



Bishop's Castle Community-Led Plan



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Foreword – Karen Bavastock

As the 21st century unfolds there are new challenges facing Bishop's Castle and the community it serves and with these challenges come some exciting opportunities.

Putting together a plan to satisfy the aspirations of our residents has not been an easy task. Unlike village plans, where often major objectives such as a new community hall are easily identified, Bishop's Castle needs as a service centre for a large rural area are multi-layered and more complex.

Add to this the need to fall in with plans made by county councils, and then of course the Government, what is right for Bishop's Castle often gets lost in mountains of paperwork. We want to ensure that the Action Plan is achievable – and while some ideas may take a little longer to come to fruition there are some which can be introduced relatively soon.

The Bishop's Castle Town Plan team who have led the development of this document has been keen to ensure that change in the town is managed sensitively in line with the wish not to see Bishop's Castle lose its unique character. Housing, supermarkets, the cattle market, tourism and parking all need very careful consideration to ensure they fit Bishop's Castle's needs now and in the future. Progress is part of life but it is essential that the way forward does not erode the sense of community and pride of place which we are so lucky still to enjoy in the town.

Members of the Bishop's Castle Town Plan team may have changed as the process of drawing up the plan progressed but everyone's contributions have been very welcome. We are grateful for all the hours these people have given voluntarily to help ensure the future of our lovely town is positive and vibrant and that Bishop's Castle will continue to be a wonderful place for people to live, work, visit and shop whatever their age.

Bishop's Castle Town Council wishes to thank all those involved in the town plan and looks forward to identifying issues within the community and tackling them for the good of all.



Karen Bavastock, Mayor of Bishop's Castle, September 2016

Foreword – Keith Whiddon

It gives me great pleasure to introduce the Bishop's Castle Community-Led Town Plan 2016. It is the intention that the Action Plan will be delivered during the period October 2016 to 2020 with an annual review, evaluation and refresh where necessary.

To ensure that it is community-driven, the Town Plan Steering Group was established as an independent team of local people with one Town Council representative. Over the last 18 months, the Steering Group has undertaken a process of consultation and engagement with local people and we now have a clear picture of what issues are currently priorities for the community. Whilst some of these issues are complex and have no easy solution, for others, attracting external funding wherever possible, we could take action to develop local projects and services, increase social inclusion and make a positive difference to the community.

It is the aim of the Steering Group and the Town Council to help secure Bishop's Castle's long term viability as a centre for social, business, recreational and cultural activities and to protect its particular character and heritage. This Community-Led Plan brings together existing statutory and voluntary organisations and local volunteers to run projects and form working groups to tackle specific issues. Without the many hours of voluntary time given by the Steering Group, our partners and others in the community, we could not continue with the tasks in hand. We trust that in reading this Action Plan, you will see how the work benefits the whole Bishop's Castle community and hope that this will encourage you to join with us to support the various projects.

In the current period of austerity and the associated decline of public services, never was there a more important time for our local community to become engaged, plan and take action to help shape the future growth of Bishop's Castle, while maintaining its unique character as a vibrant rural town. A single, joined up strategy driven by the needs of the community will be essential to the success of the town in the years to come. It is by working together as a community that we will make Bishop's Castle an even better place in which to live and work.



Keith Whiddon, Chair of Bishop's Castle Town Plan Steering Group, September 2016

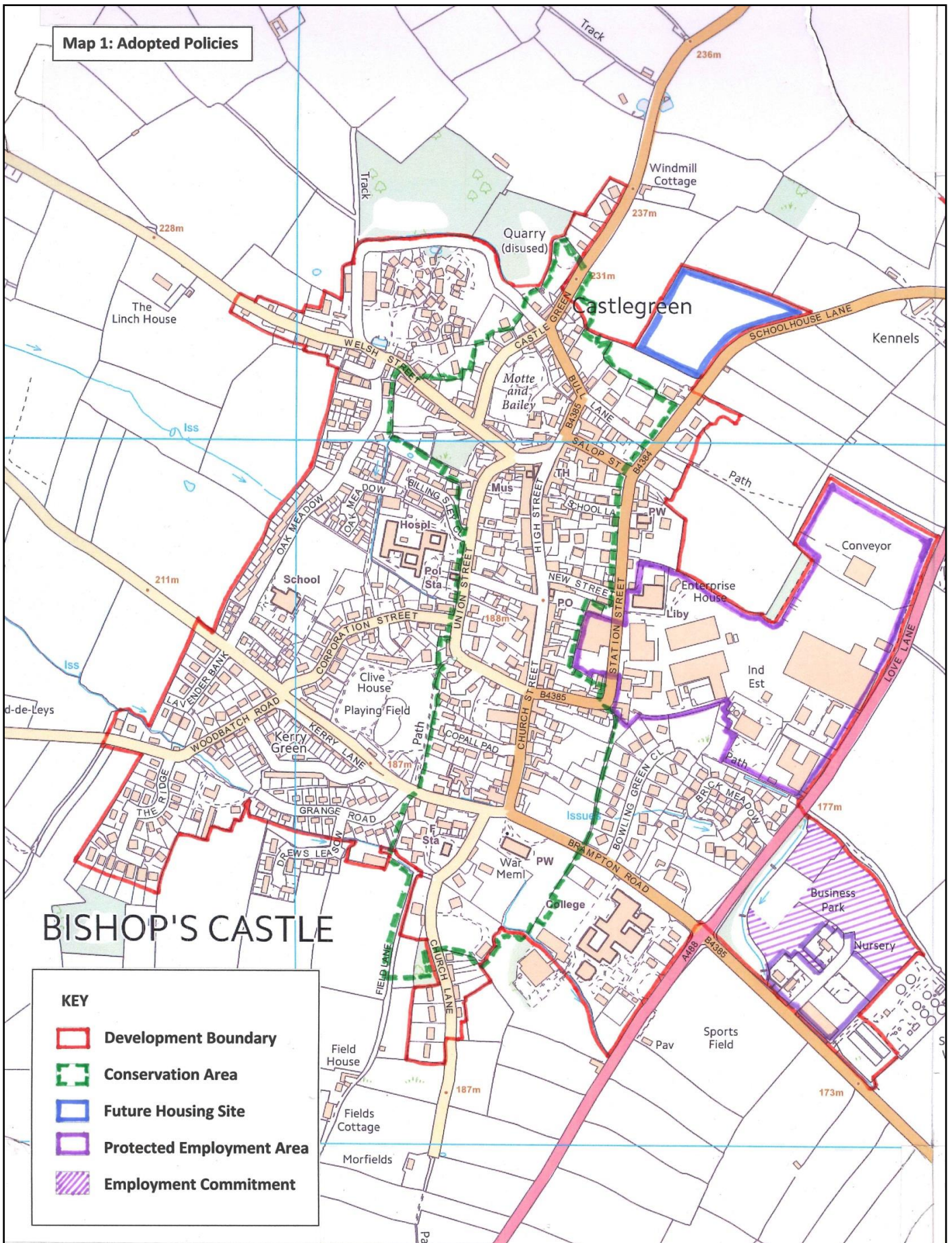
Current Bishop's Castle Town Plan Steering Group members:

Anne-Marie Jackson

Mike Watkins

Bernard Edwards

Map 1: Adopted Policies



1. Introduction

Bishop’s Castle is a small rural town in the remote South Shropshire Hills close to the Welsh border. It is a medieval settlement with a large number of historic buildings and an extensive Conservation Area covering the entire town centre and beyond (see Map 1). Throughout our engagement with the local community it is clear that there is a strong desire to protect Bishop’s Castle’s unique heritage, while at the same time see it thrive as a vibrant rural town. Our Community Survey (see Section 2) demonstrates how proud the local community are of the town.

With a population of just 1,893 (census 2011), it remains one of the smallest towns in England. However, to coin a phrase often used to describe Bishop’s Castle, the town “punches well above its weight”. It is the service centre for the population of an extensive surrounding area and supports a significant tourist population throughout the year, evidenced by its two hotels, several guesthouses and holiday rental properties. Despite its modest size Bishop’s Castle currently boasts a theatre/leisure centre with swimming pool; library; community hospital; doctor’s surgery; three old people’ homes; a business support and resources facility and a cattle market, as well as six pubs and two breweries. The local community values such services and there is a very strong will to preserve them through the current period of austerity.

Bishop’s Castle is also a very active town. There are numerous clubs and organisations, (e.g. tennis, bowls, hockey, cricket, football, rugby and two bowls clubs, cycling and walking groups and a film society). In addition, it hosts a series of events run by volunteers throughout the year (e.g. Arts Festival, Walking Festival, Carnival, Party in the Park, Beer Festival, Tandem Triathlon and the Michaelmas Fair) some of which attract visitors from all over the country. The town has a reputation for its creativity in music and the arts, with several well-respected young rock bands aided by the ‘About Music Project’ [AMP] (a volunteer group supporting the development of youth music) and a community of artists (Castle Artists). This reputation spreads far beyond Shropshire and also attracts visitors from a wide area.

In 2004/5 Bishop’s Castle produced a Parish Plan based on the issues raised by the local community at that time (www.bishopscastle.co.uk/downloads/bc-parish-plan-low-res.pdf). It is sobering to note that 10 years later the top two issues then remain the same as identified by this Plan, namely **jobs and housing**.

Whilst, for a settlement of its size the number of jobs provided locally is high and the proportion of the population that is in employment is *slightly above* the national average, the proportion of those in part time jobs is *significantly higher* than the average and in relation to those in full time jobs, there is also a *significantly higher* rate than nationally of self-employment (see ANNEX A, Table 1). This Census data also shows a *significantly higher* number of retired people resident in the Ward than the national average and whilst the Bishop’s Castle Ward covers a much wider area than the town or Parish, the evidence reflects the situation in this deeply rural settlement. The following table shows some of the main sources of employment in the Town in September 2016 (for which figures are available):-

Some of the Main Employers in Bishop’s Castle – September 2016

Employer	Full-time	Part-time	Combined
The Pines Residential Home	-	-	85
Bishops Castle Community College	36	25	61
Charles Ransford’s and Son Ltd	-	-	55
The Three Tuns Inn	9	15	24
Bishops Castle Primary School	5	17	22
SpArC Leisure Centre	3	18	21
The Castle Hotel	11	10	21
Jesmonite (inc Feathercast)	18	1	19
The Grange Care Home	3	12	15
Three Tuns Brewery	13	1	14
The Six Bells	3	11	14
Bishops Castle Building Supplies	6	0	6
Stone House Hospital	14	18	32

The risk of Bishop's Castle becoming a 'retirement settlement' is further illustrated by census data on housing tenure (see ANNEX A, Table 2). This shows that whilst the percentage of owner occupied properties is comparable to the national average, the proportion of houses owned outright rather than with a mortgage is *significantly higher* in Bishop's Castle. The census data also reflects the limited availability of 'affordable' housing, as the proportion of households in privately rented properties compared to social housing is *significantly higher* than the national average.

Across Shropshire 18 'Place Plans' have been produced by Shropshire Council to identify the infrastructure and investment needs within each community. They are aimed at ensuring that Shropshire Council and its partners understand the local priorities within each community and that resources can therefore be targeted appropriately. It is our aim that the Bishop's Castle Plan will help to direct the Town Council's submission to Shropshire Council of priorities for action in the next annual revision of the Bishop's Castle Place Plan.

Issues

Being a small, remote rural town presents some significant economic and social challenges. Access to employment is a major concern for the community along with access to suitable housing. The need to develop the Business Park (a project being led by the Community Land Trust) and the need for more affordable housing are seen as the key requirements to ensure the retention of young people and families in Bishop's Castle, thereby avoiding it becoming a retirement town.

Maintaining services (such as the SpArC Leisure Centre and Theatre) to support the community is a particular challenge currently, with local government funding cuts combined with our small population making it hard to achieve economies of scale. The town has long been seen as a good place for people to retire to and the population is ageing, resulting in falling rolls at the schools. The government's school academisation programme does not fit with small rural schools that are commonly in budget deficit due to the lack of the economies of scale that urban schools can benefit from.

Other issues include:-

- limited public transport requiring a high dependency on the car and services such as 'Dial-a-Ride';
- sub-standard internet and mobile phone access, impacting negatively on businesses and on the tourism economy;
- an over-reliance on the voluntary sector to provide critical services such as Fire and Rescue, Community Land Trust [CLT], Dial-a-Ride, etc.

The latest Bishop's Castle 'Place Plan' highlights that the key planning issues for Bishops Castle include:-

- 'the need to provide more affordable housing and more housing for the elderly;
- stimulation of additional employment opportunities to maintain economic activity particularly for small and start-up businesses;
- the need to address surface water drainage and sewerage issues, parking and congestion/access issues;
- better local provision of additional open space.'

The Place Plan also defined the need for additional housing development within the plan period of 2006 - 2026 of between 100 and 150 new dwellings. Given the number of dwellings that have already been built in the first 10 years and the number of planning permissions that are still outstanding, there remains up to 70 houses still requiring to be built of which 40 have been allocated to a site on School House Lane and the remaining 30 to 'windfall' sites (infill or vacant sites within the development boundary). In compliance with current government legislation, this allocation of 70 new remains in place for the next 5 years.

Whilst there is already undeveloped employment land available, in order to realise the second bullet point above, Shropshire Council has indicated that a small amount of additional employment land could be allocated adjoining the existing business park. However, the community view is that full development of the business park and/or redevelopment of business uses in the town should take place before any further employment land is allocated.

The key development constraints include the Conservation Area, the development boundary and the potential impact on surrounding landscape character, including views from the adjacent AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty).

