other parts of town. Young people were allowed access to this site to use. However, the site and footpath that runs under the bridge is prone to flooding even in fairly low rainfall weather events in the late summer and autumn. In winter the footpath is flooded almost 100% of the time.

This creates some health and safety issues as the graffiti wall is often flooded and inaccessible. However, the mud banks, often present are great habitat for invertebrates and birds.

Air quality

In alignment with WCS Core Policy 55 which seeks to mitigate the effects of poor air quality, the Chippenham Avon Project will deliver improvements to pedestrian and cycle infrastructure to promote modal shift away from the private car, while also increasing the amount of carbon absorption and filtration of airborne particulates through additional planting and thereby improving air quality in Chippenham town centre.

Open space

In accordance with WCS Core Policy 52 the project seeks to deliver enhanced green infrastructure and open space in central Chippenham, in particular through improving opportunities to access the riverside environment that benefits both people and the environment. The play areas within the Chippenham Avon Project area could be replaced with improved modernised facilities. Where existing open space is proposed to be re-engineered for flood management purposes the recreation facilities will be retained to ensure there is no unacceptable loss of sports amenity space.

Transport and movement

A strategic objective of the WCS is to ensure that development which has an impact on transport in the town is delivered in accordance with the Strategic Transport Strategy (STS).

Chippenham Avon Project seeks to address these objectives by encouraging and facilitating walking and cycling journeys through improving the environment and infrastructure

of key routes leading to the town centre via the riverside path. In accordance with WCS Core Policies 60 and 61, and Section 9 of the NPPF the development will come forward in a manner which achieves safe and efficient movement of pedestrians, disabled people and cyclists prioritised over the private vehicle.



Heritage

In accordance with WCS Core Policy 58 the Chippenham Avon Project will, where appropriate, take inspiration from Chippenham town centre's strong heritage, ensuring that heritage assets are preserved and enhanced.

The substantial area of the Chippenham Avon Project and the River Corridor Interface Zone integrated zone is situated within a Conservation Area and there are a number of statutorily listed buildings, located within or close to the masterplan area. Both the Chippenham Conservation Area Appraisal (2007) and Chippenham Conservation Area Management Plan SPG (2010) identified a number of features in the vicinity of the River Avon which have a negative contribution on the significance of Chippenham Conservation Area, and outlined suggestions for enhancements and these should also be considered.

With respect to archaeology, detailed planning applications should be supported by an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation and further archaeological mitigation work.

Design

As required by WCS Core Policy 57, development of the Chippenham Avon Project will demonstrate a high standard of design in line with the National Model Design Guide, MHCLG, DLUHC 2021 which will add to the quality of the area in the long term. Landscaping and infrastructure will be sympathetic to local character and history, creating and maintaining a strong sense of place. Where appropriate, this will include high quality and appropriate public art.

4

Objectives and outcomes

- The key objectives for the delivery of the Chippenham Avon Project are:
- removing the hard engineered radial gate and fish passage that is now past its intended life and replace this with a 'softer' flood mitigation scheme within Chippenham town centre to protect town centre businesses and residents into the future and improve biodiversity
- enabling and encouraging growth and regeneration within central Chippenham including creating more active frontages at the Emery Gate shopping centre and 31-33 High Street in line with the draft Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan
- increasing the functional connection of Chippenham to the river
- protecting and enhancing the biodiversity and environment along the river corridor
- reserving and enhancing the special historic environment
- enhancing and maintaining the unique character and identity of the river corridor and the riverfront
- supporting development that is responsive to the river corridor
- contributing to healthy communities through the provision of improved walking and cycling links and recreation and leisure along the river corridor
- promoting sustainable development
- increasing tourism opportunities
- enhancing the riverfront south of Gladstone Bridge as an attractive natural area and consider opportunities to limit flooding and ensure the path is passable for more of the year
- where possible, minimise the impact of reduced water levels on existing residents and businesses.
- delivering design solutions that are appropriate to the character of each reach of the river and the wider character of Chippenham as a rural market town.
- creating areas of public access to the river whilst protecting the ecology
- enabling wildlife to move over, under or through the Town Bridge (High Street), such as a wildlife underpass and/or improved landscaping of banks
- new planting, including many new trees
- increasing understanding and awareness of the local environment and cultural heritage through interpretation boards
- maintaining residential amenity and access to the river from homes
- continuing to better protect up to 100 homes and 110 businesses from an extreme flood event or if the radial gate failed

