



Bishop Auckland Town Council

PARISH PLAN REPORT

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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Introduction

Bishop Auckland is an Historic Market Town in County Durham, 12 miles South West of Durham City. There are approximately 16,200 residents within the parish boundaries in approximately 7,380 households. It is a main employment and retail centre in South Durham with good transport links to the A1 and Durham City as well as links to Weardale and Teesdale.

In January 2016, Durham Community Action was commissioned by Bishop Auckland Town Council to carry out community consultation in Bishop Auckland and produce a Town Plan in conjunction with a steering group made up of interested residents and town councillors. The Town Council commissioned the consultation because it wanted to know what local people think of living in Bishop Auckland to help shape their future priorities for the town.

The following report is based primarily on the opinions of local people and aims to provide a synopsis of their view of the community to inform service provision and future developments and provide solutions to issues raised during the consultation process.

The Town Council will consider the outcome of the consultation and statistical analysis and will feed these results into an action plan which is realistic and achievable and is a direct response to the consultation outcomes. Partnership working is essential to deliver the outcomes highlighted and where necessary, lobby for change.

It is important to note that while the town centre was not specifically included in the Town Plan, this was intentional as a Masterplan for the town centre was being undertaken in the same period and we wanted to limit any confusion between the two plans. Any comments made during the consultation process have been forwarded to Ryder Architecture to be included in the Masterplan.

Finally, the impact of The Auckland Project on the town must be acknowledged. Beginning as The Auckland Castle Trust in 2012, it has expanded over the last five years to contribute to the social and economic regeneration of Bishop Auckland with redevelopment of the castle, the opening of the Mining Art Gallery and the construction of the Auckland Tower, which will be followed by the reopening of the refurbished Auckland Castle and Faith Museum and Spanish Gallery bringing employment and volunteering opportunities to the town.

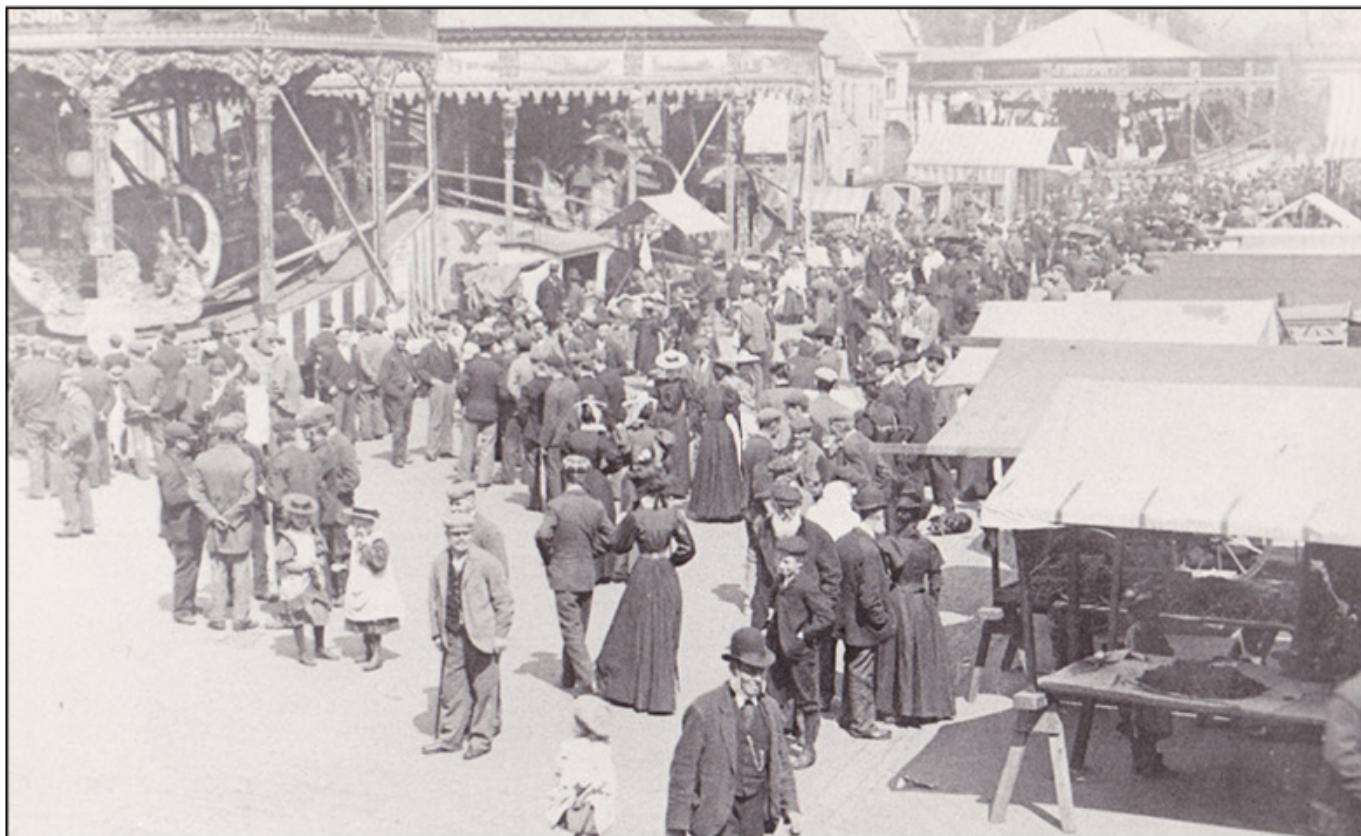


Bishop Auckland looking South, with the Roman Road running in a straight line from bottom right to top left. Durham Road snaking up along the bottom.



An aerial view of the River Wear and the two bridges.

History of Bishop Auckland



Murphy's Fair has come to town and the Market Place is packed. Around 1900.

In the Roman and post-Roman period, the main focus of population in this area was nearby at Binchester, but by about 1000, the bishops held the land, and the focus shifted to Bishop Auckland. The bishops had established a manor of a reasonable size here by the late 12th century. The first record of a borough is in 1242, and a formal market was established by the 13th century.

The original village green was extensive, and ran from Town Head, at the top of Newton Cap Bank, down to the wall of the palace. It would have been surrounded by the tofts and crofts of the bondsmen, hence the name Bondgate. It was readily defensible from Scottish raids due to its elevated position and narrow openings, easily blocked after the cattle had been driven in from the Town Fields at the first news of a raid.

The large village green gradually filled with buildings - the two Bondgates and the central section of the Market Place. Fore Bondgate became the principal shopping street of the town and development began down the old Roman road of Newgate Street.



A market day (Thursdays and Saturdays) in Bishop Auckland between the wars.



The south west corner of the Market Place, before the roads were tarmacadamed.