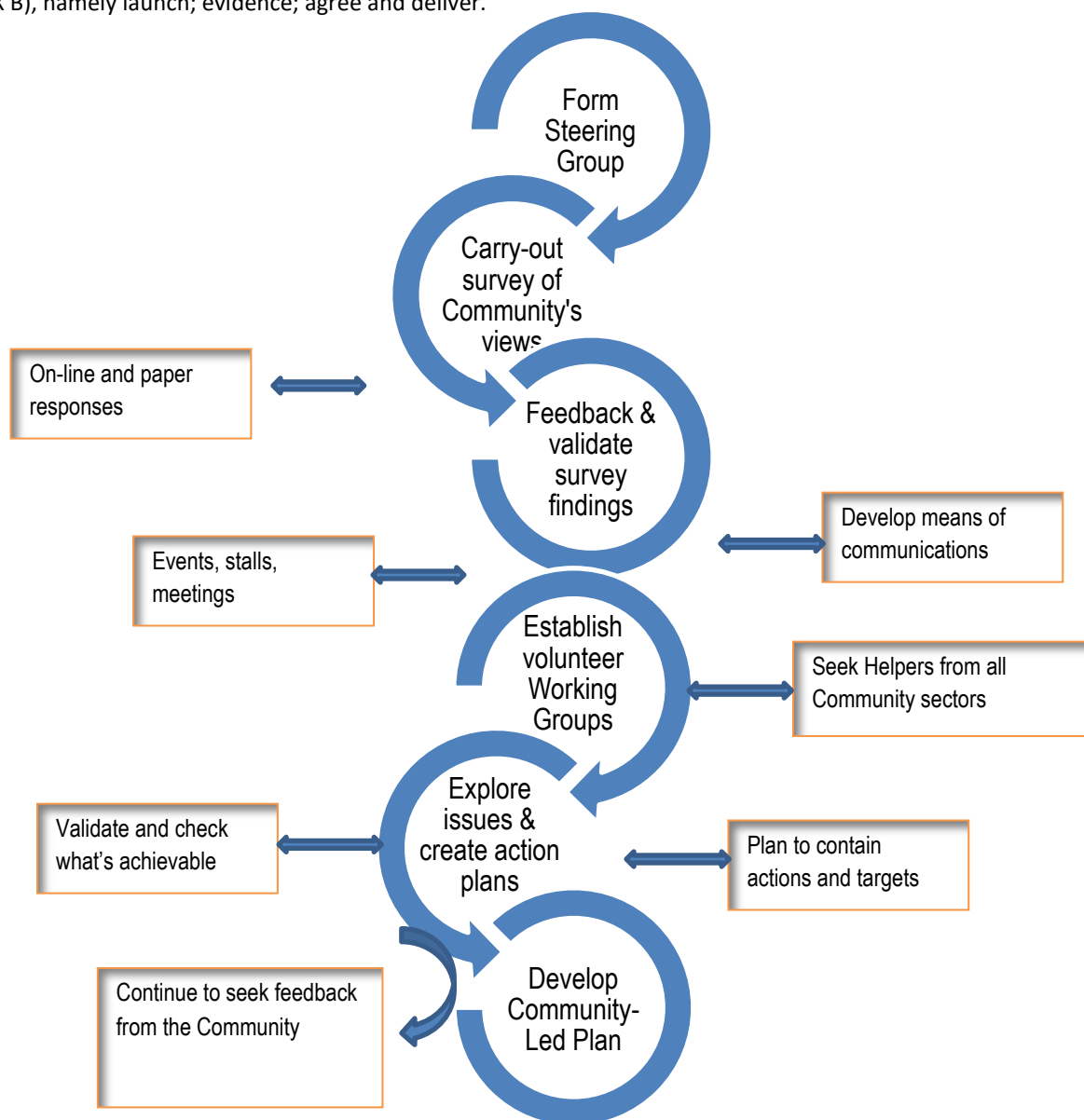
2. Plan methodology and findings

Background

The coalition government announced the 'Localism Bill' in December 2010. This proposed a range of measures to provide new rights for citizens "to allow them to shape the future of their neighbourhoods; where they want to take over local services and assets, or where they want to stipulate what new development takes place. There is, therefore, an expectation that communities are both willing and able to take action locally, and that local authorities will have a role to play in facilitating this transition of power away from 'big state' to 'big society'. Statutory policy can only go so far in putting an onus on communities to empower themselves and requiring local authorities to be supportive of this change. Experience shows that this is much more likely to occur where citizens are guided through a structured process that enables them to meet with others locally and collectively research, discuss and then agree priority actions for improving their neighbourhood, taking into consideration a wide range of social, economic, environmental and cultural factors".

The Bishop's Castle Community-led Town Plan seeks to identify those issues most important to local people and provides a strategy for working together to address them through the statutory planning system and other means. The Plan is based on consultation and derives its legitimacy from the fact that it has been created, approved, supported and will be driven by the community itself.

The process followed to develop the Bishop's Castle Plan (see graphic below) was based on the 'LEAD 4 Stage Process' (see ANNEX B), namely launch; evidence; agree and deliver.



Bishop's Castle Community Survey Autumn 2014

In the autumn of 2014, the Bishop's Castle Town Council asked for volunteers from the local community to be involved in the development of the new Town Plan. A small group of such volunteers established the 'Town Plan Steering Group' to take on this task (see ANNEX C Figures 1 and 2). Their first task was to seek the views of the community by means of a survey, the aim of which was to:-

- provide a common vision of how the community should look or develop in the future;
- focus on the issues that are important to the community;
- identify community aspirations, actions, ideas and policies on a variety of issues.

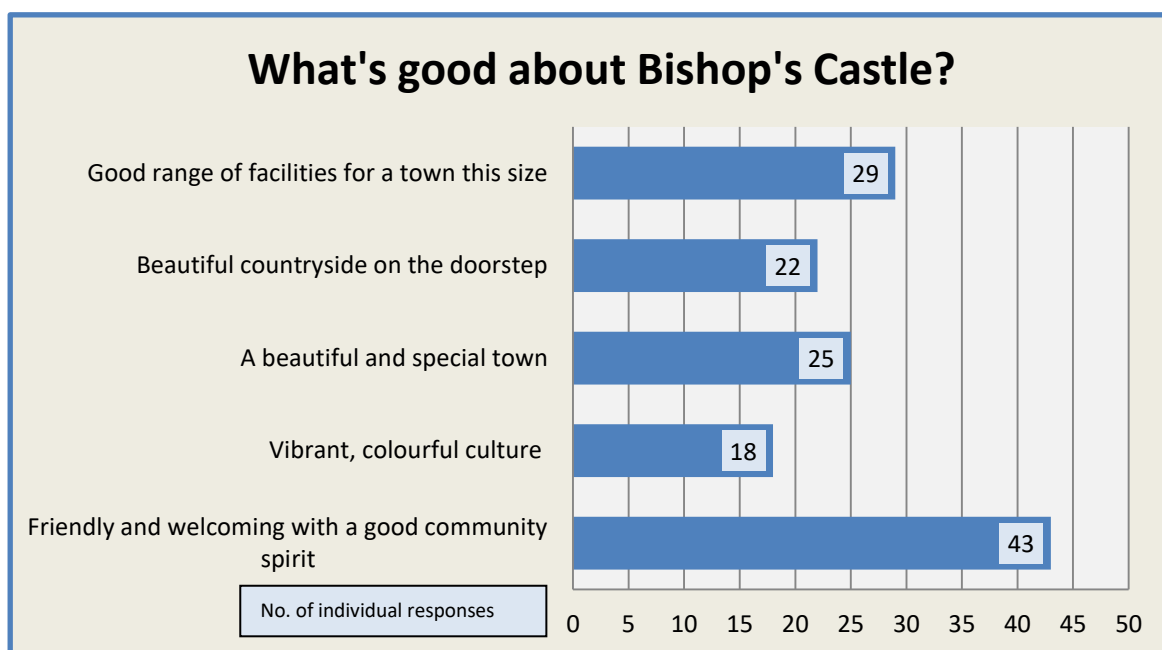
The survey was undertaken using various formats (on-line, paper, etc.), all of which invited comments on:-

- the things of value in Bishop's Castle;
- the problems being faced by the town and;
- the improvements or changes that would be desirable.

A total of 110 responses were received and collated.

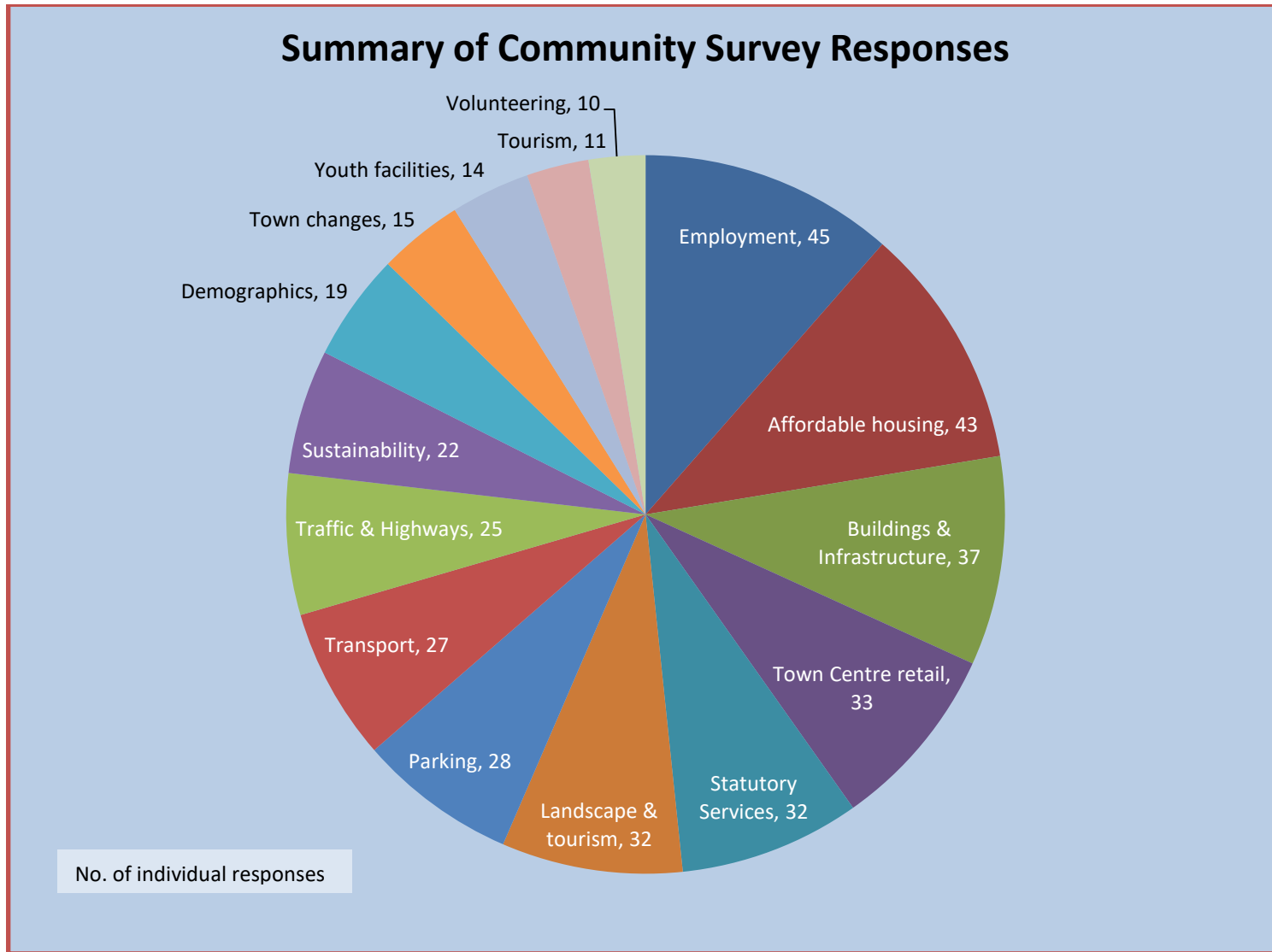
Below is a graphic summary of the results of this survey. Please see ANNEX D Figures 1, 2 and 3 for further details of the survey results.

The things that the community value about Bishop's Castle:



Clearly the most valued aspect of Bishop's Castle by its local community is that it is seen to be 'friendly and welcoming with a good community spirit'. Next is that many in the community feel that the town has a good range of facilities for its size.

The most frequently cited issues in the responses to the survey are as follows (number of individual responses shown):



The issues identified by the community fell into distinct categories which the Steering Group subsequently used as the themes in the Plan:-