- creating 250+ jobs and increasing confidence for investment from others in the town centre
- improving the 62 ha of high quality public open space to be enjoyed by all
- increasing opportunities for social connectivity
- increasing outdoor education and training opportunities
- enhancing green infrastructure which will improve amenity and wellbeing for visitors and local residents
- improving wildlife migration through the River Avon
- improving public physical and mental health outcomes resulting in increased productivity
- increasing opportunities for volunteer groups to become more involved in their local environment
- reducing risk of disruption from flooding to transport infrastructure
- improving climate change resilience
- creating new food and beverage night-time hub around Island Park
- improving the ecological condition of the River Avon watercourses
- removing visually obtrusive structures
- increasing awareness of the river and encouraging more public 'ownership' of these valuable assets
- improving cycling and pedestrian routes and segregating wherever possible
- encouraging modal shift away from the private car in favour of walking and cycling, thus reducing carbon emissions and improving air quality.



Climate change resilience improved

Enhancing the town centre through measures such as new planting, paving, public art and signage

Improving Upper Market Place for pedestrians

Reducing the dominance of cars in Upper Market Place

Potential regeneration opportunity at Bath Road car park/Bridge centre

Reducing the dominance of cars in the town centre

Encourage modal shift away from the private car in favour of walking and cycling, thus reducing carbon emissions and improving air quality

Greater recognition of the historic heritage of the Upper Market Place

250+ jobs created and increased confidence for investment from others in town centre

New food and beverage night-time hub around Island Park



Increased opportunities for volunteer groups to become more involved in their local environment



Outdoor education and training opportunities

Improvements to 62 ha of high quality public open space/public realm to be enjoyed by all



Improved cycling and pedestrian routes, to be segregated wherever possible



Increased opportunities for social connectivity

Enhanced green infrastructure will improve amenity and wellbeing for visitors and local residents



Improved public physical and mental health outcomes resulting in increased productivity



Fish migration through the River Avon will be improved

The ecological condition of the River Avon and surrounding areas will be improved

Increased awareness of the rivers encouraging more public 'ownership' of these valuable assets

Reduced risk of disruption from flooding to transport infrastructure

Up to 100 homes and 110 businesses would be better protected against flooding

Removal of visually obtrusive structure

As part of the One Plan for Chippenham the Chippenham Avon Project will contribute to delivering these outcomes.

5

The Chippenham Avon Project Masterplan

Reaches one to five

The river corridor extends from the west of the town centre and meanders along to the north east. For the purposes of Master Planning, the river has been divided into 5 distinct reaches.

The key focus of the river corridor redevelopment is to ensure the entire area around the river is fully accessible, allowing all residents and visitors to have better connections with the river, in conjunction with ecological enhancements and opportunities.

Many existing platforms and access steps are in poor condition. During the lowering trial in October 2023, a fishing platform on the bank of reach 3 was exposed. The front margin highlighted the reduced accessibility, which the masterplan aims to address.

During normal flow conditions, improvements to access will allow people to access the riverside areas safely, increasing use and enjoyment of the riverside area, contributing to wider town vitality and prosperity.



The Chippenham Avon Project Masterplan sets out design principles and specific requirements for each of the phased areas shown on the map below.



6 General development principles

All new development proposals either within the Chippenham Avon Project or within the River Corridor Interface Zone as designated on the masterplan will need to demonstrate how they meet the following planning requirements. Failure to do so to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority may lead to the refusal of planning permission.

