



**NEWPORT**  
CITY COUNCIL  
CYNGOR DINAS  
**CASNEWYDD**



# Newport 60 Big Ideas





## Foreword

# A New(port)

**What if we could wave a magic wand over the city?**

**What if the people of Newport could express their dreams for the city?**

**What if this city got to explore how to create the developments it deserves?**

**What if this city could turn into a haven of opportunity?**

This book is a compilation of **60 transformative ideas** for Newport city centre, gathered from residents, traders, workers, business owners, city officials, and visitors.

## Big ideas, bigger moves

These ideas are just the beginning

By sharing these ideas, we aim to showcase the creativity and ambition of the city. We will also test the popularity and discuss the feasibility of your favourite ideas to see which ones can be delivered.

Our goal? To see a portion of these ideas come to life as council-owned initiatives included in Newport's 10-year Placemaking plan, while others are progressed by the community, business owners, public sector and investors.

The Placemaking Plan for Newport city centre is a shared responsibility for all those who want to create a thriving city centre.





## Idea 1

# Bring music to the streets of Newport

Newport's music scene is well documented. But why is it confined to music venues?

Let's bring it to the streets. This will increase vibrancy, colour, excitement and activity to the street.

This project would see the introduction of 4x dedicated busking spots or 'stages' in the city centre which would have sufficient space, lighting and power connections. These could be bookable online or via an app.



Idea 2

# Calm room

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1 in 7 people (more than 15% of people in the UK) are neurodivergent, and many don't feel safe or comfortable in town and city centres.

To help combat this, a collection of calm rooms across the city centre. These rooms are available if anyone is experiencing a panic attack, heightened

anxiety, feeling overwhelmed or need a place to stim safely without judgement.

These rooms would be in safe, accessible places – just like breastfeeding rooms, prayer rooms and accessible toilets.





Idea 3

# Newport quiet way

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A 'quiet' pathway from the train station to the city centre.

Designed with neurodivergence at its heart, this route will consider noise, vibrations, colours, textures and places to rest.





#### Idea 4

# Newport's night-time network

Friars Walk is a popular shopping and restaurant destination. And Cambrian Road, High Street and the Market are popular later in the evening for nightlife.

But the walk between them along Upper Dock Street and Skinner Street needs improvement.

A scheme of public realm upgrades would make this an enjoyable, easy and safe route – linking these places together.





Idea 5

# Reinstate the Great Central Hall

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Returning this once thriving — 2,000 people capacity venue - to its former glory.

Built in 1904, the hall fell into decline in the 1960s and has remained vacant ever since with little movement around redeveloping it, despite recent studies into its future.

The Great Central Hall has great potential to be used as a cultural and performing arts space, encouraging more creativity in Newport.





#### Idea 6

# Rehoming Ballet Cymru

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A new city centre home for Ballet Cymru.

Ballet Cymru is an international touring ballet company for Wales, committed to inclusion and innovation in dance and classical ballet. The company is currently based in an industrial unit in Rogerstone.

With a new home in Newport city centre, Ballet Cymru could extend its Access and outreach programme and break down even more barriers to accessing the arts.





## Idea 7

# A series of water features

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The river is an intrinsic part of Newport's identity. Introducing water into the urban environment softens the existing hard landscape of the city centre and connects Newportonians to nature.

This could be a part of a wider scheme that feeds into the River Usk through a series a water feature networks throughout the city.





Idea 8

# Funny blue plaques

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Ever wondered about the people who lived in Newport before you?

Blue plaques can be a great way to learn more about the rich, cultural, and sometimes funny history of Newport.





## Idea 9

# Establishing a Youth Hub

A welcoming and safe place for young people to go meet friends, socialise, learn and grow.

It will be available to them all year round, providing support and resources to become successful and independent young individuals.





Idea 10

# The return of the Westgate Hotel

An icon of the city that witnesses major scenes of Newport Rising which changed the course of British democracy.

Refurbish the historic Westgate Hotel and open its doors to celebrate Newport and its story with its residents and visitors.