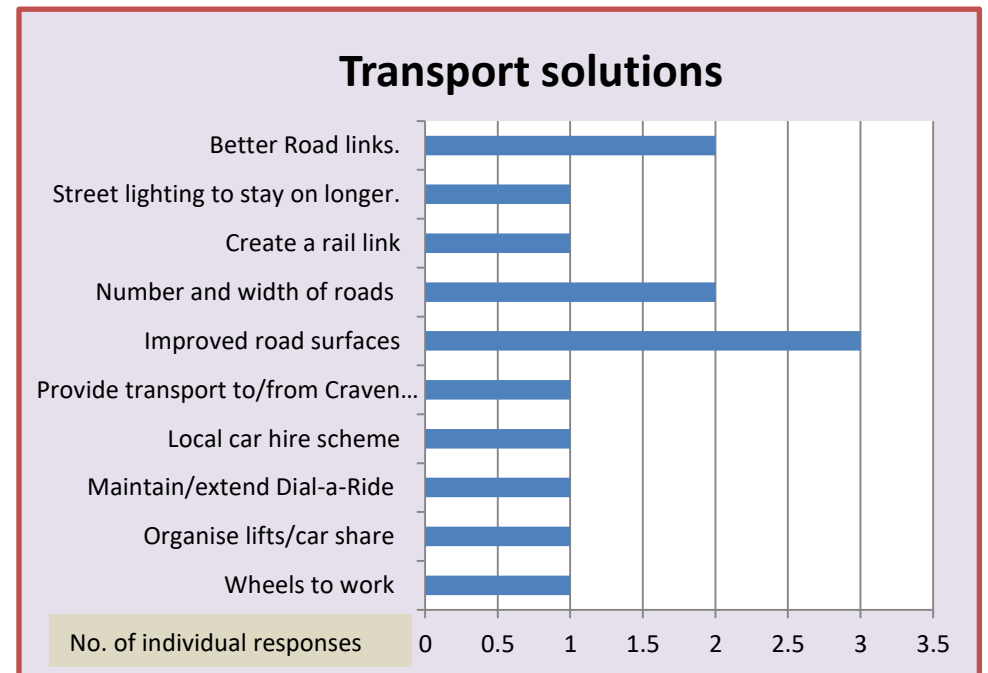
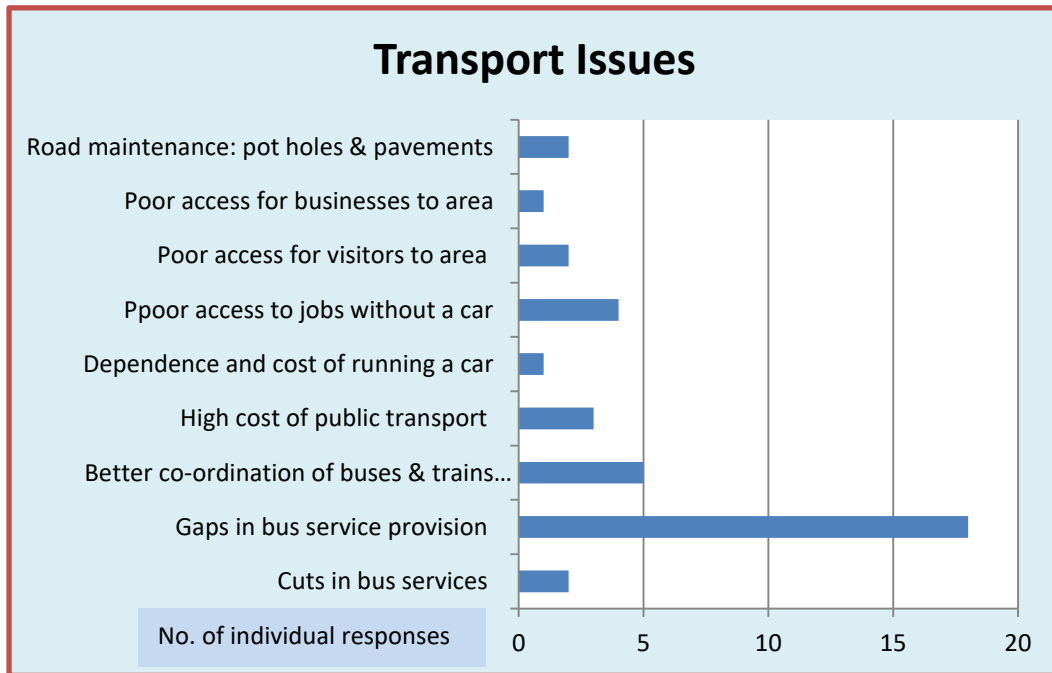
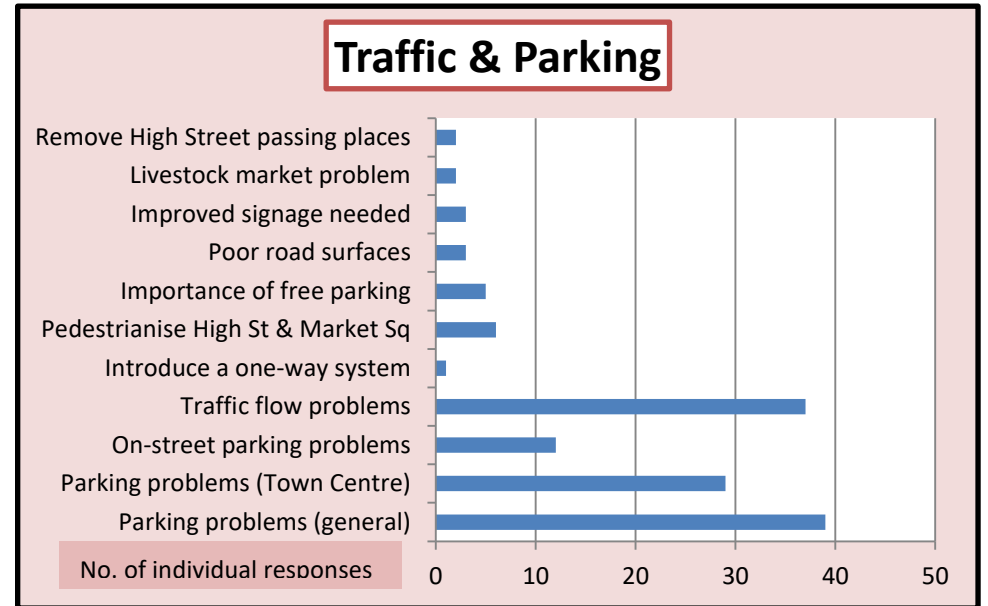
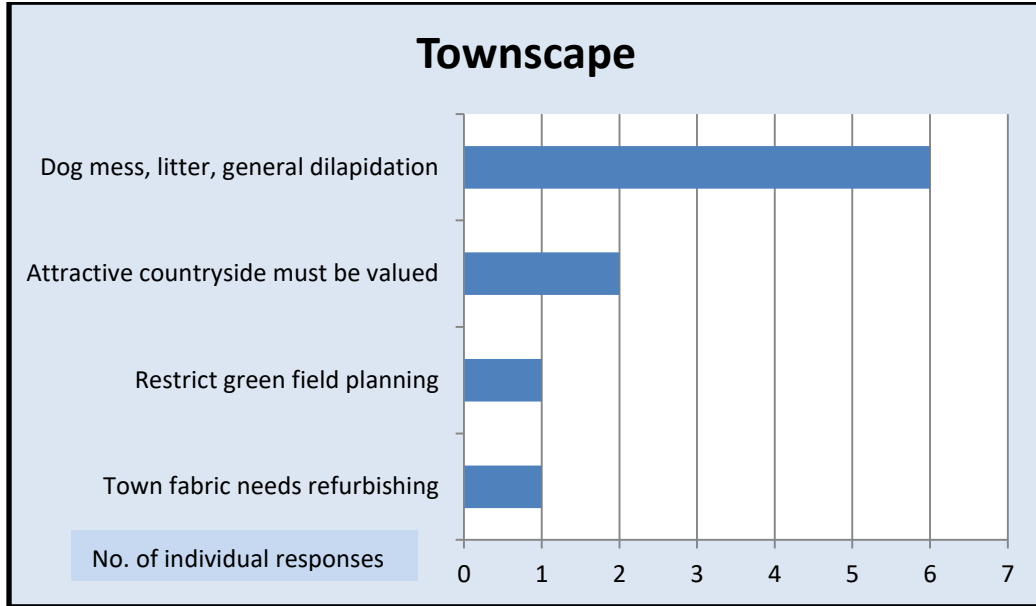
- **Town Centre** – e.g. traffic, highways and parking related problems;
- **Community and Services** – e.g. improving provision and co-ordination of local services and facilities;
- **Infrastructure** – e.g. public transport, digital broadband, street lighting and flood prevention;
- **Economy** – e.g. need for job opportunities; attracting employers to the town;
- **Development** – e.g. the need for affordable housing, and the need for development without compromising the character of the town;
- **Sustainability** – e.g. waste and re-cycling; local renewable energy; food production projects.

The table below details the most frequently quoted issues raised by the community in the survey.

Most frequently quoted requirements	No. of responses	% of all responses
The need for / lack of job opportunities other than low-wage and the difficulties in attracting businesses / employers to the town	45	41
The need for / lack of affordable low-cost housing stock to ensure the retention of local young adults and families	44	40
The need for improvements to buildings, infrastructure and/or the street-scape, and for the opportunities for re-generation, including in the town centre and its immediate surrounding, and also the impact of this on the economy and vitality of the town.	37	33.6
Historic change in the retail provision and consumer behaviour, and the need to address the impact this has had and potential threats to the viability of the town centre	33	30
To address the threats to the continuing provision of statutory services and / or vital support facilities in order to sustain the rural economy and our quality of life	32	29.1
To address the importance of the landscape both within the town and its environs and as the basis for the tourist economy	32	29.1
To address the parking problems including in the town centre	30	27.3
To address difficulties of access to the hinterland for work, leisure and services and the inadequacy of public or other voluntary transport schemes for those without a car	27	24.6
To address town traffic and highways-related problems, including in the town centre	25	22.7
The need for new initiatives in response to climate change and technological developments to ensure a sustainable future, including energy efficiency, broadband facilities and food production	22	20
To address an increasing demographic imbalance resulting from the young leaving due to lack of suitable jobs and housing and an increasingly older, retired population that will make increasing demands on services that are currently being cut and lost	20	18.2
To address the challenge of accommodating necessary changes and improvements without compromising the charm and vitality that is Bishop's Castle	16	14.6
The provision of facilities to meet the needs of young people	14	12.7
To address issues that recognise the importance of tourism to the economy of the town	11	10
Recognition of the vital place of volunteers in the fabric of the town and its activities	10	9.1

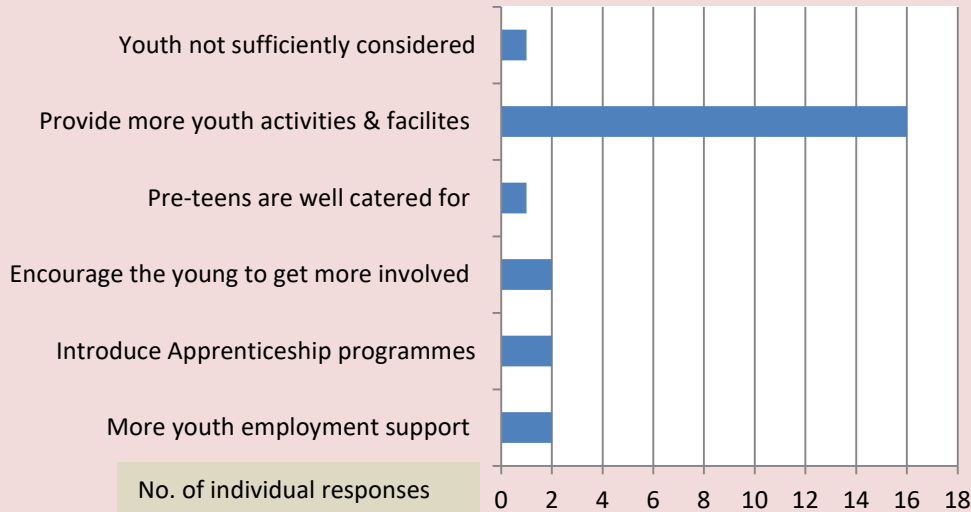
The diagrams that follow detail the number of individual community responses to the above themes:

TOWN CENTRE

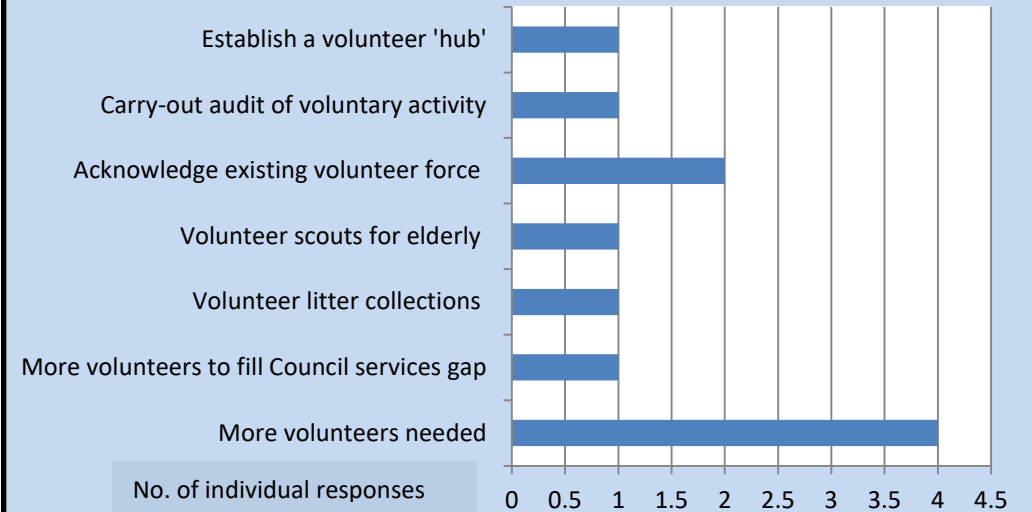


COMMUNITY and SERVICES

Youth facilities



Volunteering



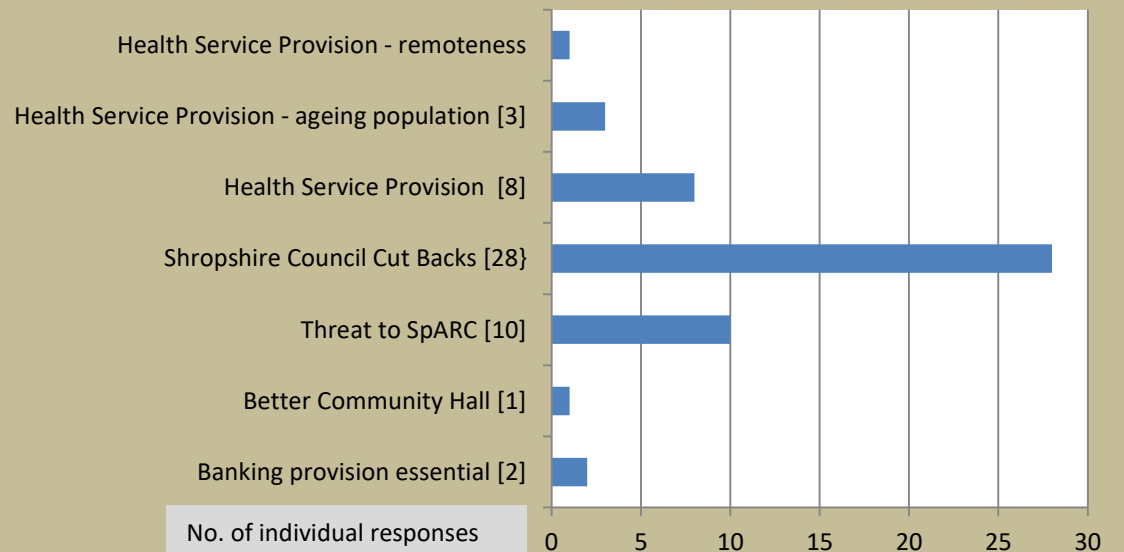
Facilities

- Extend Sparc opening hours (Swimming Pool).
- More exercise classes (health benefits)
- Community Hall to match Village Halls
- Better disabled access
- Soft Play outlet (like Oswestry)
- More sports groups

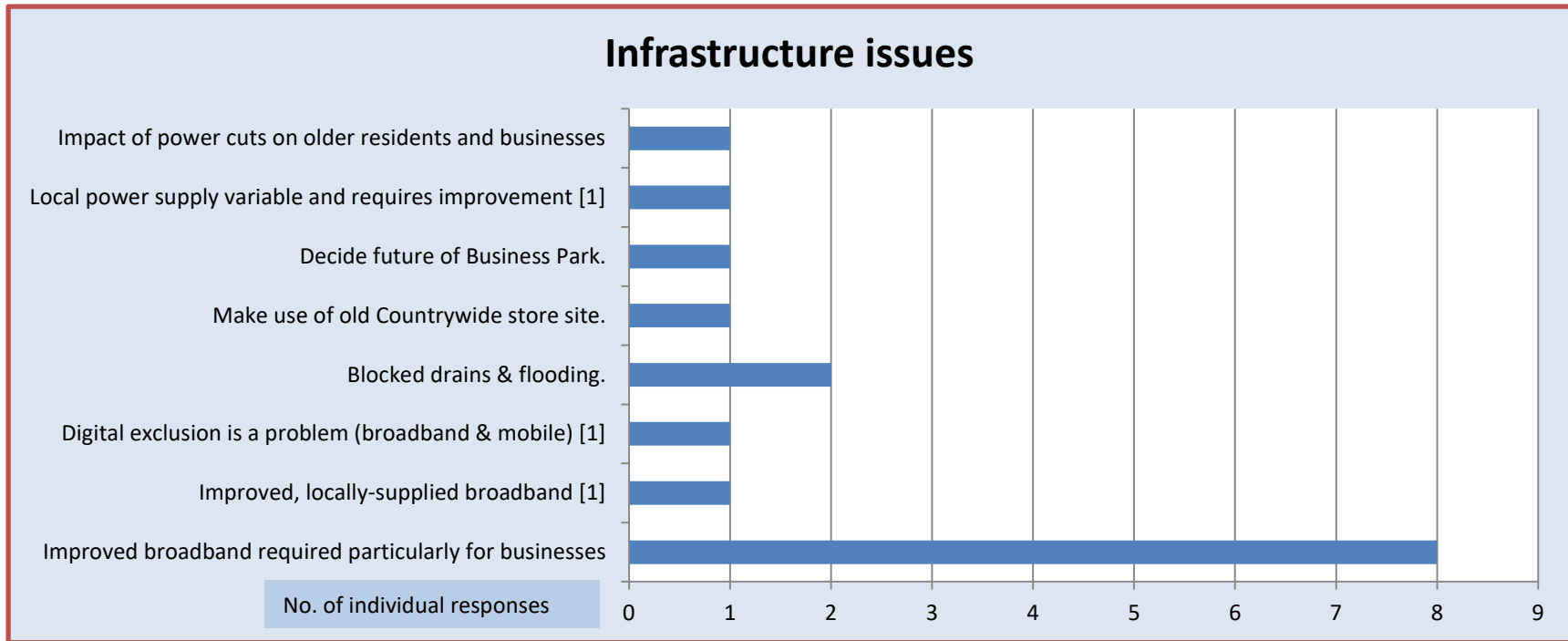
Services

- Better co-ordinated use of Community Hospital
- Re-locate GP surgery into Community Hospital
- Retain Shrewsbury A&E
- Full-life education strategy needed
- More adult education & evening classes
- Important to retain local services
- Better policing service needed