In the first half of the 18th century Bishop Auckland was still a quiet town, seen as a good place to retire to. There was very little industrial activity apart from linen weaving, shoemaking and clockmaking in a market town of about 250 houses. But in 1748, the Bowes to Sunderland Bridge road was turnpiked, which brought coaches and carriers' wagons through the town, and a number of coaching inns grew up. The turnpike road ran north up Newgate Street then on to Durham down Durham Chare as Durham Road was not extended up to the Market Place until 1928. The Market Place therefore remained a quiet place, and wealthy homes were built on the south and east sides.

By the end of the 18th century, the number of small mines in the immediate vicinity of the town was increasing, and the development of the railways in 1825 caused a tremendous expansion of the coal industry. Bishop Auckland became the market town at the centre of a large population, and it adapted by expanding further down Newgate Street to form what became known as the Golden Mile of lucrative small shops and many larger ones. Some Bishop Auckland stores became so successful that they became the centre of a web of ancillary stores in the surrounding villages, for example, the Co-Op, Doggart's and Walter Willson's.

The 19th century saw a large amount of public building - the town hall, the viaduct, many churches - and commercial buildings, for example, Barclay's Bank, and fine Victorian townhouses. Initiatives from the townsfolk saw many improvements, notably the Board of Health in mid-century, which set about improving the insanitary conditions caused by previous overcrowding, and providing a clean water supply.

The shopping boom continued during the first half of the 20th century, fuelled by the tremendous success of the town's amateur football team which saw whole families flocking to the town on Saturday afternoons. The football team won the Amateur Cup on ten occasions, having been eighteen times in the final. The five cinemas and many cafes added to the attractions.

The decline of the coal industry in the later 20th century was a huge blow to the town, because it also meant the decline of the industries that served the mines. Another blow was the decline of the railways and the corresponding growth of car ownership. The web of seven railways lines, all meeting in Bishop Auckland, had meant that it was the shopping centre for the surrounding area. Now, the motor car meant the town was too easily bypassed for larger towns. However, an innovative initiative by the townspeople resulted in the railway viaduct's transformation to a road bridge - an inspired piece of adaptation to the times. The 21st century brings yet again a period of change. We have a tremendous historical legacy - a Roman fort with the best-preserved hypocaust in the country and great potential for more excavation, one of the best-preserved Saxon churches, the history of the early Church and Bishopric, the Amateur Football cup, mining art. Auckland Project, backed by Jonathan Ruffer, is showing us how that legacy can be built on and presented to visitors in ways which will make the town memorable. Our heritage will be our future.

We have a history of adapting to change, and a history of making a success of doing so. The success of Kynren is only the start of the next new phase in the history of our town.



Looking west up Back Bondgate (now called North Bondgate).



Marks and Spencer's original premises in Newgate Street, looking up Tenters Street.



High Bondgate. The three men are where now the road to the viaduct is.



The old Police Station and Law Courts in High Bondgate.



Theatre Corner in the 60's, before both Rossi's and the theatre were demolished for road widening.



Looking east from the top of High Bondgate to where the road divides into two.

Bishop Auckland Town Council

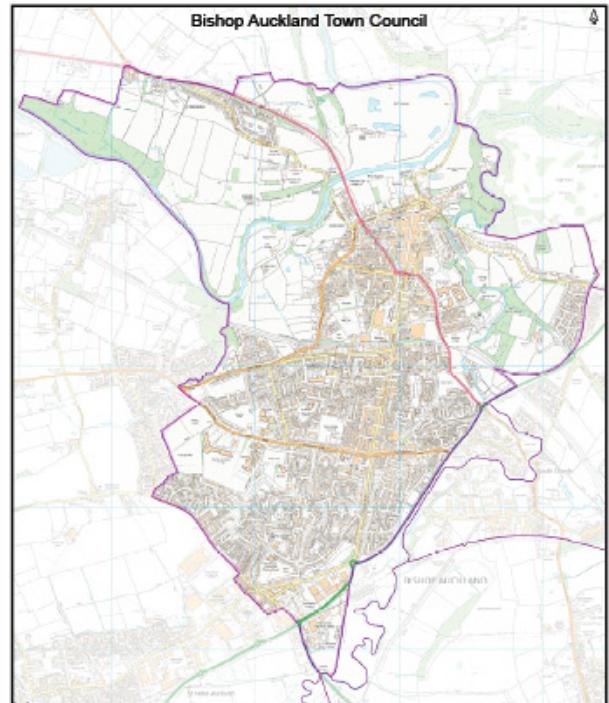
Bishop Auckland Town Council was established in 2007 as a result of a petition signed by local people who wanted a democratic voice and a structure for taking community action.

Representation

The Town Council's area covers the four wards of:-

- Bishop Auckland Town
- Cockton Hill
- Henknowle
- Woodhouse Close

The town is represented by 11 Councillors who are elected for a term of 4 years. A councillor is elected as Mayor by the Council at the annual meeting which takes place in May. A Deputy Mayor is also chosen at the same meeting. The Mayor and Deputy Mayor do not have executive powers but act as civic dignitaries during their term to represent and raise the profile of the town and the Town Council. It is usual for the Mayor to raise funds for a charity during his/her term of office. Since 2007 Mayors have raised almost £27,000 for various charities including Butterwick Hospice, British Heart Foundation, Alzheimer's Association and Help for Heroes.



Services

When the Town Council was established Wear Valley District Council retained most of the services generally associated with town councils, such as parks, cemeteries, flower beds, bus stands and street furniture. As a result of local government reorganisation in 2009 these services are now delivered by Durham County Council.

What do the Town Council do?

Allotments

The Town Council is responsible for 9 allotment sites. All income generated from rent is ring fenced to provide funds to cover the costs such as water charges and general repairs and maintenance. In addition allotment rent is used to fund improvements to the sites.



Many of the sites are managed with the help of allotment associations who provide hands on day-to-day running of allotment sites.

Town Team

Regeneration of the town centre was identified as a priority for the Town Council at an early stage. The Town Team was set up by the Town Council as a means of bringing together partner organisations, the business community and local people with an objective of '**Working in Partnership to Regenerate our Town Centre**'.

Currently the main priority is to encourage local businesses to make the most of the exciting opportunities presented by The Auckland Partnership and Eleven Arches Trust.

Durham County Council is also a key regeneration partner who is working closely with the Trusts and local businesses to improve the town centre environment and working hard to attract new business into Bishop Auckland.

The Town Council continue to be an active member of the Town Team, providing leadership and administrative support.

Meetings of the Town Team are held on a quarterly basis. Anyone with an interest in improving the town centre can attend meetings and become a member of the Town Team.

Within Town Team arrangements an Events Team, made up of community volunteers, acts independently of the Town Council to organise events in the town centre with the aim of increasing footfall.