Idea 11

# Reimagining Newport's Commercial Street

Create a vibrant Commercial Street through the use of different coloured shop fronts that clearly displays its goods without looking cluttered by posters and large signages.





## Idea 12

# Free parking for events

A great incentive to attract more people to visit Newport city centre, primarily during events.

Car parks and their income are beneficial to the community and bring in much needed funds.

However, free parking for events such as the food festival or the Big Splash could motivate more people to visit the city centre.





Idea 13

# More places to live in the city centre

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Big homes. Small homes. Apartments and terraces. Provide homes to families, young professionals, students and those in need. And with more people

living in the city centre, this would bring greater vibrancy and vitality to the area.





Idea 14

# New city park

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The city centre has too many vacant shops and is too linear for modern retail needs.

The idea is to demolish a sizeable collection of unwanted buildings and create a new large scale green space for the city.

A place to relax, play, connect to nature and breath.  
A calm oasis in the urban jungle.





#### Idea 15

# Bring Civil Service Jobs into the city centre

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Relocate the Passport Office and the Office of National Statistics (ONS), preferably to existing empty spaces.

Relocating the Passport Office will encourage visitors picking up their passport to spend more time in the city centre and increase opportunities for civil service jobs.

The ONS Duffryn office acts as a base for nearly 2,300 employees. By relocating their office to Newport city centre, employees would make use of all the local amenities throughout the day. This could also allow nearby businesses and the semi-conductor cluster room to grow.





Idea 16

# Introduce more social spaces

Churches, cafes, bars, clubs, libraries, gyms, bookstores.

In Newport, The Place, RE:MAKE Newport and The Hive provide essential services, and more of these are wanted by the community.





Idea 17

# Citizens Assembly

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'Citizens' Assembly' is a group of people who learn about and discuss an issue or issues and reach conclusions about what they think should happen.

Governments and parliaments around the world are increasingly using Citizens' Assemblies in their work.

The assemblies enable decision-makers to understand people's informed and considered preferences on issues that are complex, controversial, moral or constitutional.

Newport should have a Citizens Assembly





Idea 18

# Helping the homeless

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While much is already done with the homeless community in Newport, there is an appetite for more to be done.

There is a need for emergency accommodation people who are experiencing homelessness, whilst long term solutions are being sought. Homeless hostels and night shelters can fill the gap in providing

safety and refuge for those who do not have the option of temporary or permanent accommodation and continue to struggle with their cycle of homelessness.

Other initiatives like freshly cooked breakfasts, advice and training could also be considered at these locations.





Idea 19

# Al fresco Newport

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More opportunities for outside drinking and eating.

Either scattered across the city, or perhaps focused on one pedestrianised street, this style of hospitality can bring vibrancy to the city scape.





Idea 20

# Redevelop TJ's

TJ's was voted one of the top 50 'Big Nights Out' in the world. Its absence has left a hole in the Newport music scene.

Bring back the venue? Convert the building into apartments or student housing? Whatever the venue's future could be, let's make sure this legendary space doesn't sit unused.





Idea 21

# People powered streets

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We've all had an e-bike whizz past us. It can be frightening. Especially if you are a child, neurodiverse or have mobility issues.

Introduce people powered streets and ban e-bikes and e-scooters from using them.

Walking, scooters, wheelchairs (you can be electric) or push bike.