CAP1: Biodiversity

All new development in the Chippenham Avon Project should preserve and enhance biodiversity by:

- undertaking river corridor improvements in line with section 7 of the masterplan, where appropriate
 - providing landscaping and planting corridors that are appropriate to the riverine environment
 - establishing areas of undisturbed habitat for a range of species
 - demonstrating that any development has been designed to minimise and effectively mitigate avoid any temporary or permanent increase in artificial light levels near the river. demonstrating that any development has been designed to avoid any temporary or permanent increase in artificial light levels near the river
 - seeking opportunities to enhance local wildlife or geodiversity sites and improve their connectivity where possible. Consider priority habitats such as SSSIs and other protected species
- managing and seeking to eradicate invasive species such as Japanese knotweed, Himalayan balsam, Canadian Waterweed and Giant hogweed and coordination with planned upstream works.
 - employing bio-security measures and procedures to reduce the risk of introducing or spreading invasive non-native species (and other harmful organisms such as diseases) in the wild
 - taking into account the Guiding Principles in the the Bristol Avon Catchment Plan and Bristol Avon Fish Recovery Plan through working with the appropriate bodies
 - providing ongoing maintenance
 - supporting all applications by a Construction Environmental Management Plan that takes account of mitigation measures identified in section 10 of this masterplan that looks specifically at the use of the Chippenham Avon Project by the public and whether the area is being used as expected. This evidence should be used to inform the future design of phases with respect to any increased recreational and associated pressures such as littering



- carrying out a specific all necessary ecological surveys before any works commence to detect the presence of roost, foraging and commuting sites. The results of this survey will inform any works

CAP2: River improvements

- In addition to meeting the requirements of Core Policy 52 (Green Infrastructure), any development within the river channel will seek opportunities to naturalise the river system, remove hard engineering/structures and provide ecological improvements in order to restore the habitat and ecology of the River Avon watercourse and its margins, wherever possible. This may involve a range of measures, including:
 - de-culverting and removing concrete channels
 - any large-scale bank regrading around the Monkton Park area will need to coincide with

- retention of trees is essential, where trees must be removed to facilitate development, replacement of trees, at a ratio of 5 new trees for every 1 lost, of a species and size appropriate to the locality, will be required.

lowering some areas of Monkton Meadow, in order to reduce the gradient of the bank of the currently incised channel, improve vegetation growth and biodiversity and to provide fish with refuge from high flows.

- removing hard engineering including radial gate and associated structures
- re-grading the river banks
- enhancement within the river channel
- planting and creating wildlife habitat
- increasing public engagement with the water.

CAP3: Flood risk and water management

Development of the Chippenham Avon Project will:

- integrate flood risk mitigation measures into site layout and design, including the consideration of impacts elsewhere in the catchment



- be informed by Wiltshire Council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) and follow a sequential approach taking into account all
- incorporate Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) and sustainable drainage principles, taking account of the 'four pillars' of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) -
 - water quantity, water quality, biodiversity and amenity
- with regards to the control of surface water runoff achieve betterment over pre-development runoff. Post development runoff shall include an appropriate allowance for climate change in line with Environment Agency guidance
- positively impact on existing surface water drainage routes, both underground and overland. Development shall not increase surface water or groundwater flood risk. Any existing surface water or groundwater flooding should be intercepted by the new drainage system. Hydraulic modelling evidence may be required to confirm this
- manage water demand (for example irrigation of planting areas) where consideration should be made of how these can be met in an efficient and sustainable way such as the potential for storage during times of less water stress.

CAP4: Integrated development

For all new development within the Chippenham Avon Project and the River Corridor Interface Zone Chippenham Avon Project Interface Zone, an integrated approach to new development will be required where land and river uses are considered together.

New development proposals will be expected to demonstrate how they make a positive contribution to the aims of the Chippenham Avon Project Masterplan through, where relevant, providing some of the following outcomes:

- Creating active frontages to the river and open spaces, where feasible.
- Improving the setting of the Chippenham Avon Project through well-designed landscaping.
- Where a development will directly benefit from new areas of publicly funded public realm, then a reasonable financial contribution to that project will be sought.
- Avoiding impacts to and taking opportunities to enhance biodiversity such as through the inclusion of swift nest bricks and bat bricks.
- Taking opportunity to improve water quality.
- Contributing to the reduction of flood risk.
- Taking opportunities to showcase the area's historic significance.
- Facilitating housing and economic growth adding vibrancy to the area.
- Contributing to the planting of new trees and creation of new shaded spaces.