Town Council Events

The Town Council works in partnership with others, and independently, to support and host events that contribute to the local economy and also provide activities and entertainment for the local community.

The biggest event that the Town Council is involved in is the Bishop Auckland Food Festival, an annual showcase of the best in home-grown and handmade produce from County Durham and the wider region. The Town Council is a major sponsor of the event which attracts around 30,000 visitors and is worth an estimated £700,000 to the local economy.

The Town Council has also sponsored the Wannasee Music Festival, to help it become established as an annual event. Held over a weekend the festival offers the opportunity to enjoy a line up of the best live tribute bands in an open air stadium setting. Not only does the event provide entertainment for local people, it is becoming a national event attracting people from far and wide thereby contributing to the local economy.

Remembrance Services

Working closely with the Royal British Legion and St Anne's Church the Town Council organises the Remembrance Sunday parade and service at the War Memorial in the Market Place to commemorate the contribution of British and Commonwealth military and civilian servicemen and women in the two World Wars and later conflicts.



Christmas Celebrations

The Town Council lead the annual Christmas celebrations which take place in the Market Place.

Over the years the event has included Christmas Markets, school parades and various performances including singers, children's entertainers, pantomime characters, stilt walkers, fire performers and carols sung by local schools.

Horticultural and Produce Show

Bishop Auckland Horticultural and Produce Show is growing into a very popular event within the local community. It is a traditional vegetable, floral and home produce show which is fast becoming known for the quality of exhibits.

In 2017 the show became affiliated to the National Chrysanthemum Society and the National Dahlia Society. Displays within those categories were judged under respective Society standards and rules with winners receiving Society certificates.



Youth Awards

The Town Council hosts annual Youth Awards to celebrate the achievements of young people associated with the town. Far too often the focus is on negative stories about young people which means that their achievements are sometimes overlooked and forgotten. These awards focus on the positive contributions that young people make, be it contributing to the community, caring for others, overcoming adversity or achieving excellence.

The awards have been held for 3 years. Certificate's of Achievement have been awarded to 132 young people with Mayor's Medals being awarded to 24 young people in recognition of their special achievements.

Community Toilet Scheme – Use our Loos

Working closely with Durham County Council and in partnership with local businesses a community toilet scheme was launched in 2017 to increase the number of toilets available for public use.

Several local businesses have signed up to the partnership to increase the availability of clean, safe, free and accessible facilities for use during normal opening hours without the need to make a purchase. Several of the participating premises offer wheelchair access and baby changing facilities.

The scheme has been introduced in anticipation of the increased number of visitors expected in the town as a consequence of Kynren and Auckland Projects.



Supporting our Communities

A community fund was set up in 2007 to support local organisations working for the benefit of residents of Bishop Auckland. Community groups and local charities are invited to apply for grants of up to £500.

Grants are limited and are made available to organisations that can demonstrate a need for assistance. There are strict regulations governing grants and therefore they cannot be awarded to individuals, commercial businesses, political organisations or for the promotion of religious activities.

Since its introduction the Town Council has provided almost £60,000 to support local groups for the benefit of the community.

Encouraging Responsible Dog Ownership

The Town Council works in partnership with Durham County Council to encourage dog owners to act responsibly and clear up after their dogs. The Town Council currently issue around 62,000 dog bags a year which are available free of charge from The Four Clocks Centre.

Durham County Council is responsible for the enforcement of dog fouling regulations and has recently introduced a Public Space Protection Order to protect our parks and open spaces against irresponsible dog owners who do not pick up after, or control, their dogs properly. It should help:



- Reduce dog fouling
- reduce the number of stray dogs and make it easier to return stray dogs to their owners by checking dogs are microchipped (from April 2016 it became law that all dogs must be microchipped)
- better control of dogs in public areas
- safer and more welcoming play areas
- improve the local community and environment

Town Council Achievements

Foundation Status

The Town Council achieved Foundation Status in June 2016.

The National Association of Local Councils introduced a Local Councils Award Scheme in 2015 to provide a framework to support all local councils to improve and develop to meet their full potential.



The scheme encourages progression by including three award levels: Foundation, Quality and Quality Gold, and offers councils the opportunity to show that they meet the standards set by the sector, assessed by their peers, and to put in place the conditions for continued improvement.

Foundation Status demonstrates that the Council has the minimum documentation and information in place for operating lawfully and according to standard practice. It also demonstrates that the Council has policies for training councillors and officers and is building a foundation for improvement and development.

The council is close to achieving Quality Status which will demonstrate that it has additional documentation and information in place for good governance, effective community engagement and council improvement. A council with a quality award also meets the eligibility criteria for the general power of competence.

World Host Recognition

The Council has recently achieved the required standard to become a World Host business recognised for excellent customer service.

This award also contributes to Bishop Auckland becoming a WorldHost destination.



Methodology



Bishop Auckland Town Council proposed a Town Plan for Bishop Auckland at a public meeting in the Town Hall in January 2016. At this meeting an initial consultation took place asking residents to identify areas in Bishop Auckland where there were issues, and any possible solutions that they might propose. At this meeting, the public were also asked if they would like to be part of a steering group who would push the plan forward.

The steering group was assembled from interested residents who attended the launch event and monthly steering group meetings were set up. The group consisted of members of the community, representatives from Bishop Auckland Town Council and a representative from Durham Community Action.

Initially the steering group drafted two questionnaires, one for adults aged 18+ and the other for children and young people, which covered a broad range of topics to gather information from residents as to what issues they felt faced the community. These topics included housing, employment, anti-social behaviour and leisure amongst other themes.

Hard copies of the questionnaires were distributed by the steering group and volunteers to community centres, shops, GP surgeries, schools etc. with collection points outlined at the end of the survey. An online version was also available through Survey Monkey which was advertised in Bishop Press and on the Town Council Facebook page. Posters advertising the survey were displayed in the Newgate Centre and cards with links to the online survey were distributed around the town to encourage as many residents as possible to respond.

While the surveys were live, a focus group was held with King James students who provided their thoughts on issues in the town and what they would like to see in the future.

Residents who had left their contact details when completing the questionnaire were invited to take part in a focus group at the Town Hall where the results of the questionnaire so far were discussed and reoccurring themes looked at in more detail.

The online survey closed on the 31st October 2016 after which the results were analysed and further focus groups were organised to look in more depth at the issues raised from the questionnaires.

Once the questionnaire closed, the results and feedback from the two focus groups were collated to produce a summary of the main issues that were important to the community. Possible actions that could be taken to try to rectify these issues were identified from the comments and these were then fed back to focus groups at Bishop Barrington School, the Town Council and other interested parties. King James School was also issued with the results of the surveys. Those who attended these additional focus groups were asked to add further comments and prioritise actions. These actions will be incorporated into the action plan which will conclude the Town Plan.