Idea 22

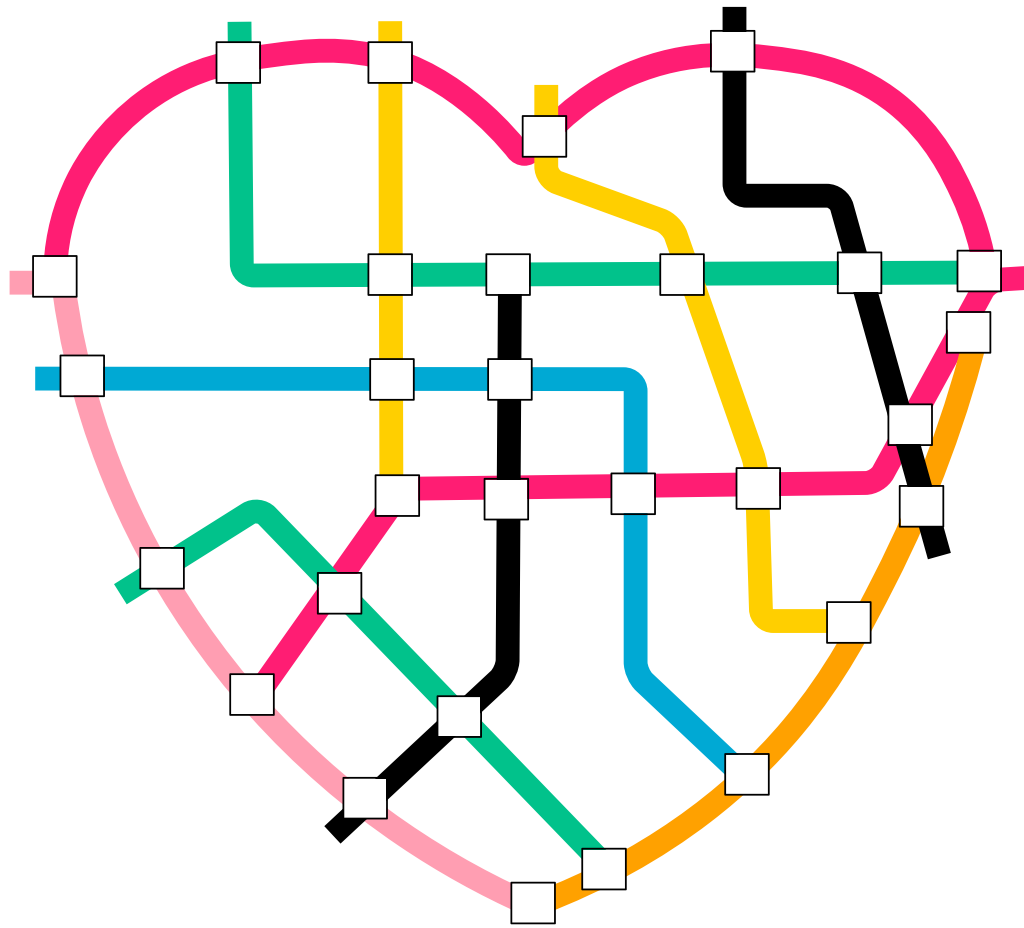
# Redevelop the 'Cabbage Patch'

This idea has long been mooted, but nothing has happened to date.

Redevelop the derelict area to the north of the stadium known as the 'cabbage patch'.

This could be a leisure complex, housing, hospitality, or event space - all with community access.





Idea 23

# Walking route 'tube' map

A colourful, curated map, corresponding street signage and vibrant floor painting linking key routes in Newport together to make an easily walkable

city, depending on what you're in the city for (e.g. A sporting day out, linking train station – Newport Market – Friars Walk– Rodney Parade).





Idea 24

# Evening cafes

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For non-drinkers and those who want to relax in a cozy environment after work.

Evening cafes provide a calm atmosphere to catch up and chill after a long day.





Idea 25

# The Medieval Ship

The Newport medieval ship was discovered in the banks of the River Usk in June 2002 during construction of the Riverfront Theatre. The ship was excavated by a team of archaeologists and lifted from the ground timber by timber. The ship is an extremely rare and a very important find.

The ship currently calls its home the 'Queensway Meadows Industrial Estate'. But it could be a

fantastic tourist attraction if it was located in a new purpose-built museum in the city centre or next to the Transporter bridge.

Examples of where this has worked in other cities include the Cutty Sark in London and the Mary Rose in Portsmouth.





Idea 26

# Newport Beach

Newport Now BID brought an urban beach into John Frost Square in August 2024. Let's do it again and this time make it permanent!

There should also be a water feature to paddle in next to it, that would unquestionably be a huge draw for young children and families.





Idea 27

# Playground

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There are limited spaces for children to play safely in the city centre.

We should create a new playground – a proper one with slides, swings and a zipline right in the middle of the city. Playgrounds should be for everyone, little kids and big kids alike.