- Considering surfacing materials and lighting so as to have a minimal effect on the River Avon and other protected species.
- Considering other indirect effects that a change in land use may have on the River Avon and other protected species.
- Where feasible, work in partnership with the Partnership Board to help design and implement plans for public realm and landscape enhancement.
- Any proposals for new housing / economic growth / food hub around Town Centre / Island Park will need to consider the sequential / exception test once the scheme is complete and the floodplain has been re-modelled.
- Development within the River Corridor Interface Zone will be expected to utilise more permeable surfaces and install Sustainable Drainage Systems.



CAP5: Access

Development of the Chippenham Avon Project should seek to improve visual and physical public access in certain areas to and along the river through:

- providing direct, safe and clear access for pedestrians and cycles travelling through Chippenham and the Green River Corridor
- providing segregated pedestrian and cycle routes when practicable
- providing a joined-up approach to river access, considering access and uses up and down stream, as well as across the river channel
- promoting uses and activities along riverside routes to help provide safe public

spaces including interpretation boards to highlight key ecology and biodiversity aspects of the river

- where access is provided to the river such as through fishing platforms, ensuring they are DDA compliant and thereby provide access for all
- balancing ecological protection and public access and carefully considering where access may be restricted for ecological gains
- as far as possible using creative solutions to safeguard the amenity enjoyed by existing residents and businesses through
- mitigating impacts of changes in water level.

CAP6: Public realm

All new development within the Chippenham Avon Project should treat the river as a key element in developing a sense of place and high-quality public realm. Development will be supported that:

- is based on design which is appropriate to the immediate context and also reflective of Chippenham's character as an historic rural market town
- provides high quality and appropriate boundary treatment along the river, creating an attractive and robust embankment
- creates a flexible entertainment, festival and events space on Island Park to include performance space and seating

- creates food and drinks terracing with outside seating overlooking Island Park
- provides high quality and appropriate public art, artistic features and wildlife/ecological/historical interpretation
- protects and enhances the conservation area
- provides imaginative screening solutions to obscure visually unattractive areas which would otherwise detract from the setting of the Chippenham Avon Project
- provides boundary treatments proposed as part of specific schemes that are tailored to reflect the river corridor environment, ranging from urbanised to naturalised.

CAP7: Public protection and amenity

In order to address poor air quality in the town, development proposals will need to demonstrate its contribution to a reduction in NO2 throughout project implementation and once completed.

A Construction and Environmental Management Plan that will be required to

manage construction activity in and around the river in support of any planning applications.

Noise impacts should be considered and mitigated in respect of any proposed construction phases and potentially operational phases where receptors are brought closer to potential noise sources that may affect amenity.

CAP8: Management and maintenance

Applicants should submit to the council a management, maintenance and monitoring plan, outlining how the river environment, including channel, banks and any associated landscaping will be maintained in perpetuity.

Community involvement in the ongoing management, maintenance and monitoring should be encouraged where practicable and addressed in the submitted management and maintenance plan. Specifically, the plan will need to cover the following:

- How ongoing management and maintenance arrangements have been considered, addressed and funded.

- How the proposals have been designed to ensure that required maintenance within and around the river channel will be kept to a minimum.
- How appropriate bio-security measures and procedures have been considered to reduce the risk of introducing or spreading invasive non-native species and other harmful organisms into the river system.

The council will consider the use of conditions and/or legal agreements to ensure that ongoing maintenance and management is adequately addressed through the lifetime of the development.

7

Area-based development principles

As shown on the masterplan map the Chippenham Avon Project will be delivered in areas. The early phases will deliver changes to the river channel infrastructure and can be brought forward sooner as funding streams are likely to be more accessible compared to other phases, as other phases will rely on the identification of additional funding sources.

The following section sets out the area-based development principles that will inform the delivery of the Chippenham Avon Project.

These are indicative, and the schemes that are delivered may vary due to the on-site conditions and available funding. However, these place specific development principles provide a benchmark against which alternative proposals will be evaluated. If they fail to deliver the environmental and community benefits identified, then they may be refused.

The ideas within the following sections are from the community themselves and have been drawn from existing policies in the Neighbourhood Plan, feedback from the One Plan and also dedicated consultation on a draft version of this Master Plan including workshops and discussions with local representatives.