Statistical information used in the focus groups were gathered from ACRE Rural Place Profile for Bishop Auckland and Bishop Auckland and Shildon AAP Profile.

Bishop Auckland Parish in Context

This section will cover headline statistics for Bishop Auckland and in some cases County Durham where the statistics for the Parish are unavailable. A more in-depth analysis will be carried out later in this report.

Currently 16,275 people live within the parish boundaries, with 47.2% male and 52.8% female.

Social (including Housing)

There are 7,380 households within the parish; 63.9% is owner occupied, 20.4% is social rented and 13.4% are private rented. Of these homes 99 (1.3%) do not have central heating and 1,000 (13.5%) households are estimated to be in fuel poverty.

Residents living within the Bishop Auckland Parish face several challenges. 41.5% are classed as living in the most deprived 20% of areas in England, 6573 people. There is above average people over 65 years claiming pension credit (35.7% in Bishop Auckland with the national average being 24.4%). 32% of children living in the area are considered living in poverty.

Crime rates in Bishop Auckland are considered below the national average. 16.8% of residents live within a crime hotspot compared to a national average of 20%.



Environment and Transport

34% of households in Bishop Auckland don't have access to a car, compared to 26% average in England. The average time to the nearest town centre by public transport or walking is 12 minutes which is below the county average of 19 minutes.



Education, Training and Employment

Bishop Auckland has 6.5% of people claiming jobseekers allowance with only 2% claiming for more than 12 months. 31% of people do not have any qualifications. The largest employment sector is retail and health and social care (16%) followed by manufacturing (14%).



Natural Heritage & Urban Design

76% of people living within Bishop Auckland are satisfied with the local area as a place to live with 80% of people aged over 65 stating they are satisfied with their home and their neighbourhood.



Health and Leisure

Health deprivation is extremely high compared to the national average with 91% of people in Bishop Auckland classed as living in a health deprivation hotspot compared to an average of 19.6% nationally.

22% of adults in County Durham aged 16+ participate in sport 3 or more times each week which is on par with the data for England



Feedback and Conclusions

The following section will comprise of feedback from various consultation methods undertaken between May – December 2016.

Firstly, a focus group of students from King James I Academy completed an activity to feed into the Town Plan. The students were split into groups and visited specific areas of the town where they were asked to think about issues that impacted on the residents of Bishop Auckland. They were directed to concentrate their thinking around the core themes of Social (including housing), Environment and Transport, Education, Training and Employment, Natural Heritage and Urban Design, Health, and Leisure.

They were given the definition of a Town Plan as “...a document that puts in place a vision and policies for the future development of Bishop Auckland” and they were asked what they felt were the key issues they wanted the plan to highlight.

This section also picks out the highlights from the two questionnaires, full results from both documents can be found in the appendix. The surveys were open from August to October 2016 and were available online through Survey Monkey and by hard copy which could be collected at various locations in the town. The questionnaire was also distributed to various community groups by members of the steering group who facilitated discussions and encouraged the completion of the questionnaire. In total, 237 adult surveys were completed and 517 children and young people's surveys.

When the questionnaires closed at the end of October, those respondents who had suggested they would be interested in speaking to the steering group in more detail about their views were invited to take part in a focus group to pull out key themes from the questionnaire and look at these in more depth. The results from this focus group are included in the analysis.

Finally, each section has a conclusion which looks at some of the statistics available to the steering group and examines how they correlate to the views of the respondents who took part in the consultation process. It also encompasses the priorities identified during consultations with the Student Council at Bishop Barrington, the Town Council, the Bishop Auckland Town Plan Steering Group and a public meeting.

It must be emphasised that the available statistics are gathered mainly from the 2011 census via the Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE) Rural Evidence project. Statistics were also taken from the Sub-County Statistical Profile Summary Sheets for Bishop Auckland and Shildon AAP.

Social (including Housing)



Young Persons Focus Group

The focus group felt that there were issues with the current provision of housing in Bishop Auckland. They felt that more housing and flats needed to be made available in the town along with cheaper housing, especially for young people. The focus group also wanted to see more 'Help to Buy' schemes and they felt that there were too many homes to let. They also felt that there were too many family homes at the higher end of the market being built in the town.

A strong theme running through this section was the need to safeguard and promote welfare and social cohesion of people from all backgrounds in the town. Students came up with a number of suggestions to encourage social inclusion in Bishop Auckland.

Of particular concern to young people was the recent appearance of racially prejudiced stickers and posters appearing in the town centre stating that 'refugees are not welcome in Bishop Auckland'. Whilst it was felt that this was not the view of the vast majority of people living in Bishop Auckland and possibly the work of only a few individuals, it did not present Bishop Auckland as a tolerant and welcoming town. Students wanted these messages to be removed as quickly as they appeared.

In addition, as a way of integrating communities, the students suggested numerous ways of encouraging social cohesion and developing a better sense of diverse communities, including setting up a community samba band and perhaps organising a pen pal exchange so that residents of the town could communicate with people in other countries.

Students also wanted to see groups of Bishop Auckland residents meeting to discuss ways to improve issues in the town and suggested social cohesion should be part of this debate.

Another priority highlighted by young people was the misuse of alcohol and drugs and felt that ideas to combat this should be included in the plan. They suggested that an increase in places for young people to go in the town would reduce occurrences of antisocial behaviour. They would also like to see more support available for young people in order to encourage and deter them from being involved in underage smoking and drinking alcohol, taking drugs and committing crimes. They felt that one way that this could be achieved would be to encourage more people to join clubs and socialise so that younger people are taking part in positive activities instead of negative ones. The students wanted to create an inclusive youth group so that students from all schools in Bishop Auckland could socialise together.

To improve emotional wellbeing of residents in the town, the focus group wanted to see an increase in parks and picnic areas, with spaces for socialising which had seating and chill out spaces. They also felt that emotional wellbeing would be enhanced by having more events organised in the town such as food festivals and music festivals.

The students commented that they wanted additional shops in the town centre with less charity shops and pound shops and an increase in attractions like a Sea Life Centre, trampoline park, indoor bowling and for the facilities at the swimming pool to be upgraded and improved.

Questionnaire

The adult's questionnaire examined resident's views regarding what new housing was needed in Bishop Auckland and where it was needed. The results concluded that most respondents identified a need for additional housing with 59% wanting more bungalows for older people and 75% wanting cheaper starter homes for younger people.

Development on brown field sites was preferred with 72% of respondents wanting any new housing to be built on sites that had previously been developed, whilst only 9% wanted houses to be built on current green areas within the town.