Services Provision

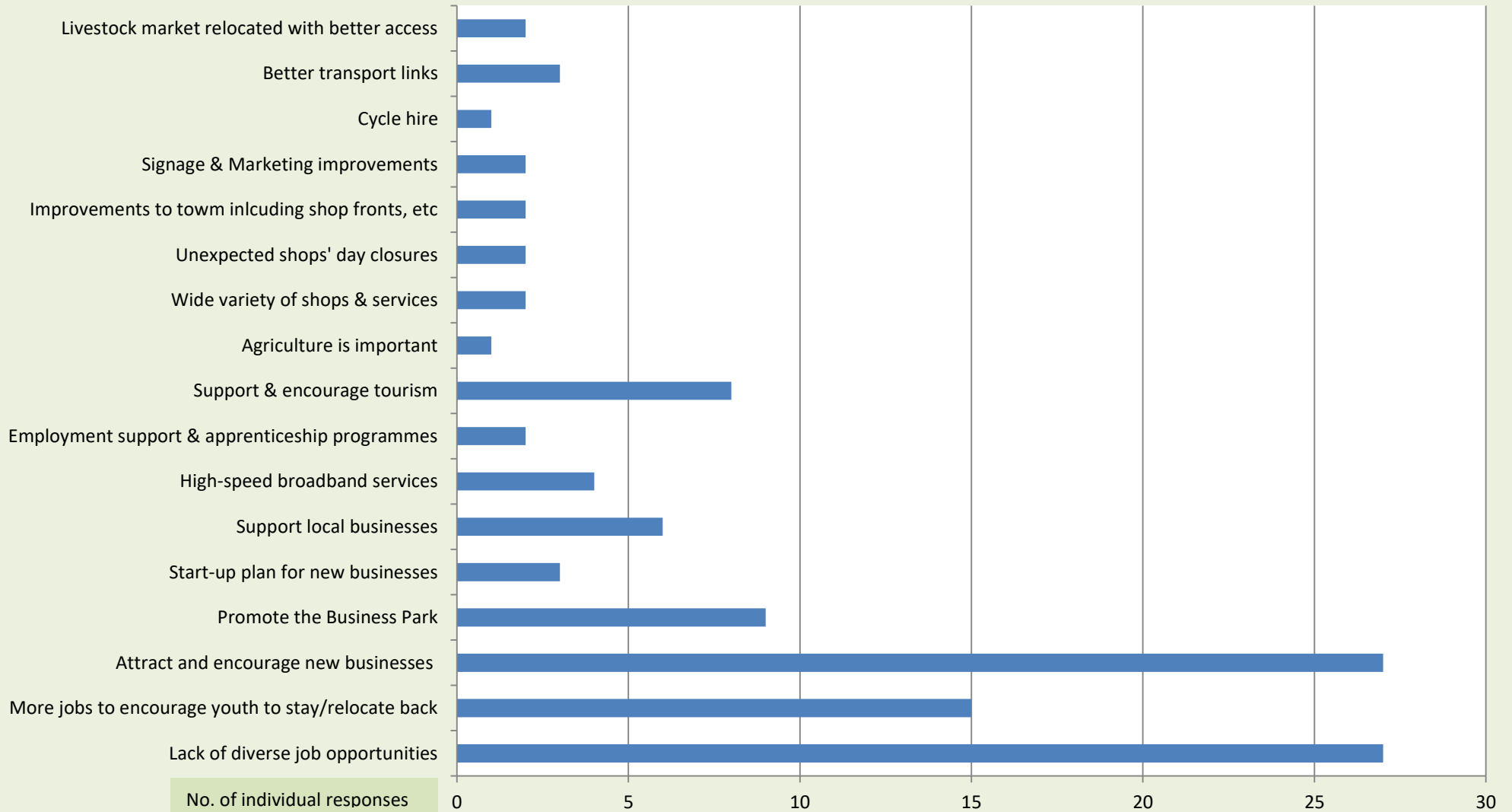


INFRASTRUCTURE



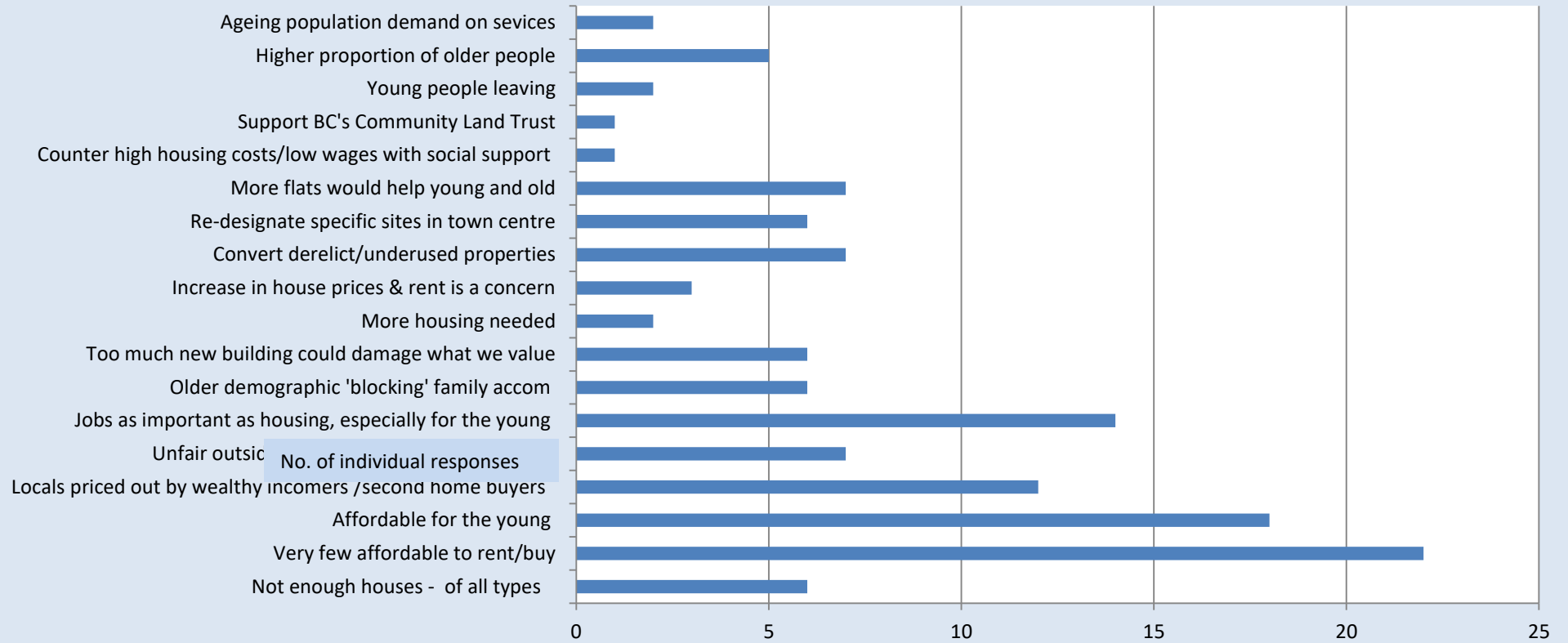
ECONOMY

Economy



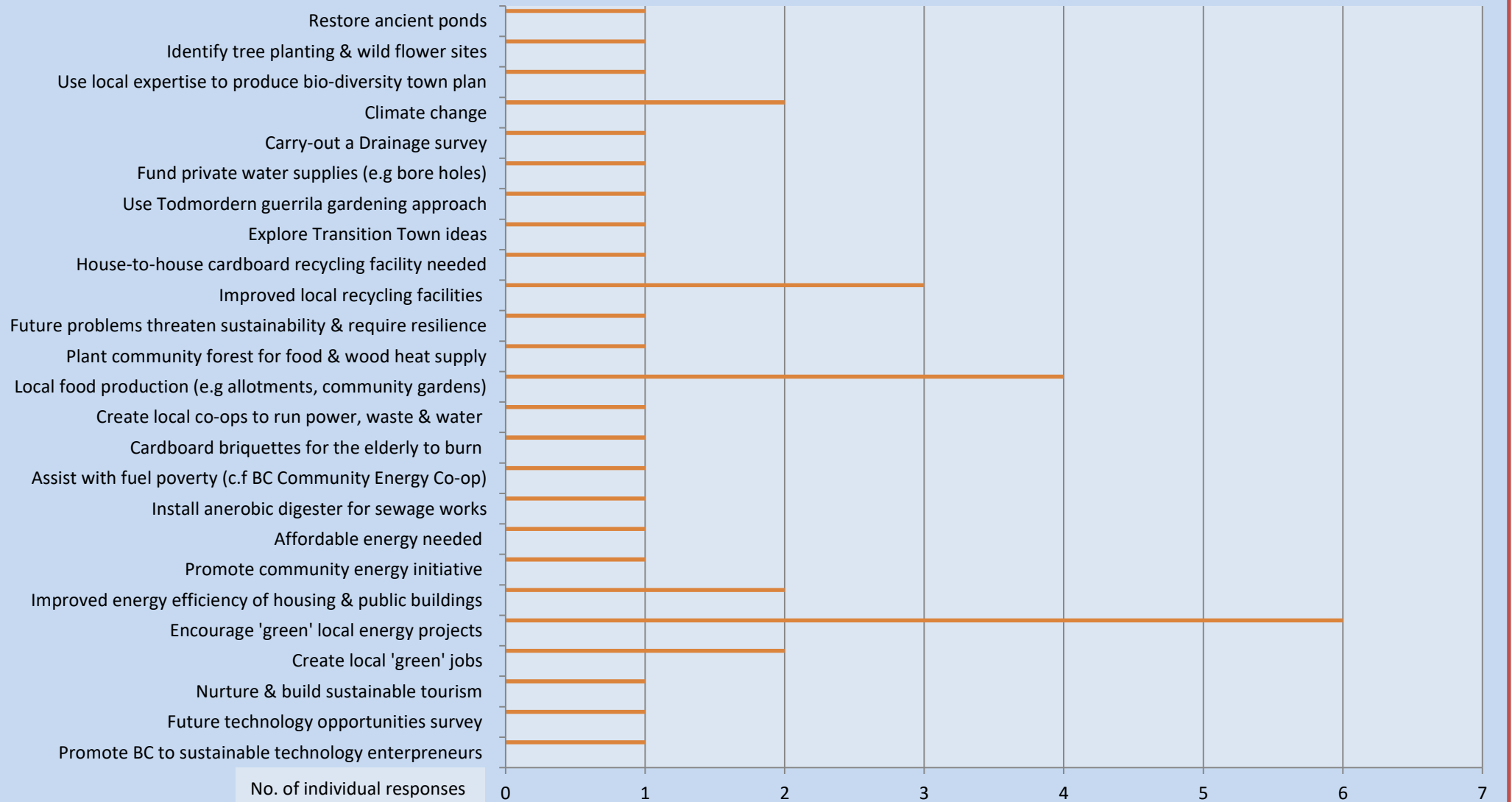
DEVELOPMENT

Housing and Demographics



SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability



Additionally, The Bishop's Castle Primary School Council was asked for its views about the town. The results are summarised in the table below:-

Bishop's Castle Primary School Survey

What makes you *MAD* to live in Bishop's Castle?

- Not enough public car parks (free)
- Littering – more bins / dog bins needed
- Not enough public toilets
- Bigger skate park

What makes you *SAD* to live in Bishop's Castle?

- Spray painting (need anti-vandalism paint)
- More equipment needed in park
- More football nets needed
- Dogs off the lead
- Not enough public transport

What makes you *GLAD* to live in Bishop's Castle?

- Big park
- Friendly people
- Great walks
- Big swimming pool
- Nature around us
- Colours of the houses are nice
- Good schools
- KEEP THE TOWN SMALL!

3. Drafting the Plan

The survey responses were prioritised and the most frequently quoted issues turned into a set of objectives in each theme (see ANNEX E). These objectives form the ‘WHAT?’ of the Plan; the actions to achieve the objectives are the ‘HOW?’ and the group or individual responsible (currently or potentially) for delivering the actions is the ‘WHO?’, as seen in the Action Plans for each theme.

It was the Steering Group’s original intention to form Working Groups for each theme in order to help develop actions to meet the objectives. However, other than the Town Centre Working Group it has not proved possible to recruit sufficient volunteers. As discussed below, the Steering Group has engaged with more than 130 relevant organisations and individuals in order to develop the Action Plans and to ensure that they are realistic and deliverable.

Where relevant, we shall undertake the collection of statistics (Key Performance Indicators) so that in future years we will be able to measure trends over time, for example, keeping a count of the number of vacant shops to see how this changes over time as an indicator of how vibrant the retail sector is.