Reach one

Reach one extends directly north towards the town centre adjacent to the Millennium Wall and the ARC climbing centre. The aim along this reach is to make better use of the footpaths throughout this area, providing improved connectivity to this part of Chippenham and the climbing centre.

The masterplan aims to introduce permeable routes through the area with a network of trails to improve access throughout the riverside and encourage outdoor activity.

Features such as raised boardwalks, criss-crossing a naturalised wetland space, are proposed. This would allow public access at times of high river flows in the downstream Avon Valley Walk area.

Acknowledging potential broader development in this identified reach, the area to the east side of this section of the river may be suitable for further development in the future. As such, the masterplan aims to create a permeable space that will facilitate access from this area through to the town centre.

The Millennium Wall also provides an opportunity for enhancement of both the commemorative structure and the area around it. As this is adjacent to existing cycle routes, suitable improvements would aid in encouraging movement and footfall throughout this area and towards the town centre.



Reach two

Gladstone Bridge to Town Bridge

Reach two extends between Gladstone Road and the High Street Bridge. This stretch of the river features the radial gate and weir, both of which are of significant importance for the broader enhancement of the River Avon in Chippenham.

Works undertaken alongside the Environment Agency have identified the need for this river infrastructure to be replaced or removed with immediate effect. The radial gate currently maintains an artificially raised water level. To ensure removal has no negative impact on the watercourse or ecological assets in this area, works will include mitigation measures, preventing detrimental impacts on the broader environment.

Further options are also to be considered, including features such as exposed river walls along the riverbank upstream of the radial gate, lowered walkways, modules fitted to river walls seeded with target species, and retrofitting of timber fenders and ledges to trap sediment and seeds. There are a series of potential measures which can be implemented depending on suitability of the site and provision of the appropriate locations, blue and green infrastructure, and viability against the broader aims of the masterplan.

A trial was undertaken to lower the water level to where it would typically reside compared to the artificially high water levels currently in place. Staining in the images included reflects the drop in water level during the lowering trial, with vegetation establishing naturally on the existing wall in cracks within the brickwork.

The replacement of the existing pedestrian bridge proposed along this reach will provide improved connectivity to the town centre and to other foot and cycle paths, bus and train networks leading directly in and out of the central area of the town and main retail areas.

In this reach, there may also be future redevelopment opportunities of buildings adjacent to the river which would contribute to wider enhancements of the river corridor. Buildings along the High Street, close to the Bath Road/High Street Bridge, afront the river and therefore could be improved to make better use of the river corridor and integrate the river with the town centre which is currently underutilised. Addressing the permeability, access, and visual appeal of the buildings adjacent to the river would support the broader outcomes and aims for Chippenham town centre, improving the appeal of the area and river frontage.



Reach three

South of the Olympiad Leisure Centre and Island Park incorporating an area of retail uses to the south of Island Park

Reach three occupies the main section of the river from the High Street through Monkton Park along the rear of the town centre area. In this area, the aims of the redevelopment are to provide better access to the river and use of the park area and Island Park, creating more of a destination for tourism, visitors and residents.

There have been substantial opportunities identified throughout the river corridor that would support increased use of the area. The redevelopment is looking for opportunities to provide better access to the river, and in conjunction with this, improved and increased seating provision is sought to encourage people to enjoy and reconnect with the river which is an underused asset in its current state.

Consultation feedback has advocated for less 'urban' terraced seating areas, and as such sympathetic and aesthetically appropriate solutions should be considered in future planning applications. Additional paved areas on Monkton Park or Island Park will be avoided, unless first agreed by the Town Council. The former Lido may be considered for potential reinstatement, however this is a more long-term consideration as it has been covered over for many years. In line with the other recreational opportunities in this area, restoration of the former Lido would contribute to creating a destination for activities, visitors and general utilisation of the river as an asset.

The proposed development throughout the river park area will take full advantage of the opportunities present, increasing active travel routes, accommodating improved play provision, facilitating appealing seating areas and increased planting and greening of the park.

There is the potential for an improved riverside meeting and feature area downstream from the Town/High Street Bridge. This would encourage improved use of the area, advocating for the enjoyment of the park for socialising, connectivity, and supporting interactions within the community. Again the character of this area should be designed taking account of the setting within a conservation area of this historic rural market town .