Comments included

"Single bedoomed social housing is in very short supply and many people are having to pay the 'bedroom tax' because they cannot find one-bedroomed accommodation"

"Bishop Auckland needs new housing of all types not only to replace the existing housing stock, much of it poorly designed for the 21st Century. There is a chronic shortage of quality bungalows and assisted living provision for people who wish to downsize without having to move to a small, industrialised space."

"There are many houses in the Bishop Auckland area. Don't think more are necessarily needed."

In relation to crime, respondents to the adults survey felt that there were problems caused by anti-social behaviour, people under the influence of drugs and alcohol and other types of nuisance crime. Alcohol, including underage sales and illegal sales were mentioned often as problems in the town, along with drugs and gangs of young adults/teenagers. The young people surveyed agreed with some of these issues.

Litter and dog mess were mentioned frequently in both surveys when asked what antisocial behaviour issues people were facing.

Adult Focus Group

The focus group suggested that private rented accommodation is the cause of some of the biggest problems in the town. They felt that landlords do not vet their tenants properly which has led to problems in the neighbourhood with police being called to the same houses on numerous occasions. These problems have been discussed at local Police and Community Together (PACT) meetings but there were no long-term solutions being put forward to tackle these issues. One person commented that she had heard that the council received money for taking people from a problem area and placing them in Bishop Auckland.

The group wondered what controls could be put on private landlords, especially absentee landlords to prevent or resolve issues with tenants causing antisocial behaviour or conducting illegal activities thereby creating a nuisance for neighbours. It was queried whether private landlords could be forced to adopt a vetting procedure for prospective tenants.

The members of the group spoke of the difficulty in identifying landlords of neighbouring properties and frustration of not knowing who to contact to report issues and complaints.

The group was concerned about the cut in police funding and that the PALS group has 'fizzled out' in Bishop Auckland. It was felt that the police don't take residents' complaints seriously and that as landlords received housing benefit directly from the there are no financial incentives for them to do anything about any issues with tenants.

The possibility of an approved landlord scheme was discussed where anyone wanting to let out their house would have to register with the scheme.

One attendee had heard that in some areas of the country there were government grants for starter homes, where a certain percentage of houses on new build estates are eligible to local people who couldn't afford to buy a house in other circumstances. The focus group felt that this type of scheme would be good for Bishop Auckland and could be used to encourage development on brown field sites. It was also suggested that housing for older residents should be included in such a scheme.

The group wondered if empty retail space in the town could be converted into housing, for example empty spaces above shops. They felt that having residents in the town would bring back some life and help the local economy. They didn't feel that the proposal for 550 houses in Woodhouses, which is classed as a green field site, would be beneficial to the town and that it would cause problems with an increase of traffic flow at Tindale traffic lights which already cause issues. The focus group felt that terraced affordable starter homes were needed and suggested that the Town Council could take on run down houses to do up as part of a compulsory purchase scheme.

The group felt that trying to make local people feel part of a community is harder in large town such as Bishop Auckland. They also felt that the town had declined in recent years.

Conclusion

The statistics show that 13.4% of housing in Bishop Auckland is private rented and while this figure is below the average of 15.4% in the rest of England, comments on the questionnaire and those raised during the various focus groups and events highlight that residents feel anti-social behaviour and illegal activity stemming from some of these privately rented households are disproportionately high.

In relation to crime and antisocial behaviour, the number of people in Bishop Auckland living in a crime 'hotspot' is 2,663 which is 16.8% of all people (the average in England is 20%). The consultation highlighted that residents felt that anti-social behaviours was one of the biggest concerns in the town and would like to see more police on the streets as a deterrent.

Statistics show that there were 27.9 reports of crime per 1000 residents which is much lower than the average in England of 37.6. However, the information from the Perceptions of Crime study (which is data for the whole of County Durham) suggests that people feel that drug use and drug dealing is a problem locally, as is drunk and rowdy behaviour.

It is also interesting that while the reported incidences of crime were lower in Bishop Auckland compared to the rest of England, comments throughout the consultation suggest that residents felt that crime was difficult to report. In addition comments throughout the consultation suggest that while residents are aware of incidents of antisocial behaviour and criminal activity, they are reluctant to report for a variety of reasons, including fear of repercussion.

Responses given during the consultation process correspond with the Perception of Crime data.

Action 1.

Further research is required into issues raised relating to anti-social behaviour and other problems emanating from some of privately rented households and possible solution. In addition, explore how the Town Council can advertise ways that people can report crime as well as ensuring victims of crime are confident of reporting without fear of repercussion.

The results of the questionnaire conclude that the residents believe more social housing should be made available in the town and this is corroborated by discussions with the focus groups. Although the 2011 Census tells us that Social Housing makes up 20.4% of all housing in Bishop Auckland which is above the average in England of 17.7% this needs to be looked at in context of a lack of social housing in the rest of the country.

Similarly, lack of affordable housing was highlighted throughout the consultation. While the AAP statistics show that house prices in the area can be seen to be affordable compared to the rest of England, the report also states that "it is estimated that it is less affordable for a resident to purchase a house in their area than it is across the county on average..."

Action 2.

Look at ways to increase the stock of affordable starter homes by working in partnership with other agencies and investigate the perception that there is a need for more social housing by collecting details of waiting lists for the area.

Although the consultation showed that more affordable and diverse types of housing was required in Bishop Auckland there was also concern that green areas should be protected from development and wasteland should be used for housing developments. The possibility of empty retail space being turned into housing to improve the look and vitality of the town centre was also raised. The students also felt that using the green spaces for recreational activities and festivals would help to build a case for keeping them for public use.

Action 3.

Investigate controls currently on development on green space contained in the Local Plan and possibly consider the production of a Neighbourhood Plan to determine areas for redevelopment and the protection of green spaces if necessary which will feed into the County Council.

The consultation process also highlighted that residents of all ages felt that there were issues with underage sale of alcohol, although there are no statistics available to corroborate this, it may be worthwhile investigating this further.

Action 4.

Quantify the problem of the sale of alcohol to underage people and identify what is currently being done to resolve

Similarly, while there are no current statistics that show if there is an increase in hate crimes in Bishop Auckland, the students at King James I Academy did feel that social inclusion in the town was low and presented a variety of solutions to this issue.

Action 5.

Work with young people, including students of King James I Academy, Bishop Barrington and St John's, to tackle the perceived issues of social inclusion.

Environment and Transport



Young Persons Focus Group

Overall, students felt that the appearance of the town could be improved, they suggested more floral displays, more litter and recycling bins as well as repainting and renovating some of the more dilapidated buildings in the town centre.

The focus group wanted to reduce pollution by increasing the number of cycle paths which they felt would also help to make the roads safer. They also felt that more bike shelters would encourage the use of bikes and reduce the number of cars on the road.