The Steering Group was responsible for driving the Plan forward so that it would be published in time for it to inform the next Place Plan revision in October. The following timeline was published to ensure this would be achievable:



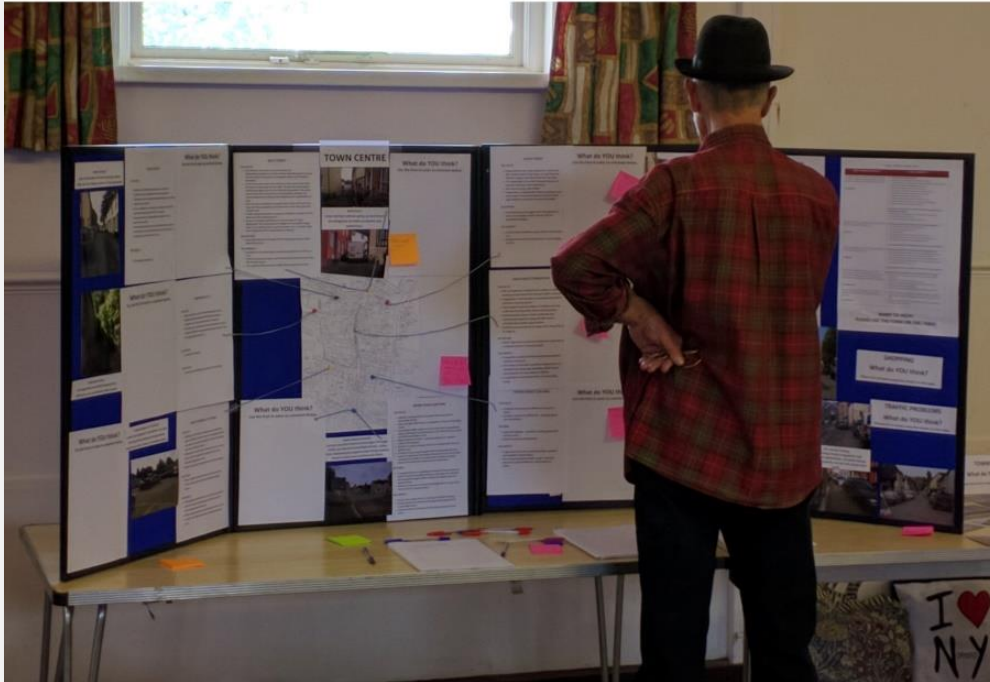
Public Consultation and Engagement with the Local Community

As stated previously, this Plan was developed to represent the views of the Bishop’s Castle community. Core to that has been the amount of time devoted to public consultation and engagement. In addition to the initial public survey of autumn 2014, the Town Plan Steering group have consulted to seek the views of the community in the following ways:-

- A website (<http://www.bishopscastle.co.uk/council/town-plan/>) and email address (townplan@bishopscastle.co.uk) have been set up and integrated into the Bishop’s Castle Town Council home page;
- Regular updates on the progress of the Plan and requests for help have been included in the bi-monthly Bishop’s Castle Newsletter;
- Stalls with information about the Plan and the recruitment of volunteers to help shape it have been manned at various events, including the Bishop’s Castle Carnival and the Party in the Park;
- The Town Plan is a standing item on the Town Council agendas and progress reports are minuted;
- A progress update has been provided to the Annual Public meeting;
- 3 public consultation meetings were held in June 2016 in the Public Hall and Church Barn to gain feedback on the draft Action Plan;
- Several additional surveys have been undertaken, including a detailed parking survey and occupant’s survey of the High Street residents and businesses.

Bishop's Castle: Into the Future - The Town Plan

This is *your* plan - have *your* say



Delivery Partners and Contacts

Wherever possible we seek to bring existing work into the Plan without re-inventing the wheel. In this way, it is hoped that the Plan will become the single vehicle to co-ordinate the work going on in different parts of our Town which hitherto has not been joined up.

We believe that it is essential to develop the Plan so that it builds on the work of existing groups and policies as far as possible, given the lack of manpower and resources at our disposal. It is hoped that these groups will become our delivery partners, working with us to provide solutions that address the issues raised by the community.

To achieve this, we undertook a 'mapping' exercise to identify any contacts, organisations, groups, individuals or existing policies which address each of the objectives of the Plan. For example, we have mapped our Plan themes to the objectives set in the current Place Plan for Bishops' Castle (see ANNEX E). In total, the Steering Group approached and, where responses were received, consulted with approximately 130 identified organisations and individuals in the development of the Plan. A list of potential delivery partners is to be found in ANNEX F.

4. Action Plan

4.1. Town Centre

The Context

The Town Centre Action Plan seeks to address specific issues raised by the Community Survey. 67% of respondents had something particular to say about the town centre and over 10% of the comments identified the High Street as a problem in some way (see ANNEX G, Figure 1). The majority of comments related to traffic and parking problems, but there were also strong concerns about the sustainability of the retail and services outlets and the impact both on the local community and on the tourism economy of a 'tired' looking town centre.

An active 'Town Centre Working Group' was established to: seek ways to support and revitalise the town centre's shops; highlight problems caused by town centre traffic and explore potential solutions; examine perceived town centre parking difficulties and potential solutions and address the opportunities for and the potential risks associated with development and change in the town centre, particularly in relation to the Conservation Area and the impact on the heritage of the built environment.

The town centre, for purposes of the Action Plan is shown in Map 2 and, for work undertaken so far, has been defined primarily by the area occupied by properties on Salop St.; Market Square; High St and the northern end of Church St. to the Boar's Head crossroads, together with adjacent streets where these were relevant to the issues being studied.

Work on this Plan is already well developed, the Town Centre Working Group having undertaken a comprehensive Parking Survey and Occupants' Survey, a survey of the needs and opinions of occupants of town centre, main street properties. Following analysis of these surveys, findings and possible solutions were also examined at Public Consultation sessions held in June. By drawing on the outcomes of all three actions, some recommendations are made as to the way forward.

Traffic and Parking Issues

Traffic and parking issues were major concerns in the Community Survey. This is an area that the Plan Steering Group believes this Action Plan can help to address as a priority. However, the medieval environment of the town centre does not easily accommodate 21st century vehicular movement or patterns of behaviour. Consequently, not all problems can be resolved. In addition, implementing even the simplest of solutions has implications, particularly as community views on what should, or should not be done to address issues can vary considerably!

The Steering Group believes that the following must inform the development of any traffic or parking solutions:-

- the need to take an holistic approach to traffic solutions so that there is one, joined-up strategy which can avoid piecemeal patch and mend measures and help ensure that a solution in one part of the town centre doesn't impact unfavourably on another area;
- an understanding that solutions could inadvertently damage the visual and social characteristics that make Bishop's Castle unique - e.g. introduce excessive yellow lines or signage; counter existing patterns of considerate and patient behaviour by encouraging the ability to speed, etc;
- conflicting pressures on limited funding sources means that simple, low-cost solutions are a necessity and that the delivery of solutions may need to be prioritised;
- the need to be realistic about what can or cannot be done – for example there are limitations to the policing of parking – this is no longer a Police Force responsibility and there are no traffic wardens in Bishop's Castle.

The Parking Survey

The Parking Survey was undertaken on five days of the week (Sunday excluded) and on 17 visits at different times of the day, across the year. The number of parked cars was recorded on the town centre streets listed above as well as on Station St., Union St., the southern end of Church St., Harley Jenkins St., and New St. Parked cars were also recorded on the Auction Yard, Harley Jenkins St. and Church St. car parks.

The Parking Survey showed that within the town centre streets and car parks and the immediately adjacent Union and Station Streets, **there is sufficient parking space available** (see ANNEX G Table 1). Whilst the High St., Church St., Market Square and Salop St. all experience problems as regards parking, on all 17 occasions when the streets were surveyed there were **always some available parking spaces** somewhere within the streets and car parks adjacent to the main streets.

As Bishop's Castle serves a large hinterland with extremely limited public transport, a considerable proportion of town centre users arrive by car. The perception expressed in the Community Survey that 'there is nowhere to park in Bishop's Castle', appears at least in part to stem from the fact that the ability to park on the four main streets of the centre, close to the particular shops and services being visited is in fact the issue at hand.

As the Ward data shows (ANNEX A, Table 1), Bishop's Castle's hinterland has a higher than average retirement population, for some of whom mobility may be an issue and parking close to the destination, a priority. This is borne out by the results of the Occupants' Survey (see below), in which some business occupants specifically referred to the need for their elderly customers and those with young children to be able to park adjacent to their premises.

The survey data, summarised in ANNEX G, Table 1, shows that on three of the four main streets the number of cars parked **exceeded** the number of parking places available on several days of the week.

- In the case of Salop St., parking exceeded the number of places on every day surveyed and on 15 of the 17 visits, both in the morning and the afternoon and on one of the two other visits there was only one space available;
- On Church St., parking capacity was exceeded on 7 of the 17 survey visits and only on a Tuesday was there always some spare capacity;
- Market Square exceeded capacity on 4 visits, on four separate days and on the remaining two days there were two visits when only one space was available;
- On High St. parking exceeded capacity only on a Monday and a Saturday but on Wednesday and Friday there was only one space free on one of the visits.

Parked cars exceed the number of spaces available either by: parking on yellow lines (e.g. Market Square); parking on pavements at narrow points of the carriageway where otherwise traffic would be unable to pass (e.g. Salop St.); parking on both sides of the road at narrow points, sometimes not leaving sufficient space for large vehicles to pass (e.g. Church St.) and; parking in dedicated passing places (e.g. High St.).

The Occupants' Survey

In spring 2016 a survey of 141 occupants of front street premises was undertaken to assess their needs regarding vehicular access to their premises and to on street parking in the town centre. Their comments were also sought on actions that could potentially ease some of the traffic and parking problems that had been identified, in particular, the possible introduction of new signage, as well as a one way system and speed bumps on the High St./Church St. section, north of Harley Jenkins St. Residents, residents with a business and business only occupants were all surveyed. ANNEX G, Table 2 provides a breakdown of respondents from 3 distinct zones.

ANNEX G, Table 3 reveals that, as regards attitudes to signage and speed bumps, very few respondents had firmly positive views. Rather, the majority (69% on signage and 59% on speed bumps) had either no comment to make or saw no problem with it. Negative responses to the introduction of signage were received from 28% of respondents and from 33% towards the introduction of speed bumps. As regards the introduction of a one-way system, 44% had either no comment or saw no problem with it; 31% (12 respondents) commented negatively and; 26% (10 respondents) commented positively.

When taking responses to the question of a one way system and speed bumps, only from Zone 1 (the High St./Church St section) where these works would actually take place, 50% of occupants (9) had no problem with speed bumps; 39% (7) were negative towards the idea and 11% (2) felt that it would help. As regards a one way system, 44% (8 respondents) saw no problem and the remaining 56% (10) were divided equally between positive and negative responses.

Data on the demand for front streets parking either by occupants or their employees was analysed for each zone:-

- **Zone 1:** Church St/High St from Harley Jenkins St up to but excluding the Town Hall. On most days from Tuesday to Saturday, between 24% and 34% of spaces are taken up by occupants who responded. In addition, a further 21% are taken up by occupants, for long periods on most days of the week. As however only 18% of residents and 42% of businesses are represented in these figures there is likely to be a significant increase in take up of spaces if the

additional residents and businesses are taken into consideration. This suggests that, on most days of the week, only a small proportion of spaces are free for shoppers and visitors to use;

- **Zone 2:** Market Square; Salop St. and; Bull St. The demand for on street parking spaces by respondents puts great pressure on available spaces. On any given day, between 14 and 20 vehicles in total are likely to try to access the 20 spaces available. As this represents the parking requirement of less than 26% of all occupants of Zone 2 and only 38% of businesses who don't reside in the zone, then the actual demand is likely to be significantly greater. Availability of space for customers of the retail and hospitality premises in this part of town appears negligible and is reflected in some respondent's comments;
- **Zone 3:** Church St. from Harley Jenkins St. to the Boar's Head crossroads. On most days between 3 and 5 cars are parked on street for between 6 and 8 hours per day, the majority in Church St. In addition, 2 other vehicles are parked occasionally on street for long periods and 3 additional vehicles use the Church St. car park. Station St. is used by another 2 to 3 vehicles for long stay parking. Whilst these cars are well within the parking capacity of this part of Church St., the response reflects less than 27% of the zone's occupants so the real pressure on parking spaces in Station St. from occupants of the zone is difficult to determine.

The results from both the Parking and Occupants' Surveys demonstrate that: -

- There is always spare parking capacity somewhere in the town but some key front streets experience problems that, if at all possible, need to be addressed;
- Parking on yellow lines is not enforceable by law and frequently they are being ignored (e.g. in Market Square) so, regardless of their visual impact on the historic environment, their efficacy is questionable;
- Parking on pavements is an increasing problem for pedestrians, prams and wheelchair users especially on streets that are important pedestrian routes to significant destinations (e.g. in Salop Street which is a key route to the doctors' surgery and the bus stop);
- There is an absence of parking for residents in certain areas (e.g. Welsh Street) which inevitably leads to parking on pavements;
- Inconsiderate parking, including in passing places on the High St. and close to the junction of Market Square and Salop St. frequently causes traffic congestion and/or incidents;
- The desire to be able to park immediately adjacent to a chosen destination whether because of mobility issues or conditioning to the modern retail experience is unlikely to be assuaged;
- The demand for on street parking space by occupants of the front street's premises suggests that, at least in zones 1 and 2 there is minimal space available for use by shoppers and visitors;
- On the basis of the responses to the Occupants' Survey there is no overwhelming preference either for or against the possible signage, speed bumps or one way system 'solutions', even from the zone that would be most affected by them.

The Public Consultation

Various possible solutions to address traffic and parking issues were displayed at the Public Consultations held in June 2016 to gain the views of the community as to their priorities and responses. Details are provided in ANNEX G Figures 2, 3 and 4. The following solutions received the greatest positive response, in order of preference:-

- **Better signage** – on the entrances to town to direct visitors to car parks and also in the town centre itself;
- **Create a map of Bishop's Castle** - to show the location of car parks, etc;
- **The re-modelling of the Boar's Head crossroads** - this has long been a problematic junction with poor sightlines; no pavements on part of it but comprising a busy junction for both pedestrians and traffic. A trial realignment of the junction which involved confusing road markings was recently abandoned and the priority reverted to Church St. Another attempt is suggested to remodel the junction to encourage the use of Station St. by traffic not needing to go into the town centre;

- **Erecting bollards in Salop Street** - to prevent the current on-kerb parking that currently makes pedestrian movement hazardous;
- **One-Way system in the High Street** – views at the Public Consultation session were polarised. More research and consultation is needed together with Shropshire Council.

The Way Forward

The immediate tasks following approval of the plan will be:-

- To investigate the potential for better signage at the entrances and in town to direct people to car parks;
- To instigate consultation with Shropshire Council highways department to assess the potential to trial a one-way system for a limited period and/or evaluate the likely impact of defining Church Street/High Street from the Boar’s Head junction, as Access-Only. **This requires immediate attention because of its relevance to the forthcoming Place Plan review and Shropshire Council’s allocation of budget.**

Shopping Priorities

Empty shops, a tired appearance and the loss of services and the Friday market were the key things mentioned in the Community Survey as contributing to a sense that the high street is struggling. The actions identified in this Action Plan to support and revitalise the town centre’s shops were displayed at the Public Consultation meetings for feedback. The top 3 actions according to visitor comments were:

- **Celebrate what makes Bishop’s Castle unique;**
- **Create a local produce and traders’ directory;**
- **Create a joint delivery service for local goods.**

See ANNEX G Figure 5 for further details.