Broader redevelopment within Chippenham town centre would also have a significant impact on this reach of the river. The Emery Gate Shopping Centre provides an opportunity to create a more active river frontage which currently prevents connectivity between the High Street area and the river corridor. Redevelopment of this site, and other opportunities such as the former Wilkinsons unit, Tesco unit and Emery Gate car park, could facilitate a significant improvement in the links between the town centre and the river, encouraging a more river facing shopping experience with terraced seating, food and beverage offerings, and an improved public realm by which the river becomes a focal point.

As mentioned in the strategic issues in this Master Plan (page 7) there is potential for alteration in water levels to detrimentally affect the amenity currently enjoyed by existing residents and businesses and therefore where feasible and viable, engineering solutions should be sought which seek to minimise such impacts through such measures as remodelling of riverbed, sculpting of banks and replacement jetties.



Examples of boardwalks to encourage enjoyment and interaction with the river and working with local clubs to improve recreational activity, access and enjoyment.

Reach four and five

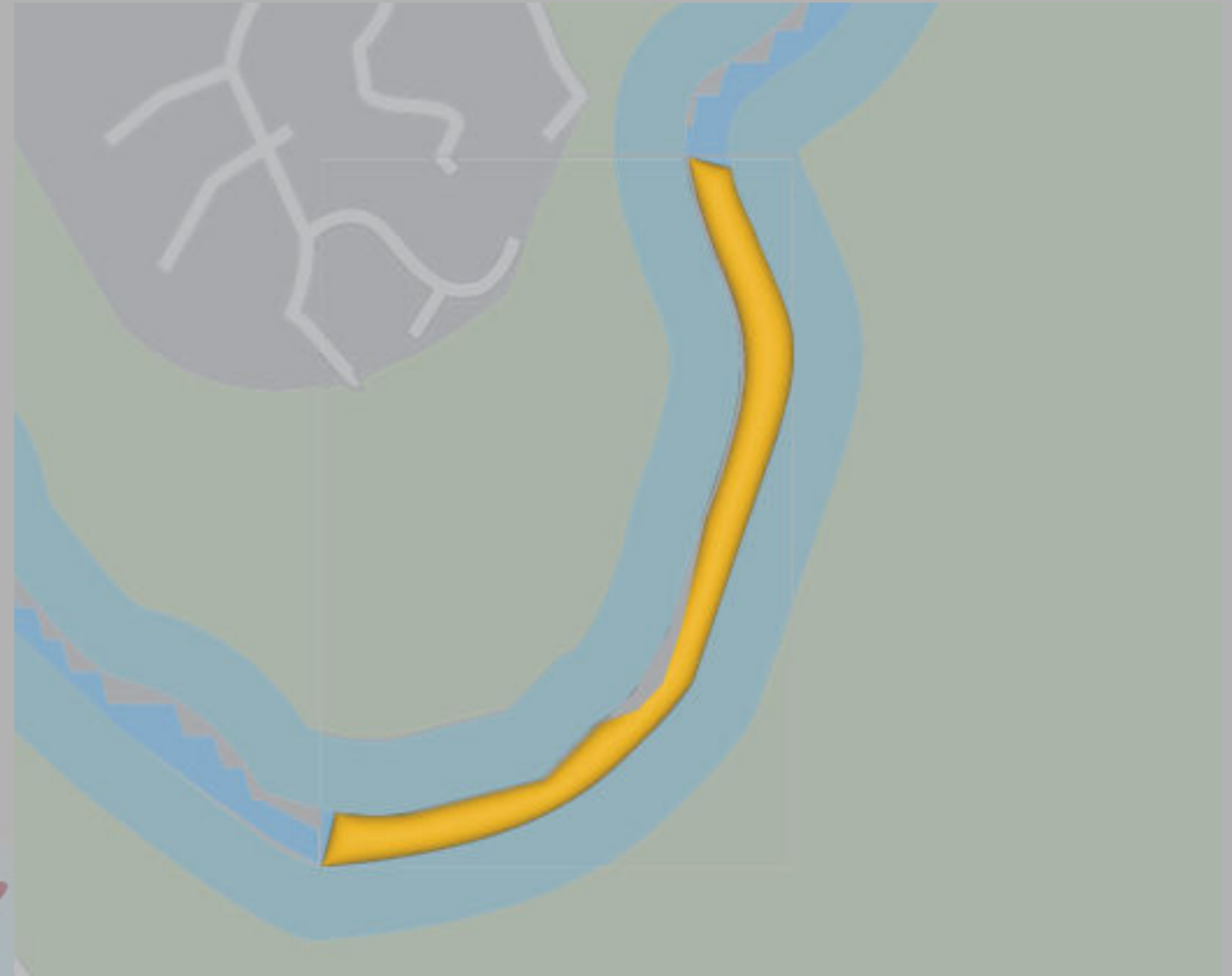
Reaches four and five extend from the central areas in Monkton Park, up to the north-east. Works to this area of the river will need to integrate with the Neighbourhood Plan and Chippenham Town Council's proposals for Monkton Meadow. The renaturalisation of the river will provide additional opportunities along these reaches for planting, to create an ecological buffer zone between the river and agricultural land.