A central playground in the middle of Newport can help to foster interactions between the younger and older generations, as well as provide fun and welcome respite for residents, shoppers and visitors too.





Idea 28

# Boating on the Usk

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The river Usk is a key feature of Newport, so let's bring the River Usk to life and utilise its position in our city centre.

This could be to build a barrage and turn a section of the River Usk into a floating harbour, or to introduce

a river taxi, so the river becomes a key public transport facility providing access to all areas of Newport and beyond.

This development will encourage sailors, residents and visitors alike to explore more of the River Usk.





Idea 29

# Using the river for renewable energy

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Tides and water heat pumps are a great way to generate renewable energy which can be used to power up Newport city centre. It can also provide a reliable source of electricity for Newport residents.





Idea 30

# Replacing Debenhams

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More jobs, more shoppers, more opportunities.

Fill this large empty store with another high-profile retailer and bring this corner of the city centre back

to life. Whether this is relocating an existing retail outlet here, or welcoming a new one, there is huge potential for this site.





Idea 31

# Cinema

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Newport city centre should have a big screen cinema (we love Riverfront, and you Cosy Cinema, but we also need a big sister).

Cineworld in Friars Walk closed in March 2020 due to the pandemic and has never re-opened, with the only other offering out in Spytt.

A city should have a cinema. And we want one in the city centre.





Idea 32

# Relocate the Council

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The Civic Centre is a beautiful building, but it is no longer fit for purpose and is expensive to maintain.

Move the Council to the empty Admiral House and / or the empty former Royal Mail sorting office and then sell off the Civic Centre to a housing developer.

Use the money raised for the sale of the building to fund other Placemaking Plan projects.





Idea 33

# Guerilla gardening

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Let's make Newport the guerrilla gardening capital of Wales.

Guerrilla gardening is the act of growing food or flowers in neglected public or private spaces. While there are laws regarding trespassing and damaging property, there are no laws pertaining specifically to

guerrilla gardening and, as long as it is being done in a public space, generally it comes down to what individual councils will permit.

This initiative will make public spaces more vibrant, improve biodiversity and build a community of 'guerrilla gardeners'.





Idea 34

# Bring Newport's history to life

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There is an acknowledgment that Newport should reclaim its history and 'tell its story'.

There are pockets of spaces which offer residents and visitors a space to learn about the rich backstory

of the city's culture and heritage. But we should bring and celebrate Newport's art, history and heritage to the street.

This could be done via a series of plaques, signs, QR codes and virtual reality.





Idea 35

# City centre education

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We love students (especially the creative ones!)

Bring education facilities back into the city centre for students of all ages.

This will encourage people to use the city centre, bringing back the vibrancy that pupils, their parents and students add to a place.





Idea 36

# Newport Museum and Library

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This one needs very little explaining - open Newport Library and Museum on Mondays!





Idea 37

# Pedestrianised Bridge Street

Walking from the train station to the middle of town isn't easy or obvious... Do you go down Queensway and Cambrian? Or get lost behind Travelodge?

What if Bridge Street was pedestrianised, with a nice new entrance through the repurposed small NCP car

park (imagine this as a new little parklet instead of a car park) and signage with a clear route to the centre?

A safe and traffic free way into town.





Idea 38

# Vertical farming in Newport

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There have been some high-profile news headlines recently of vacant buildings being used illegally as vertical farms for illegal substances. Clearly, we don't condone this.

But, is there a case for tuning some vacant buildings into vertical farms to grow food?

Vertical farming is the increasingly popular practice of growing crops in vertically and horizontally stacked layers. It is a growing trend in urban areas.

Let's start doing it in Newport!





Idea 39

# Plant more trees

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Trees are essential for people, wildlife and the environment.

We should, quite simply, plant more trees in the city centre.





Idea 40

# Happy hoardings

Wrap vacant premises with colourful local art and meaningful messaging.

This addition will make empty spaces more welcoming, friendly and attractive.





Idea 41

# Street lighting

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We should have more lights on key city centre streets. Strip lights, festoon lights, and lamps.