Townscape Feedback

The vibrancy of the community is reflected in the vibrancy of the townscape. Together they help make up what the community values most about Bishop’s Castle’s unique character (see ANNEX G Figure 6). The town centre lies at the heart of the Conservation Area which includes a number of listed buildings, some dating back to the 16th century with narrow streets and shuts and a gradient of 1 in 6 on the High St. However, this ‘chocolate box’ image belies the reality as part of what is unique about Bishop’s Castle is that it’s Conservation Area is a living entity, continually incorporating modifications to its historic architecture.

Thus you will find a medieval building decorated with a modern metal sculpture; 16th century architecture juxtaposed with building facades, decorated with bright, fun, fantasy images and; Bishop’s Castle’s answer to ‘Banksy’s’ graffiti art – a sprinkling of knit-bombing which incorporates a High St. telephone kiosk and a Post Office letter box. Not everything is to everyone’s taste but that is another feature of the community that is highly valued (see ANNEX G Figure 6) – a pragmatic, imaginative population that is tolerant of others.

As change is a continuous process and one which the community celebrates, to ensure that the Conservation Area continues to be a vibrant, living entity into the future, the Action Plan proposes an audit of the central area of the Conservation Area to include a visual impact of what exists and an assessment of areas that are safe or sensitive to future development with a view to the town’s likely needs in the future.



Bishop's Castle's unique heritage - where traditional Medieval building styles live side-by-side with modern artistic humour



The C16th Porch House



The 'Zippy house' painted in 2016

TOWN CENTRE ACTION PLAN

What? (Objectives)	How? (Actions)	Who? ¹ (Who Could Help?)	Priority H / M / L
<p>1. SHOPPING</p> <p>Seek ways to support and revitalise the town centre's shops</p>	<p>Encourage people to shop locally:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. explore how to celebrate what makes Bishop's Castle unique; II. explore what might be done to ensure retail trading in Bishop's Castle is sustainable; III. market what the town has to offer (e.g. create map of shops and car parks, online directory, including opening times, etc.); IV. link to local produce and traders' directory; V. seek ways to increase parking spaces close to shops; VI. explore a joint delivery service for local goods; VII. support on-line trading for local shops; VIII. work with traders to re-establish a Traders' Group; IX. consider running a 'support your local shops' campaign; X. better link opportunities for shopping to the town's festivals; XI. explore ways to develop a wide variety of markets in the town; XII. consider staging events to attract shoppers (see Economy plan). <p>Establish the collection of relevant Key Performance Indicators on the retail sector in the town to facilitate future analysis, e.g. number of vacant shops.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Centre Working Group • Tourism Group • Traders • Enterprise House, BC Business Support Unit 	H
<p>2. TRAFFIC FLOW</p> <p>Highlight problems caused by town centre traffic and identify potential solutions</p>	<p>Explore, test and implement possible solutions resulting from 'Occupants Survey' and public consultation, for example:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. a one-way street scheme in the High Street; II. making the High Street 'Access Only' to reduce through-traffic; III. placing speed bumps in the High Street; IV. improved signage; V. deploying bollards to prevent on-kerb parking in Salop Street; VI. the remodelling of the 'Boar's Head junction'; VII. the closure Bull Street to through traffic VIII. relevant actions to alleviate problems in other highlighted town centre streets <p>Explore potential sources of funding to address the issues identified</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Centre Working group 	H

¹ This table contains examples of groups who may be able to help with this work, but not all have yet been contacted.

TOWN CENTRE ACTION PLAN

What? (Objectives)	How? (Actions)	Who? (Who Could Help?)	Priority H / M / L
<p>3. PARKING</p> <p>Examine perceived town centre parking difficulties and identify potential solutions</p>	<p>Explore, test and implement possible solutions resulting from ‘Parking Survey’ and public consultation:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. improve signage to existing car parks (including signs in the car parks to where alternative parking maybe found if full); II. better information on shopping and parking in Bishop’s Castle for visitors (see Shopping and Tourism actions); III. better use of existing parking capacity - e.g. marking out parking bays in Church Street car park. <p>Explore potential sources of funding to address the issues identified</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Centre Working group 	H
<p>4. TOWNSCAPE</p> <p>Consider the importance of the town centre townscape to both the local and tourism economy and ensure that development and change do not compromise the heritage of the built environment</p>	<p>Maximise the unique character of Bishop’s Castle by preserving its heritage:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. explore ways in which the Conservation Area could be better valued and protected; II. undertake a Visual Impact / Vacancy survey, establish the collection of relevant Key Performance Indicators and create a Design Statement; III. identify areas that are safe or sensitive for development including land in and around the Auction Yard on Station Street; IV. Town Council to consult over sensitive planning development; V. promote a refresh of the ‘knit-bombing’ and other unique displays around town; VI. make better use of specific areas of the town centre for tourism, recreation and the local economy e.g. enhance facilities for outdoor eating (see tourism actions). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Centre Working group • Tourism Group • Town Trail • Civic Society 	M

4.2. Community and Services

The Context

This theme pulls together how our community interacts with the services that make this town a great place to live in. It covers issues for young people and for an ageing population. It highlights how we are reliant on people volunteering to help. It shows what services are available locally both from the public and private sector. In the current period of austerity and the associated decline of public services, it is vital for Bishop's Castle to be pro-active and to seek alternative strategies to maintain those services of value to the community.

During the consultation process we asked the community to devise a list of services and events that make this town thrive – these are given in Appendix H.

As part of our Public Consultation meetings, we asked the community if local people would be prepared to pay more to the Town Council as part of their Council Tax if that money would be used to help maintain threatened services. The results are in Annex I demonstrating that there is willingness by those who took part in the consultation to pay more for these services in the future.

Saving SpArC ('Sport and Arts in the Community')

SpArC is the name of the sports, leisure and arts centre in Bishops Castle. Recent threats to SpArC over its funding have highlighted how vulnerable such services are to this community. SpArC serves the town and wider community of villages, hamlets and numerous small schools in this comparatively remote part of Shropshire. The number of users of the facility from the wider regional community is approximately 72,000 per annum. In January 2016 Shropshire County Council announced that its support funding would cease in March 2017. This means that SpArC will close unless funds can be raised to save it.

Consequently, a movement is underway led by a group of volunteers called 'Save the SpArC' Campaign (<https://savethesparc.org>) to raise (initially) £50,000 to refurbish the swimming pool. This team has applied to Marks and Spencer for a £13,000 grant to provide a cover for the pool which will help reduce running costs by up to 15% per day. Elsewhere numerous fund-raising activities have so far generated approximately £35,000.

'Save The SpArC' has applied for charitable status and are working with various groups (including Shropshire County Council) to establish a board of trustees. It is hoped that they will be able to steer the running of this important centre during the next 12 months.

The impact of losing SpArC on the community would be significant, with much-used facilities disappearing from the town and affecting the following groups of people:-

- primary and secondary school pupils;
- users of fitness classes, gym and retired patrons;
- GP' referrals, for heart disease, obesity and those with special needs;
- leisure and patrons of the SpArC theatre.

Volunteer Bureau

It is proposed to develop a volunteer bureau which would help established and potential new groups with the 'paper work' needed and provide a network of helpers. As services come under threat they are likely to depend upon the help of volunteers to continue. The proposed bureau will strengthen the recruitment and organisation of such volunteers enabling organisations to quickly respond to changing circumstances.

Enterprise South West Shropshire

Enterprise South West Shropshire is a key delivery partner in providing services to Bishop's Castle and the wider community including:

- the local public library;
- a drop-in IT Centre;
- the Village Outreach equipment loan project;
- the local SpArC Theatre;
- business support;
- the Artificial Sports Pitch;
- as well providing ongoing support to local community groups, Parish Councils and schools.

The transfer of the day-to-day running of the library to Enterprise South West Shropshire in 2016 is a good example of how Bishop's Castle is able to respond to threats to public services by seeking alternative ways to maintain community services by bringing them into local control. The library has remained in its existing location and opening times will have not been affected. Existing library staff has transferred to Enterprise South West Shropshire, who continue to provide the same range of services.

Bishop's Castle Schools

The schools in Bishop's Castle, together with other local primary schools, have formed The South-West Shropshire Learning Trust. This is a family of 12 local schools, including Bishop's Castle Primary School and Bishop's Castle Community College. These schools work strategically together with partner organisations on behalf of the community towards a shared vision of outstanding educational provision for all. All of the schools in the Trust are either good or outstanding and believe that sustained success is best achieved through collaboration and not competition.

Bishop's Castle has an ageing population, resulting in falling rolls at its schools. The 'per pupil' funding formula for schools announced in 2013, coupled with increased national insurance and pension contributions for every member of staff, plus a 1% teachers' pay rise has hit small rural schools very hard. The government's current school academisation programme does not fit with such schools that commonly have budgetary problems due to the lack of the economies of scale that urban schools benefit from.

The Bishop's Castle Crowgate Child Centre and the Sure Start Children's Centre are both highly valued by the community.

We will track this theme's outcomes using measures such as:-

Young people – identify what is missing and monitor the provision

Volunteers – Set up and then the number of groups it helps

Services – number of services and events as per annex

Ageing population – identify what is there and what is missing – monitor the provision

COMMUNITY and SERVICES ACTION PLAN

What? (Issues)	How? (Actions)	² Who? (Who Could Help?)	Priority H / M / L
<p>1. YOUNG PEOPLE</p> <p>To examine opportunities to improve the provision of facilities to meet the needs of young people in terms of:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • educational provision; • leisure pursuits; • employment support; • job opportunities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify what services are available, what is missing and create an action plan to address the issues. • Work with partner organisations to explore opportunities to improve the provision of facilities to meet the needs of young people in the future. 	<p>South Shropshire Youth Forum SpArC Community College Primary School South-West Shropshire Learning Trust Youth Groups (Scouts, AMP) Town Council Other Parish Councils Shropshire Council</p>	M
<p>2. VOLUNTEERS</p> <p>To recognise the vital place of volunteers in the fabric of the town and its activities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a 'Volunteer Bureau - Exchange and Information Service' for such things as:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • constitutions; • funding; • meeting places; • volunteer directory 	<p>All Voluntary Groups CoE/ Methodist / Age UK Dial-a-Ride / Carers Group</p>	M

² This table contains examples of groups who may be able to help with this work, but not all have yet been contacted.

COMMUNITY and SERVICES ACTION PLAN

What? (Issues)	How? (Actions)	Who? (Who Could Help?)	Priority H / M / L
<p>3. SERVICES</p> <p>To address the issue of continuing threats to the provision of statutory services, in particular:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the threatened closure of SpArC; • the need for better provision and co-ordination of local health facilities; • the perceived need for more adult education and evening classes; • rural poverty arising from increased costs of housing; • transport and fuel whilst wages remain stagnant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List those services identified as important to the town. Identify those that are statutory those that are voluntary. Publicise this information.(See Annex H) • Explore options of asset transfer and raise money through the 'Save The SpArC' Campaign to secure the future of the SpArC for the local community. • Evaluate the raising the local precept will produce enough to help provide support to some of these services. (See Annex I) • Support and campaign to save local services which come under threat in future. 	<p>Town Council / Coverage Care The Grange /The Pines NHS- Stone House /Patients Group 'Save The SpArC' Campaign / BC library / U3A Enterprise House / Surgery Community College Primary School South-West Shropshire Learning Trust</p>	H
<p>4. AN AGEING POPULATION</p> <p>To develop more volunteer activities to address the withdrawal of Council services, particularly for the elderly.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify the needs of this demographic • explore the possibility of becoming a dementia friendly town 	<p>Town Council / Coverage Care The Grange /The Pines NHS- Stone House /Patients Group SpArC / BC library / U3A Enterprise House / Surgery</p>	M

4.3. Infrastructure

The Context

The Infrastructure theme seeks to address many of the underlying issues associated with being a small and isolated rural town as raised by the Community Survey. In particular: the inadequacy of transport for access to work, leisure and services for those without a car; specific traffic and highways issues leading into and out of the town; seeking ways to overcome rural social exclusion and identifying improvements to prevent flooding, and reviewing street lighting needs. Many of these issues are also to be found in the current Place Plan for Bishop's Castle (see ANNEX E)

INFRASTRUCTURE ACTION PLAN			
What? (Objectives)	How? (Actions)	Who? ³ (Who Could Help?)	Priority H / M / L
1. TRANSPORT Address the difficulties of access for work, leisure and services	I. Expand and co-ordinate volunteer drivers for Community transport (e.g. Dial-a-Ride) through the BC Business Support Unit [BSU] database II. Publicise Dial-a-Ride service and the Wheels to Work scheme to the community III. Establish the feasibility of an on-line lift-sharing facility IV. Seek ways to preserve public transport links V. Establish the collection of statistics regarding the number of people served by community transport as a KPI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CLP Steering group • Dial-a-Ride • Bus Users Group • Wheels to Work • Enterprise House BSU 	M
2. TRAFFIC and HIGHWAYS Assess issues and seek solutions to traffic and highways related problems leading into and out of the town	I. Assess issues and seek solutions for traffic/pedestrian conflicts, especially with regard to Montgomery Road, Kerry Lane and Love Lane. II. Explore possibility of use of social media and other means to publicise and discuss issues e.g. road closures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CLP Steering group • Town Centre Working group 	M
3. RURAL SOCIAL EXCLUSION Monitor and consider solutions to overcome rural digital exclusion (e.g. improved broadband, mobile phones, etc.)	I. Apply pressure to ensure improvements to broadband and mobile phone infrastructure for residents and businesses; II. Establish the collection of statistics regarding local bandwidth as a KPI III. Explore the possible use of social media and other means to provide a mechanism for dissemination of information and feedback. IV. Publicise the Shropshire RCC Community Fuel Buying Scheme to help reduce costs for individual households V. Exploring options for setting-up a local bulk purchase oil scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CLP Steering group • Shropshire RCC 	M

^{3 3} This table contains examples of groups who may be able to help with this work, but not all have yet been contacted.

INFRASTRUCTURE ACTION PLAN

What? (Objectives)	How? (Actions)	Who? ⁴ (Who Could Help?)	Priority H / M / L
<p>4. INFRASTRUCTURE</p> <p>Identify improvements to prevent flooding, such as blocked drains, and review street lighting needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. Explore the possible use of social media and other means to provide a mechanism for dissemination of information and feedback. II. See Sustainability Action 2 iii regarding tree-planting to management catchment area run-off. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CLP Steering group 	<p align="center">M</p>

4.4. Development

The Context

Adopted Policies

Map 1 on page 5 identifies those policies, adopted by Shropshire Council that will determine the future development of the town. In principle, growth will be limited to the area defined by the Development Boundary which now includes the SAMDev housing site on School House Lane. The Development Boundary also contains the as yet undeveloped Business Park at the junction of Love Lane and the B4385 which is currently the subject of discussions regarding a possible asset transfer to a community group. This issue is covered by the Economy Action Plan.