There is an opportunity to create a new Public Right of Way (PRoW) on the eastern bank of the river, improving the access and footfall along this section of the river. Expanding the pedestrian routes will integrate the sailing and canoe club and also improve access to this part of the river corridor which appears more restricted and disconnected at present. This will provide additional opportunities for planting along the PRoW to integrate the new pathways within the green setting.

Discussions have taken place for the potential creation of a watersports centre adjacent to reach five. Supporting and providing opportunities for recreational activities would encourage visitors and residents to use the river, also contributing to the maintenance and conservation of the river.

From previous research, recreational uses of the river were identified as one of the most common responses to what people would like to see as part of the River Park area redevelopment. Supporting recreational opportunities provides ecological and economic prosperity for the area and can be supported by improved access and connectivity to the town centre.

Consistently throughout the reaches, the development aims to improve connectivity and access. At this section there is the opportunity to connect new pathways for pedestrians and cyclists to the existing cycle route along the former railway line.



Use of boardwalks will promote the managed enjoyment of the natural environment and a new pontoon will be considered to allow greater recreational use of the water.

8

Delivery and funding

Funding opportunities to deliver the long-term phases of the Chippenham Avon Project are expected to come from a range of sources, to be investigated by the Partnership. The private sector will be expected to play its part when development falls within the River Corridor Interface Zone Chippenham Avon Project Interface Zone.

The project area covers a considerable amount of land within the town centre, and there are a number of land owners who are/will need to be engaged in the delivery of the project. A predominant part of the land is owned either by Wiltshire Council or Chippenham Town Council or Chippenham Borough Lands Charity, all of whom are closely involved in the project. Later phases of the project may potentially require negotiations with third party landowners to progress.

9

Community involvement

While the maintenance of the watercourses remains the responsibility of the landowners, there may be an opportunity for a voluntary community role. Sections of the masterplan area could be allocated to community groups with an interest in wildlife, recreational, sustainability, cycling, walking, arts and educational projects.

Under this model, the responsible bodies would support volunteer organisations to assume the maintenance of sections of the new green space subject to appropriate checks that may include provision of an appropriate scheme of works/business plan; and confirmation of the necessary public liability insurance cover and risk assessments.

10

Habitat Regulations Assessment

A HRA screening should be undertaken on this plan and subsequent Appropriate Assessment should be undertaken if necessary on the final masterplan.

If screened in for each phase a more detailed HRA screening should be undertaken in consultation with Natural England when specific details of the scale and nature of the works alone and in-combination are known in more detail.



11

Status and role of this masterplan

This masterplan is a framework to guide the phased development of the Chippenham Avon Project. It has been endorsed by Wiltshire Council Cabinet so it carries significant weight as a material consideration in the determination of any future planning applications affecting land within the masterplan area, and there will be a presumption in favour of development that accords with the requirements of this masterplan.



Information about the Chippenham Avon Project can be made available on request in other languages including BSL and formats such as large print and audio. Please contact Wiltshire Council on 0300 456 0100 or by email on customerservices@wiltshire.gov.uk.