Street lighting plays a crucial role in enhancing public safety in urban areas.

Well-lit streets deter criminal activities, and this sense of security encourages more people to walk or use public spaces during the evening and night, fostering a vibrant community life.





Idea 42

# Live music venue

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More high-profile acts = more visitors.

We're talking scale. We do small-medium live music well, but can we bring large scale music into the city centre?

This could mean building on what current venues do, bringing new uses to existing premises, or establishing a music festival to the city centre.





Idea 43

# Outdoor events space

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Events are some of the most successful things in Newport for attracting people in, but there is no proper events space.

Let's create one!





Idea 44

# The Big Scrub

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Let's have an organised 'Big Scrub' event each year where hordes of volunteers clean up the streets in a big community effort stretching over a long weekend.





Idea 45

# Public toilets

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Caught short for the loo? We need more publicly accessible toilets in the city centre.





Idea 46

# Colourful dragons

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Let's do it again!

Newport should have permanent brightly painted dragon statues – possibly in support of a local charity or cause.

Bristol has had brightly painted Gromit statues as part of a charity exhibition dotted all over the city.

Croydon has recently done the same with giraffes.





Idea 47

# The Steel Wave

There is far too much dead space by The Steel Wave.

Introduce mixed uses – such as eateries, ice-cream stands and cafes - on the west bank by The Wave to make it a better, more useable space.



Idea 48

# Newport Bazaar

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Newport is home to many different cultures. But the city centre doesn't have many markers of this.

The diverse populations of Maindee and Pill should be better represented in city centre offerings. We should have a Newport Bazaar.

A bazaar is a marketplace consisting of multiple small stalls or shops, especially in the Middle East,

the Balkans, North Africa and South Asia. They are traditionally located in vaulted or covered streets that had doors on each end and served as a city's central marketplace.

This would be an exciting addition to our city.





Idea 49

# Independent shops

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We love our independent shops, with over 300 of them in the city centre.

However, we want more of them to increase variety and bring in more choice for our multicultural community.





Idea 50

# Bus interchange

Interconnectivity of public transport is really important. Our bus stations are a bit confusing and not perceived to be safe.

Let's move the bus interchange next to the railway station like they have just done in Cardiff.





Idea 51

# Rodney Parade

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The Compeed Stand backs onto Rodney Road. On the approach from Millenium Walk, this famous stadium looks more like an industrial shed then a sporting venue.

The rear of the stadium should have some 'Welcome to Rodney Parade' branding with images of our beloved rugby and football teams.



Idea 52

# Our food scene

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Up our Food Scene game.

More independent restaurants needed – and wanted!





Idea 53

# Creative, co-op style spaces

This is a creative city. But there are not enough affordable spaces in the city centre to create in.

Convert some of the vacant retail units into creative artist studios and maker spaces – a new home for an artist co-operative.

Using a model where artists commit to giving back to the city in the form of community initiatives (workshops/classes/city centre art projects) in return for inexpensive city centre space.



Idea 54

# More accessible recycling points

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We all know that recycling is super important.

But some city centre residents feel that there are not enough recycling points or collection services to encourage recycling.

So, we need more accessible recycling points please.





Idea 55

# More environmental interventions

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We want to see more environmental interventions on buildings such as renewable energy solutions, sedum roofs, green walls, solar panels, rainwater harvesting, bird boxes, insect hotels and solar shading



Idea 56

# Night buses

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More buses running later at night for workers and people socialising.





Idea 57

# What's on in Newport?

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Newport hosts loads of fantastic events. But people aren't seeing them advertised and feel they don't know they're happening.

More, easy to access marketing and sharing are needed.



Idea 58

# Wayfinding

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The street signage in Newport is poor and boring.

Let's make it vibrant and exciting with some colourful signage and wayfinding.





Idea 59

# Police on the beat

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Anti-social behaviour is a big concern for many people in the city centre. People want more police on the streets. And more CCTV.



Idea 60

# Local artist gallery

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A new art gallery in vacant shops, either in Friars Walk or the top end of Commercial Street to display art from local artists and up-and-coming stars.