To enhance the town environment, they wanted to see more open spaces, an improvement to the footpaths, places to feed the birds and more nature walks.

They also felt that the parks could be improved if they were gated and closed on a certain time of the evening to stop underage drinking and if the skate parks had wardens to prevent trouble.

Questionnaire

Respondents were asked where they thought that there were problems with traffic lights around the town. Tindale, Kingsway, South Church, Theatre Corner and Cockton Hill were all mentioned as areas that had problems with traffic lights. Traffic lights – Asda traffic lights are dangerous.

When asked if their household had access to a car, 92% of respondents said that they did. Of those that have access to a car, 56% agreed that they were happy with the availability of car parking in the town. Similarly, when asked what forms of transport their family most used, 96% said car followed closely by 85% who walked. Only 45% used the bus and 39% the train.

Adult Focus Group

The questionnaire highlighted various areas around the town where residents felt that traffic lights caused issues. The group felt that the traffic lights around ASDA were dangerous and need taking out. They were also concerned that the traffic issues at Tindale crossing will get worse when there are 550 new houses in the Tindale area. One member of the focus group suggested creating a double lane where you go across to Shildon at Tindale and move the lights back or make it a no right turn into the retail park at Tindale crossing lights.

It was suggested that the Kynren car park could be used for a park and ride service when not in use for the shows, preferably the shuttle bus would be free. This would reduce number of cars in the town and free up parking spaces. The focus group also felt it would be useful to look at alternative sites for people to park and then travel in.

Specific traffic issues were raised during the period of the consultation because of roadworks taking place in the market place. There were complaints regarding the length of time the roadworks had taken which had the knock-on effect on traffic in other areas of the town centre. There were also comments about traffic congestion during Kynren shows where cars were backed up along the viaduct.

Illegal parking in the town centre was raised as a particular concern, with people parking on the pavement and on one street parking on the areas that were put in as a traffic calming measures. It was suggested that 30-minute free parking was needed to encourage people to use businesses in the town centre.

The group also highlighted a degree of confusion over which body was responsible for the enforcement of illegal parking. Greater clarity was required over responsibilities of the police and County Council. One of the participants wanted to see electric cars being provided by the council to reduce pollution but still allow people to get to the town centre.

Conclusion

The statistics show that 65.9% of households of Bishop Auckland have access to at least one car, this can be compared to the 97% who responded positively to having access to a car in the questionnaire as part of the community consultation for the town plan. This variation could be due to the smaller sample size of the questionnaire in comparison to the census data and because more than one person in each household could have responded to the questionnaire.

3.2% of people in Bishop Auckland travel to work by public transport which is below the national average of 11%. This can be compared to the questionnaire results which show that 43% of those who responded said that they didn't use public transport.

It is interesting to compare the apparent correlation between the percentage of households with cars, the percentage who use public transport to travel to work and the percentage of people travelling less than 2km to work which is 34.6% in comparison to the average in England of 20%. Further research could be undertaken to determine if the residents work close to home because they do not have access to a car and public transport provision is not sufficient or that they don't use public transport because employment is close to where they live.

The fact that Bishop Auckland is a feeder town for numerous towns and villages in the vicinity needs to be taken into consideration, as the consultation focused mainly on town residents, congestions and parking affects those travelling in from outside the town for employment and shopping.

A Masterplan is being prepared for the town centre by consultants Ryder Architecture, which will also consider environmental and transport issues. Comments relating to the town centre have been forwarded to Ryder's to help inform the Masterplan. In turn the Masterplan will also inform further actions of the parish plan

Action 6.

Work with Ryder Architecture and Eleven Arches to look at possible park and ride options to reduce the congestion and issues with parking in the town centre.

While we do not have statistics regarding reported issues with traffic lights in the town, the issues raised by residents should be discussed with the relevant departments at Durham County Council.

Action 7.

Speak to Durham County Council/Highways regarding the issues raised with regard to the effectiveness of traffic lights in the town.

While some of the comments collected during the consultation period focused on the empty shops in the town centre, which we will consider in more detail later in this report, many of the responses related the general cleanliness of the town. Students also wanted to see ways to encourage the use of cycles in the town to ease congestion and parking issues.

Action 8.

Further investigations into the incidences of reported litter, dog fouling and fly tipping and look at ways to reduce these as well as incidences of vandalism

Education, Training and Employment



Young Persons Focus Group

The students who took part in the focus groups felt that they needed more support to realise their potential. They suggested more education around life skills such as money management, managing bills, taxes, first aid etc. as well as additional time in school to learn about writing CV's, interview training, and job searches. They wanted to see free provision of transport to colleges and university.

The focus group also wanted businesses to be more accommodating to hiring young people straight out of school and those who have had no work experience. They would also like to see an increase in the number of apprenticeships.

Questionnaire

96% feel that more jobs need to be available with apprenticeships, retail and manufacturing being most frequently mentioned.

Comments from the survey included, "Decent jobs for young people – not zero-hour contracts." "Fairly paid full-time jobs outside of retail, we have so many skilled workers in the area who are faced with zero-hour retail jobs as their only option following the cessation of skilled work in the area." "Part time/school run friendly hours. The benefits of flexible working could be promoted to local companies." "Probably a way for people aged 25-40 into work via experience or doing apprenticeships not everyone had a chance to go to college or university when younger and many in this age group are stuck without a job as no qualifications or experience so employers just overlook them."

Adult Focus Group

There were comments that manufacturing in Bishop Auckland had declined over recent years which was countered in the focus group by those who said that manufacturing jobs had always been outside of the town and that they were no worse now than 20 years ago. The focus group said that there are issues with bus services, particular for those who are working shifts, or seeking employment that required them to work shifts starting/finishing at unsocial hours when there was a lack of or no buses running. It was also commented that most people had to travel out of town as there were no work in Bishop Auckland. It was suggested that if people had to travel to work they could do so by other means such as cycling. Someone suggested that some employers put on transport for staff such as buses if they were working shifts.

The group felt that there are many apprenticeship opportunities in the town. It was agreed that it should be high on list of priorities that apprenticeships should be more widely publicised, and it should be made clear that they are available for many roles, not just manufacturing.

The group wanted more to be done to motivate people to work and suggested that the 'Job Centre' should recommend training courses for people who were unemployed, however it was also stated that there need to be jobs available to get people into employment.

Conclusion

The statistics show that 6.5% of working age adults in Bishop Auckland are claiming Jobseekers Allowance, this compares to the average in England of 3.8%. Also, in Bishop Auckland, 2% of working age adults have been claiming Jobseekers Allowance for more than 12 months. Furthermore, the unemployment to 'Available Jobs' Ratio is 683.17 claimants per job whereas in the rest of England the average is 343.44 claimants per job. The consultations show that there is a consensus that residents of Bishop Auckland would like more local jobs and this perceived lack of available jobs can be seen to be corroborated by the available statistics stated above. In particular, the consultation process identified lack of jobs for 19-24 year olds as the biggest issue.