As regards future housing development, the only exceptions to the Development Boundary restriction are sites outside the boundary that have already been granted planning permission, including land at both Woodbatch Road and Lavender Bank, and any future provision of affordable housing under the 'exception sites' policy which allows for development beyond the boundary only where the affordable housing criteria are met (see Annex D)

The Community Survey

The second most important issue identified in the 2014 Community Survey was the need to provide more affordable housing to ensure the retention of local young adults and families (40% of responses). ANNEX A, Table 1 also shows that the number of retired residents is significantly higher than the national average, supporting concerns expressed in the Community Survey that the aging population is putting inevitable strain on services.

In addition, 34% of respondents identified improvements to the townscape and infrastructure both in the centre and immediate surroundings as necessary to secure the future economy, and 15% referred to the challenge of accommodating the necessary changes and improvements without compromising the charm and vitality that is Bishop's Castle.

These are the factors that inform the Development Action Plan. Three of its Objectives are amplified below:

Affordable Housing

Whilst the community related the housing need in Bishop's Castle to affordable units, housing development is now driven by the government's national strategy which requires all housing authorities such as Shropshire Council to identify the total housing requirement across the county over a 5 year period and ensure the provision of deliverable sites to accommodate it. As part of this process land has been allocated at School House Lane for 40 houses.

In addition, Shropshire Council have forecast that up to a further 30 dwellings could be provided on 'ad hoc' sites in Bishop's Castle by 2026. These are in addition to sites which had received planning approval pre 2012 but which remain undeveloped. Should the site at School House Lane be developed to its full capacity, it would be required to include 8 affordable units. However it would not be necessary to allocate them to local people. The additional 30 dwellings would not necessarily include any affordable units.

The Scope for Affordable Housing

The need for affordable housing was the single issue that concerned the great majority of Bishop's Castle residents in the 2004/5 Parish Plan. More than 10 years later it remains, at 40% of responses, a pre-eminent issue for the community, matched only by concern for the lack of job opportunities (identified by 41% of respondents).

Shropshire Council has adopted a strong affordable housing strategy. There are however some serious limitations regarding the ability to deliver affordable housing to local people:-

- To date the main providers of affordable housing in Bishop's Castle, whether for rent or shared ownership, have been Housing Associations. Only 1 unit, adjacent to the Auction Yard has been provided by a private developer, the Community Land Trust, and there have been a few single 'self-build' properties built on exception sites beyond the town but within the Parish boundary.

The ability of Housing Associations to continue to provide affordable housing has however been impacted by recent government directives and the fact that grants are no longer available for the development of rental accommodation. New build by Housing Associations will now be dependent on them generating sufficient income from commercial activities to make a project viable but any gains from increased commercial activity will be nullified by the government's imposition of rent reductions on Housing Association homes until 2020.

- There is no requirement to allocate the affordable housing element of an open market development to local residents. Similarly, unless the development is on an exception site (land that is outside the development boundary and which is therefore only eligible for development as affordable housing), local connection criteria do not take precedence over a Housing Association's own criteria of housing need when allocating affordable housing.
- The current discounted sale/resale value of a 3-4 bed affordable house translates as £140k. In terms of local wage rates this may put purchase of affordable housing beyond the reach of some local residents.

Further background on the opportunities and difficulties of delivering affordable housing in the future is provided in ANNEX J.

Managed Development and Provision for the Elderly

Central to the MANAGED DEVELOPMENT objective are the Conservation Area and the landscape around the Development Boundary (both defined on Map 1, page 5). The community places great value on both the townscape and the surrounding landscape, in terms of everyday living and because of its importance to the local economy. Implementation of the two tasks identified in this Objective will however be dependent on finding interested volunteers within the community with the appropriate skills.

As regards the Objective **Provision for the Elderly**, at least one of the retirement facilities in Bishop's Castle has been full for the majority of the time over the last 16 years and it is felt that, given the population demographic, demand for further provision of some form of assisted living for the elderly is likely to continue.

DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN

What? (Objectives)	How? (Actions)	Who? ⁵ (Who Could Help?)	Priority H / M / L
<p>1. AFFORDABLE HOUSING</p> <p>Stimulate opportunities for the development of Affordable Housing suitable for local, young adults and families.</p>	<p>I. Bring together those who may be interested in developing sites/buildings within Bishop’s Castle’s existing development boundary to explore the scope for their development.</p>	<p>Community Land Trust Housing Associations Local land and property owners Shropshire County Council</p>	H
	<p>II. Implement existing ideas for ‘Live-Work’ workshops that are being explored in the Business Park Business Plan</p>	<p>Community Land Trust Enterprise South West Shropshire</p>	H
	<p>III. Bring together potential developers and providers of sites for affordable housing beyond Bishop’s Castle’s existing development boundary (that would not conflict with outcomes of the landscape evaluations undertaken for Objective 2).</p>	<p>Community Land Trust Housing Associations Local land and property owners. Shropshire Housing Group</p>	H
<p>2. MANAGED DEVELOPMENT</p> <p>Facilitate development and change without compromising the charm and vitality of the town and its environment</p>	<p>Explore ways in which we might safeguard our environment e.g.</p>		
	<p>I. Undertake a landscape/land use evaluation of the Conservation Area to highlight sensitive locations and identify issues to be considered in future development. (This would be incorporated with the Town Centre Conservation area studies)</p>	<p>Shropshire Council Historical Environment Team Town Centre Working group Tourism Group Civic Society</p>	H/M
	<p>II. Undertake a landscape evaluation of areas adjacent to but outside the development boundary which would be sensitive to development for environmental or other reasons but which could be available for development under the exception sites policy.</p>	<p>Tourism Group Footpath Group Proposed Farmers’ forum</p>	H
<p>III. Establish the collection of relevant Key Performance Indicators to facilitate future analysis of change e.g. the number of vacant properties/sites; environmentally sensitive sites etc.</p>	<p>Development Working Group</p>		

⁵ This table contains examples of groups who may be able to help with this work, but not all have yet been contacted.

DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN

What? (Objectives)	How? (Actions)	Who? (Who Could Help?)	Priority H / M / L
<p>3. PROVISION for the ELDERLY</p> <p>Provide for the housing needs of increasingly aging population.</p>	<p>Investigate potential future availability of sites of easy access (flat land with access to the town centre) that could be suitable for development for accommodation for the elderly.</p>	<p>Shropshire County Council Local land and property owners Accommodation Providers</p>	<p>M</p>
<p>4. RETENTION of YOUNG PEOPLE</p> <p>To help redress the imbalance of an increasingly ageing population by providing opportunities to young adults and families.</p>	<p>Explore ways to create both housing and job opportunities and provide facilities and opportunities that ensure the retention of young people in the community. These are covered by the affordable housing suggestions above and by actions identified in the Economy Action Plan</p>	<p>Ref above and the Economy and Community and Services Action Plans</p>	<p>Ref above and the Economy Action Plan</p>

4.5. Economy

The Context

Bishop's Castle Business Park Project

An exciting opportunity for Bishop's Castle is the development of a Business Park. This project is being led by a partnership consisting of Bishop's Castle Town Council, Enterprise South West Shropshire and the Bishop's Castle and District Community Land Trust, with support from our new County Councillor Jonny Keeley. The Project is seeking the transfer of the existing Bishop's Castle Business Park land from Shropshire Council into the ownership of the BC Community Land Trust for no cost.

The project's objective is to deliver more jobs for the benefit of the local community and help to support growth and sustain a local rural economy. As well as offering facilities for medium and larger enterprises, it recognises the need to further stimulate additional employment opportunities through support of small business and start-up units. It is currently creating a business case for submission to Shropshire Council to prove the financial viability of the project.

The aspirations of the Bishop's Castle and District Community Land Trust are:-

- to deliver more jobs for the benefit of the local community;
- to support growth and sustain a local rural economy.

The key aims of the Business Park Project are to focus on:-

- providing affordable housing to local people;
- premises for small businesses;
- making land available for allotments, market gardens, orchards and woodland; and
- acquiring and holding land for any other use of benefit to the people of Bishop's Castle and District.

Bishop's Castle 'Business Support Unit'

The Bishop's Castle 'Business Support Unit' [BSU] suggested in this plan is intended to give additional support to the business and volunteer communities in Bishop's Castle. It will be based in and under the control of Enterprise House. In addition to extra voluntary, part-time, unpaid roles, there would also be resource implications for Enterprise House - see ANNEX K

Enterprise South West Shropshire is critical to the success of Bishop's Castle, but also has a remit to serve the wider south-west of Shropshire. It has a range of offices and workshops as well as its own facilities. It houses the local Public Library as well as the Council Registrar's Office and Customer Services. It runs an IT Centre, the Village Outreach project (equipment hire service), an outdoor sports pitch and the SpArC Theatre. The 'Reaching Communities' project in the Action Plan is being pursued by Enterprise House to ensure the future for their services.

Farming and Tourism

Farming, and its associated support businesses, forms an important local source of employment. This Plan identifies the need to explore ways to acknowledge this importance; to identify and manage any issues or concerns, and ensure that the close link between town and countryside is maintained.

The Economy Action Plan contains many suggestions on maintaining and improving Tourism, a critical requirement the economy of Bishop's Castle. The actions listed in this Plan are drawn from the Bishop's Castle and Clun Tourism Plan.

Key Performance indicators will need to be established. These may include measurement of the number of new jobs created by the Business Park and growth in the number of registered volunteers on the new database.

ECONOMY ACTION PLAN

What? (Objectives)	How? (Actions)	Who? ⁶ (Who could help?)	Priority H / M / L
<p>1. JOBS</p> <p>To address the need for lack of job opportunities other than of low wage</p>	<p>1a. Business Park Project: over its 15-year existence, the Business Park has not been developed to its full potential. This project's remit is to develop and create new employment opportunities for the benefit of the local community, to support growth and assist with sustaining the local rural economy by:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. creating a viable business plan to achieve asset transfer from Shropshire Council; ii. raising funds to create necessary infrastructure (roads, drainage, buildings, etc.); iii. developing business opportunities and managing the site. 	<p>1a. .i, ii & iii</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community Land Trust [CLT], - Enterprise South West Shropshire [ESWS], - Town Council 	H
	<p>1b. Publicise existing business support activities carried out by Enterprise South West Shropshire and extends its remit as a Business Support Unit [BSU] to undertake additional activities, such as:- Acting as a focal point for local businesses to:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. meet and discuss changes required to improve the local economy, II. draw-up a business strategy, III. assist in the promotion of these outputs and other retail activities. 	<p>1b. I ,ii & iii</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ESWS BSU - Volunteers 	M
	<p>1c. Recognise the importance of farming as a local employer by using the newly-formed BC BSU to explore establishing a 'Farmers' Forum' to assist with identifying farming issues and solutions, and acting as a link with the local community. This could be done by:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. assessing the scale of interest in the farming community; II. if viable, setting-up and supporting the Farmers' Forum. 	<p>1c. ESWS BSU, NFU Young Farmers, Country Landowners' Association [CLA]</p>	M

⁶ This table contains examples of groups who may be able to help with this work, but not all have yet been contacted.

ECONOMY ACTION PLAN

What? (Objectives)	How? (Actions)	Who? (Who could help?)	Priority H / M / L
<p>2. MAINTENANCE of our ENVIRONMENT</p> <p>To address the importance of the landscape both within the town and its environs and as the basis for the tourism economy</p>	2a. Led by the Farmers' Forum (see Objective 1c), bring together local Farmers and civic groups to draw-up a working paper containing ideas on how to give priority to maintaining a high-quality landscape and environment as a primary resource for local people and for sustainable tourism.	ESWS (BC BSU), Town Council, SCC, AONB, BCCIC, BC PPP & Footpath Group, Town Plan Sustainability WG, BC Walking Group, BC Cycling Group.	L
	2b. Make local walks more accessible improving footpath way-markers to match the local numbered Walk Sheets issued by the Town Hall and number the stiles to improve maintenance identification issues.	BC Footpath Group, BC & Clun Walking Groups, BC PPP	M
	2c. Seek tourist feedback by including a pull-out sheet inside the Town Hall's Walk Sheets to find out where walkers shop, eat and stay in Bishop's Castle to help assess the benefits to the local economy.	BC Footpath Group	M
	2d. Sustain the material and resource support for BC PPP footpath repair group.	Shropshire Council	H

ECONOMY ACTION PLAN

What? (Objectives)	How? (Actions)	Who? (Who could help?)	Priority H / M / L
3. ATTRACTING EMPLOYMENT To address the difficulties in attracting businesses and employers to the town	3a. 'Reaching Communities' project, which will enable the replacement of capital equipment (e.g. Enterprise House, Village Outreach, the Library and SpArC Theatre), plus some revenue funding for ESWS administration and future-proofing. To be achieved by:- i. pursuing grant funding; ii. procuring capital equipment iii. investing to meet ESWS's future needs.	3a. i, ii & iii ESWS	H
	3b. Create and maintain an on-line directory giving details of following local facilities:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • skills-sharing (free and charged) • volunteers (listing volunteering opportunities) • local traders • local produce and products • local services (e.g. plumbers, builders, etc.) This will be done by:- i. advertising the on-line facility and mediating responses ii. creating and hosting the on-line engine iii. entering and maintaining data	3b i. Volunteer(s), Town Hall, ESWS ii. ESWS iii. Volunteer(s)	M
	3c. Business Park Project (see Objective 1).		

ECONOMY ACTION PLAN

What? (Objectives)	How? (Actions)	Who? (Who could help?)	Priority H / M / L
<p>4. PROMOTE and SUPPORT TOURISM</p> <p>To address issues that recognise the importance of tourism to the economy of the town and to consider drawing-up a business strategy including improved promotion of the Town.</p>	<p>4a. Actively pursue top priority actions laid down in the Bishop's Castle and Clun Tourism Plan (March 2014). These are:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. develop the unique identity of each town in relation to the destination brand; ii. provide effective information material for each town; iii. provide a high quality of visitor facilities, services and amenities; iv. deliver a creative experience of the town's heritage, through sites, trails and interpretation; v. co-ordinate and promote a programme of events between the towns; vi. encourage and support and distinctive retail experience; vii. provide clear access links between the towns and the countryside. 	<p>4a. I - vii Town Hall Trust, Bishop's Castle & Clun Tourism Group, ESWS (BC BSU), BC Cycle Group, Cycle Shop</p>	H
	<p>4b. BC BSU to assist with business strategy and promotion of the town, and co-ordination of the work of the Tourism and other groups.</p>	ESWS (BC BSU)	M
	<p>4c. BC BSU to explore the need for a BC Festivals' forum to reduce duplication of effort in fund-raising, publicity, and to develop future events planning, liaising with Pubs, B&Bs, etc.</p> <p>e.g. establish an Events Stewards group (cf. Newtown)</p>	ESWS (BC BSU)	M
	<p>4d. Establish an electric car charging point to encourage more electric-car-owners to visit the town</p>	BCCE	M
	<p>4e. Actively pursue promotion of the Town to encourage visitors, in particular:=-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. more promotion of the countryside; II. more promotion of BC as the 'friendly town'; III. more information about facilities in the town e.g. improved signpost for Library IV. improve availability of information on activities for children V. more off-season promotion work. 	<p>4e. I - v BC & Clun Tourism Group, ESWS (BC BSU) Town Hall trust</p>	H

ECONOMY ACTION PLAN

What? (Objectives)	How? (Actions)	Who? (Who could help?)	Priority H / M / L
	<p>4f. Assist businesses with training courses, such as:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. marketing/Internet Marketing II. web-site and social media development III. tailored advice to improve the market penetration of website IV. compliance with regulations 	4f. I - iv ESWS BSU	M
	4g. Develop cycling off-and-on road routes leaflets (e.g. the Robert Smith route)	BC Cycling Group	M
	<p>4h. Further enhance the use of the town centre for tourism (see Town Centre plan) by:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. creating an outdoor space where people can sit and watch the world go by while enjoying food and drink. e.g. the area below the Town Hall or the Old Market Square ii. exploring the potential for either a temporary or permanent level platform in front of the Town Hall for entertainment, etc. 	4h. I & ii Town Council /Town Centre WG / Town Hall Trust / Civic Society	L
	4i. Actively support Shropshire Council and the Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership in their efforts to develop a new independent organisation for the Shropshire Hills AONB.	Town Council	L

4.6. Sustainability

The Context. The concept of ‘Sustainability’ is not new and is now largely accepted world-wide. It has a variety of definitions: the UN’s ‘World Commission on Environment and Development’, more widely referred to as the Brundtland Commission, defined it as: “. . . *development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*”.