The statistics show that Retail, along with Health and Social Work are the two largest employment

sectors in the town, each employing 16% of the people in employment in the town. They are followed closely by manufacturing with 14%. Even though it is the third largest employment sector in Bishop Auckland, the consultation showed that local people would like to see more manufacturing and engineering jobs as well as more apprenticeships.

The statistics also show that 34% of people in Bishop Auckland are travelling less than 2km to work which compares to the average in England of 20%.

31.6% of people aged 16+ in Bishop Auckland have no qualifications according to the data from the 2011 census which compares with 22.5% in England. The consultation process showed that people wanted to see a promotion of apprenticeships in the area and the provision of more training schemes in response to this statistic.

Discussions were had regarding the provision of transport for local people to access employment opportunities elsewhere in the County such as Hitachi in Newton Aycliffe, this can be correlated with the statistics debated above with regards how many people in Bishop Auckland use public transport to travel to work and why this might be.

Action 9.

Work with a variety of agencies to promote apprenticeships and training programmes. Work with The Auckland Project to increase employment opportunities. Look into possibilities of tackling transport issues for people working shifts.

Natural Heritage and Urban Design



Young Persons Focus Group

The students were keen to see different types of retailers on Newgate Street, with more modern high-quality goods available as well as a variety of bars and restaurants. However, it must be noted that one group commented that people in Bishop Auckland couldn't afford expensive shops. They also wanted to see more tourist attractions like a nature park within Auckland Castle and places for local art work to be displayed.

Again, it was mentioned that the appearance of the town could be improved with more plants, flowers and trees in the town. The students also felt that it should be decided if the architecture in the town was going to be modern or historical as the two didn't mix.

It was suggested that the town could make use of its connection with Stan Laurel to draw in tourists. They thought that a map of the different attractions in the town, and a monthly tour of the ages which would walk visitors through the history of Bishop Auckland would also encourage tourist to spend more time in the town.

Questionnaire

The questionnaires asked respondents if they were happy with the overall appearance of the town, 62% replied that they were not happy. The comments showed that the town centre in particular was an issue for a lot of the respondents. Newgate Street was highlighted as needing to be improved most with 57 mentions, followed by Kingsway, Bondgate and Cockton Hill. The empty shops and type of shops were seen to be a disadvantage to the town with a feeling that there were too many charity shops and pound shops in Bishop Auckland. The development of the out of town shopping area was also thought to have had a detrimental effect on the town centre.

When asked how happy they were with the local parks, while many respondents were happy overall, there were mentions of issues with litter, broken glass, dog fouling and children/teens hanging around in gangs.

When asked what problems people felt there were in and around the town centre, dog fouling and litter were cited as the biggest problems by both adults and young persons. With dog fouling mentioned by 76% of adults and 81% of adults and litter by 87% of adults and 86% of young people. The problem areas were seen to be Cockton Hill and the Town Centre with South Church also being mentioned.

The survey highlighted that people are not happy with the state of the pavements around the town (especially icy pavements in winter). It was also suggested that the salt bins need to be filled more regularly. The biggest issue was public toilets, only 10% said they were happy with them. Comments suggested that people wanted salt bins to be checked more frequently and pavements to be de-iced as well as new, well maintained toilets for the town centre.

90% of people that completed the adults survey felt that there was not the right mix of shops in Bishop Auckland. Many commented in the surveys and focus groups that they wanted less charity shops. Respondents also wanted to attract bigger brands into the town. The younger people especially wanted to develop Tindale shopping area to attract brands such as Primark, whereas the adult's survey wanted to bring shops back into the town centre

62% said that the town centre didn't have the right mix of eating/drinking venues. They wanted a wider variety of better quality restaurants and bars. The young people wanted to see more chain restaurants and more international cuisine.

90% of respondents felt that there were issues that stopped people coming into the Town Centre. Parking was mentioned as the biggest issue, with empty shops, too many charity shops and too many pound shops as well as the streets being run down and scruffy also mentioned frequently.

Adult Focus Group

Issues with the look of the town and the number of empty shops was discussed and the focus group felt that was nowhere for tourists and visitors to go, especially now that Doggets and Marks and Spencer's have shut down.

It was suggested that there is a problem with overflowing residential bins and bins are not being taken back in once the rubbish has been collected. The group thought that if fixed penalties notices were issued for any violations this would alleviate the problem.

There is also an issue with fly tipping in the town and the group wanted to see more enforcement and people being named and shamed. It was understood that Durham County Council was using covert CCTV cameras in the worst affected areas to catch offenders. Once convicted video footage was being posted on the County Council's website and released to the media to highlight the initiative. The group suggested that it would be good to have more publicity to make sure people know that they are being watched.

The focus group said that they would like to see more being done about cars that have been dumped and cars on the road that are untaxed.

It was felt that the council workmen cleaning up the litter in town were fighting a losing battle, that they are seen out at 7am on a Sunday morning and it's still as bad the following day. The participants of the focus group wondered if something could be done to encourage people to dispose of cigarette ends responsibly as the town is covered in them.

There was a suggestion that a project could be set up within the schools to encourage students to take part in litter picks as a way of educating the next generation. The group discussed projects in Middlesbrough where several organisations are working together to reduce litter and improve the appearance of the town centre and they thought that this approach might work well in Bishop Auckland.

The state of the high street was an important topic for the people who attended the focus group. They thought that with over 30 shops on the main street closed, Bishop Auckland was becoming a ghost town. They also felt that the opening of the retail park at Tindale Crescent was a contributing factor in the decline of the town centre. There were comments about shoppers being put off by people selling products in the street. The group wondered who owned the buildings on Newgate Street and what would happen to the Beales building now that the store was closing. They wanted to see a butcher and a fruit and veg shop back in the town centre. The group were aware that town centres were failing country wide and hoped that an increase in tourism through Kynren and Auckland Projects would fill up the empty units and create jobs but were concerned that this would take time.

The group were positive about the events that were being run in the town and that they bring people into the town centre and help businesses.

The group thought that lack of available parking and the cost of parking put people off coming into the town.

It was felt that there was still a place for the market to be re-established in the town but it would need to be thought through to make sure that it attracted custom. They wondered if something could be done about the walk from the train station to Market Place to make it more appealing and attract more visitors.

Conclusion

The AAP statistics show that there is an increase of 2% of business units in use in the Bishop Auckland and Shildon AAP area between 2011 – 2013. However, as they don't hold the statistics for empty retail units in the town, further research would need to be undertaken to realise the extent of the problem.