Closer to home, Shropshire Council’s Sustainability strategy states that: “*Our vision for Shropshire is to stabilise and progressively reduce our environmental footprint*”, and adds: “. . . *the council recognises the impact that its day-to-day activities have on the environment, as well as the importance of managing the resources used. Through our Sustainability, Environment and Climate Change Policy, we aim to reduce our resource consumption as an authority, and to promote sustainable practices throughout our organisation, with partners and the county as a whole. The localism agenda will be used to empower communities to become more sustainable and climate resilient*”. [<https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/sustainability/sustainability-policy-communications/sustainability-policy/>]

All of the actions in the table below are, perhaps appropriately for the subject, dependent on local volunteers, individuals and groups. But, however enthusiastic and willing the volunteers are, these tasks need the support, practical and financial, of local and national government, if they are to succeed.

On the renewable energy front, as a result of present Government policies, Bishop’s Castle Community Energy Co-operative has advised that the opportunities for commissioning community renewable energy projects are, at present, very limited. If future opportunities arise they are likely to be wind or solar ones, both of which will require support from the community.

On energy efficiency, Lightfoot and BCCE are developing a pilot project to help tackle the problems created by climate change and the effects of austerity on the health and well-being of local people in the mid-Marches, specifically focussed on addressing the vacuum created by the failure of the Green Deal, and aimed at off-gas rural housing with solid wall insulation.

For local food production, the recent discovery that Bishop’s Castle was the birthplace of Sir Albert Howard, one of the founders of the organic movement, has encouraged the establishment of an Albert Howard Society which has a project to acquire land and develop it as a community asset that would be good for our economy, by encouraging tourists, creating employment, and also for our local environment and community. It is proposed to run the Community Garden as a not-for-profit organisation. The small-holding will include an educational and training aspect, with community volunteers and public access. It would provide the opportunity for local people, of all ages, to be involved in growing and tending crops collectively. This style of cooperative working often draws in people who would not normally apply for an individual allotment. It will include:-

- an area of raised beds which offer the opportunity for older residents, care home residents and others to be involved;
- the development of a weekly market at which vegetable produce and gardening material is sold, in tandem with the Town Hall Farmers’ Market;
- a drop-in, open access workshop and craft sheds which will help to break down social isolation and make a contribution to mental and physical health. It will also add footfall to the crop growing area, helping to encourage use and a volunteer stream, whilst promoting health and wellbeing.
- the involvement of schools and family groups which will meet curriculum requirements to understand where food comes from and contribute to healthy eating with links to Grow Cook Eat projects.

This Community Food Market Garden ticks a lot of existing National Goals and the inclusion of a programme of education and training may well open the project to other revenue streams through the Health and Education Services, and local GP and Psychiatric services. It will also support the Public Health Outcomes framework 2013-2016, and, importantly, Sir Albert’s world-wide reputation creates a new tourism opportunity for Bishop’s Castle.

Waste and re-cycling are in the hands of Shropshire Council. BCCE assist with the cardboard collection site at Crowgate and were looking at ways of expanding cardboard collection, but Veolia is now promising improved collection of cardboard later this year. There is a growing concern nationally over Food waste and more exploration is needed to find out what can be done about it locally.

The essence of Ecological Enterprise Zones and the Transition Town concept is building resilience at the community level, in all aspects of life: e.g. energy and food supply with an aim to increase self-sufficiency through encouraging local production, to reduce the potential effects of peak oil, climate destruction, and economic instability. As a matter of necessity, the initiatives are purely grass-roots, since even local governments are behind the curve on the issue. But it is also a matter of preference. If a low-carbon future means reliance on community resources, no one knows those better than the locals. The best known example of a Transition Town in Britain is Totnes. (<http://www.transitiontowntotnes.org/>)

SUSTAINABILITY ACTION PLAN

What? (Objectives)	How? (Actions)	Who? (Who could help?)	Priority H / M / L
1. RENEWABLE ENERGY Encourage green local energy projects	Continue to explore local wind and solar project opportunities in the hope that improved technology (e.g. storage), or strategic scale projects such as the Business Park project, can enable a community approach to renewable energy supply.	BC Community Environment Co-operative [BCCE]	L
2. ENERGY EFFICIENCY Improved energy efficiency of local housing and public buildings and assistance with fuel poverty	i. Establish a collaborative model to unite groups and individuals in delivering domestic green energy efficiencies.	Lightfoot & BCCE	H
	ii. Seek a grant for an Energy diary project for the Community College.	Lightfoot	H
	iii. Explore potential of a community forest for wood-heat supply (and also to assist bio-diversity and flood control).	?	M
3. FOOD PRODUCTION Promote local food production for local consumption	i. Seek site upon which an organic community garden can be established. Naming the site after Bishop's Castle's Sir Albert Howard would have historic and tourist benefits.	Albert Howard Society	H
	ii. Produce database of local produce (merge with the Economy Skills and Volunteers database)	BC BSU	M
4. WASTE and RECYCLING Improved local recycling facilities including cardboard and food waste	i. Await Veolia announcement in December 2016 on kerb-side collection of cardboard. If inadequate, consider cardboard collection at Auction Yard car park.	BCCE	M
	ii. Better information to be made available on what materials, particularly plastics, can be re-cycled. (e.g. re-circulate key elements of SCC-Veolia leaflet on re-cycling in the Town Council's newsletter)	Town Council	M
	iii. Explore food recycling opportunities with local shops (and Clun Foodbank)	?	M
	iv. Explore re-cycling KPI collection	Sustainability Working Group	
5. CLIMATE CHANGE	Explore Transition Town or Ecological Enterprise Zone approach	BCC Climate Change Coalition	L

5. Next Steps

As our timeline (see Section 3) details, this Community-Led Plan for Bishop's Castle is scheduled to be considered for adoption by the Town Council in October 2016. At that point the Plan enters its implementation phase and becomes 'live'. Once adopted the Town Council will be the owner of the Plan. It is intended that the remit of the existing Steering Group will change from driving the development of the Plan to steering its implementation, monitoring its progress and evaluating its success on behalf of the Town Council.

It is the intention that the Plan will run from October 2016 to 2020 with an annual review, evaluation and refresh where necessary. The actions in the Plan have been prioritised in terms of importance or urgency. Not all the actions will be delivered in year one due to manpower and/or financial constraints, or where the delivery is outside of the immediate control of the delivery partners. Some actions may take more than one year to come to fruition while others will be 'quick-wins'.

The success of the Plan depends entirely upon there being sufficient manpower and resources to be able to implement its actions. Several actions will be the remit of valued delivery partners, such work being already undertaken as part of existing projects. These include two issues that are critical to the community: the development of the Business Park, currently being led by the Community Land Trust, and the potential asset transfer of the SpArC centre to a local community group.

A substantive part of this Plan, however, is entirely dependent upon the work of community helpers (as was the creation of the Plan itself). **The Town Council should note that a potential lack of helpers is a critical risk to successful implementation.**

We Need HELP!!

The Bishop's Castle Community-led Town Plan will *only* be successful if enough people are willing to help with the work necessary to deliver the actions. We need helpers, both for the Steering Group itself and also to provide *practical* help to deliver particular elements of the following Action Plans:

- **TOWN CENTRE:**
 - Help to support local shops by staging events to attract shoppers; produce a Town map to show shops and car parks; help set up a community delivery service, etc;
 - Explore, trial and help implement possible solutions to address identified traffic and parking issues (e.g. traffic surveys, designing questionnaires, consulting with specialists and the community, etc.);
 - Helping to appraise Conservation Area issues and opportunities for development (e.g. land-use surveys, consulting with specialists, the community, etc.)
 - Help to identify and bid for possible grants and other sources of funding
- **COMMUNITY AND SERVICES:**
 - Help to set up a volunteer bureau exchange and information service;
 - Help to list services important to the community;
 - Help to disseminate information to the community (e.g. through social media, etc.)
- **INFRASTRUCTURE:**
 - Help to recruit volunteers for Dial-a-Ride, etc;
 - Set up and run social media (e.g. Facebook) groups to keep local people informed of infrastructure issues (e.g. road closures, slow broadband issues, etc.);
 - Help to publicise schemes designed to help residents (e.g. 'lift to work' schemes, Oil buying consortia, etc.)

- **DEVELOPMENT:**
 - Engage with local landowners and potential housing providers to explore possible opportunities for the provision of affordable housing;
 - Help with a landscape evaluation exercise (e.g. land-use surveys, consulting with the community, etc.);
 - Help to explore ways to create both housing and job opportunities and provide facilities and opportunities that ensure the retention of young people in the community.

- **ECONOMY:**
 - Create and maintain an online directory for skills-sharing;
 - Help set up and support a Farmer's Forum;
 - Help to identify and bid for possible grants and other sources of funding

- **SUSTAINABILITY:**
 - Work with the Albert Howard Society to acquire land as a community asset in order to produce affordable organic food;
 - Help to explore the potential of a community forest for wood-heat supply, etc;
 - Help to identify and bid for possible grants and other sources of funding

Here is your chance to take a practical role in helping to shape the future of our town. If you would like to be involved or would like to find out more, then please contact us at:-

- By e-mail: townplan@bishopscastle.co.uk
- Via Facebook: www.facebook.com/communityplan
- By post: The Town Hall, Bishop's Castle, Shropshire, SY9 5BG
- By hand: The Town Hall, Bishop's Castle

Community Partnership

As mentioned in the Foreword, in the current period of austerity and the associated decline of public services, never was it more important for the community of Bishop's Castle to take control and plan for its future growth while maintaining its character as a vibrant rural town. A single, joined-up strategy driven by the needs of the community will be essential to the success of the town in the years to come.

As the implementation of the Plan proceeds, a more structured approach to ensuring its longer term development and governance may well need to be considered. The establishment of a 'Community Partnership' for Bishop's Castle may be a logical outcome.

A Community Partnership is run by local volunteers to achieve a better quality of life for residents. They are community-led organisations and seek to involve as many local residents and businesses as possible in their work. Anyone who lives or works in the local community can join.

A Community Partnership is often set up as a 'not-for-profit limited company' with a Board of Directors, as this organisational structure enables the Partnership to bid for funding and grants while remaining independent of the Town Council.

A Partnership works closely with a Town Council to address the issues and priorities identified in the Community-Led Town Plan by bringing together local residents, charities, voluntary groups, businesses, and local government across a range of projects and activities. Effectively it is an umbrella group whose aim is to help co-ordinate work being carried out by a wide range of organisations and individuals to deliver the aims of the Town Plan.

The day-to-day work of a Partnership is carried out by working groups, with strategic oversight provided by a Steering group / Board of Directors. People are elected to key roles each year at an open AGM. Partnerships are committed to transparency and publish all meeting minutes and key project documents.

The advantages of a Community Partnership are summarised by the following diagram:-



6 We Need HELP!!

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 - Help to support local shops by staging events to attract shoppers; produce a Town map to show shops and car parks; help set up a community delivery service, etc.;
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 - Help to identify and bid for possible grants and other sources of funding

- **COMMUNITY AND SERVICES:-**
 - Help to set up a volunteer bureau exchange and information service;
 - Help to list services important to the community;
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- **INFRASTRUCTURE:-**
 - Help to recruit volunteers for Dial-a-Ride, etc.;
 - Set up and run social media (e.g. Facebook) groups to keep local people informed of infrastructure issues (e.g. road closures, slow broadband issues, etc.);
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- **DEVELOPMENT:-**
 - Engage with local landowners and potential housing providers to explore possible opportunities for the provision of affordable housing;
 - Help with a landscape evaluation exercise (e.g. land-use surveys, consulting with the community, etc.);
 - Help to explore ways to create both housing and job opportunities and provide facilities and opportunities that ensure the retention of young people in the community.

- **ECONOMY:-**
 - Create and maintain an online directory for skills-sharing;
 - Help set up and support a Farmer's Forum;
 - Help to identify and bid for possible grants and other sources of funding

- **SUSTAINABILITY:-**
 - Work with the Albert Howard Society to acquire land as a community asset in order to produce affordable organic food;
 - Help to explore the potential of a community forest for wood-heat supply, etc.;
 - Help to identify and bid for possible grants and other sources of funding

Here is your chance to take a **practical** role in helping to shape the future of our town. If you'd like to be involved or would like to find out more, then please fill in the form or contact us at townplan@bishopscastle.co.uk

THE BISHOP'S CASTLE COMMUNITY-LED TOWN PLAN

I am interested in helping with:-	Please tick any of interest
<p style="text-align: center;">TOWN CENTRE</p> <p style="text-align: right;">shopping traffic flow parking townscape</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">COMMUNITY and SERVICES</p> <p style="text-align: right;">young people volunteers services an ageing population</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">INFRASTRUCTURE</p> <p style="text-align: right;">transport traffic and highways rural social exclusion infrastructure</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">DEVELOPMENT</p> <p style="text-align: right;">affordable housing managed development provision for the elderly retention of young people</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">ECONOMY</p> <p style="text-align: right;">jobs attracting employment maintenance of our environment promote and support tourism</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">SUSTAINABILITY</p> <p style="text-align: right;">renewable energy energy efficiency food production waste and recycling climate change</p>	

YOUR CONTACT DETAILS:-

NAME: _____

PHONE: _____

EMAIL: _____

Post or return to:-
The Town Hall,
Bishop's Castle
Shropshire
SY9 5BG