It was noted that the masterplan being produced by Ryder Architecture would focus on regeneration of the town centre.

Action 10

Work with various organisations involved in the town centre masterplan to influence the outcome and encourage positive and sustainable change.

Statistics show that residents had a strong affinity to Bishop Auckland

76% were "Satisfied with the local area as a place to live."

63% had strong connections stating that "I belong to the neighbourhood" compared to the average in England of 58%.

77% said that they liked living in an historic town surrounded by countryside.

50% said that they liked green spaces, recreation ground, Auckland Park, walkways around the town.

Although no statistics were available to quantify the level of dog fouling and littering, the questionnaire revealed that residents felt that these were particular problems that should be addressed.

Action 11.

Further information should be sought regarding reports and incidents of dog fouling and littering.

Health and Wellbeing



Young Persons Focus Group

The number of comments relating to Bishop Auckland Hospital highlighted that this was very important to the students. They wanted to see A&E returned to the town, especially if it was closing in Darlington. They pointed out that it was expensive for people to have travel to hospital in Durham, Darlington and Newcastle. They also wanted to see maternity services brought back to Bishop Auckland. They felt that people would feel safer if they were closer to health care services. They also wanted more doctors to be employed so that people would be able to get appointments. The focus group suggested that there should be a Sexual Health Clinic in the town and to raise awareness about how to prevent STDs. They also wanted therapy units for mental health.

The students suggested that less takeaway shops in the town and an increase in health shops with healthier options being sold in cafes, restaurants and schools would help improve the health of the community. They also thought that cheaper fees for sports facilities as well as more open spaces would encourage residents to a healthier lifestyle. The focus group wanted gyms for younger people without weights and thought that a cycle powered cinema would encourage people to exercise.

The facilities at the swimming pool were highlighted by the students who felt that better facilities, with more spaces available for general swimming would allow people to be more active. They said that health and hygiene at the pool could be improved and that the pool was “unattractive and smelly”.

Conclusion

91% of people in Bishop Auckland live in a health deprivation hotspot which is considerably higher than the average in England of 20%. This statistic is based on the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) health domain 2010.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) describe health inequalities as “... differences between people or groups due to social, geographical, biological or other factors”. And suggest that “These differences have a huge impact, because they result in people who are worst off experiencing poorer health and shorter lives. Some differences, such as ethnicity, may be fixed. Others are caused by social or geographical factors (also known as ‘health inequities’) and can be avoided or mitigated.”

This is highlighted further by the statistic showing that 20% of people aged between 16-64 in Bishop Auckland are living with a limiting long-term illness compared to the average in England of 13%. Further, 9 % of the population of Bishop Auckland claim Disability Living Allowance compared to the average in England of 5%

The average time for residents to travel to the nearest hospital is 16 minutes which is below the county average of 29 minutes, however it is not clear if this statistic allows for the fact that services have been cut at the local hospital meaning that residents now must travel further for specialised care.

Action 12

Work with partners to look at reducing health inequalities

Leisure



Young Persons Focus Group

The focus group wanted to see more activities of all types to be available for the residents of Bishop Auckland. This includes sports activities such as tennis courts, rugby and football pitches, rock climbing, obstacle course, dance studios, parks, gymnastics centre, trampolining centre, walks and paths and an outdoor gym.

The students also came up with a wide variety of leisure and family activities that they hoped to see available in Bishop Auckland. These activities included; ice skating rinks, bowling areas, cinema with free transport from the town, horse riding lessons, water rafting, drama, music studios, animation studios, canoeing, art classes, creative writing and journalism opportunities, planetarium, festivals, museums, water park and an arcade (slot machines).

It was felt that music was important to the town and the focus group wanted to see additional facilities for live music such as a bandstand in the park for local bands to play. They also wanted more street music, music festivals and Jazz bands in the town on the weekends.

Additionally, the students suggested that there should be a town Leisure card with discounted admission to a range attractions and facilities. They also wanted free entry into Auckland Castle for local people.

As well as additional activities available in the town, the students also wanted to see more family friendly restaurants, more coffee shops aimed at teenagers with music and free WIFI like McDonalds. They also thought that Bishop Auckland would benefit from big name high street shops such as Primark, House of Fraser, H&M, Mac and Pandora.

Questionnaire

The surveys highlighted that respondents felt that more activities were needed in the town for all age groups. Cinema, sports, events, bowling, music, festivals came up as top activities for adults, whereas youth clubs, sports, parks, cinema and skate park came out top for young people. 82% of young people felt that leisure centres, school/college sports halls and all-weather pitches were important to them and their families. It was suggested in both surveys that improvements should be made to the swimming pool.

When asked what they liked most about living in Bishop Auckland, the most popular response at 77% from the adult survey was that they like living in an historic town surrounded by countryside while only 20%, the lowest response, liked the shopping facilities, restaurants and cafes available. However when the same question was asked to the children and young people, 21% liked living in an historic town surrounded by countryside and 49%, the most popular response, liked the shopping facilities, restaurants and cafes.

With regard to public events and services provided directly by the town council or in partnership with others, all were deemed important or very important. The most important being the Food Festival at 95% and the Remembrance Day Ceremony and Community Fund both at 93%. The least important was the Horticultural/Produce show but this was still rated as important or very important by 63% of respondents.

When asked about the effectiveness of these services and public events 91% of respondents felt that the Food Festival was effective or very effective, 75% felt that the Remembrance Day Ceremony was effective or very effective and 70% felt that the floral displays in the town were effective or very effective. Only 36% of respondents felt that the Community find and donations to help local groups and projects were effective or very effective.

There were comments made during the consultation that suggested that some community groups were

not aware that the community fund existed, but that this was a good idea as these groups were run by volunteers and need support. There were also comments about the Fireworks Display being a ticketed event or in a different location so that there was room for everybody.

Adult Focus Group

It was suggested that there has been talk of a cinema being built in the town for a while but nothing has materialised. The group also said that there was a cinema club running from the Town Hall. They felt that there were plenty of activities for school children and for the over 60's in the town but there was a gap that could be filled catering for the people in the middle.

They felt that there were groups of young people between college and work who were being missed and this group often end up unemployed or getting into trouble and wanted to make sure something was available for them.

There was strong consensus that there were a lot of activities in the town but that these were probably not as well advertised as they could be, for example the schools are putting on activities that the public can join in with but these are not very well attended. They thought that more marketing and promotion could be achieved through Bishop Press but that use of Facebook and other forms of social media as methods of promotion were also important. There was anecdotal evidence that Kynren visitors were shocked by the town, and surprised that there was nothing else for them to do in Bishop Auckland

Conclusion

The Rural Community Profile for Bishop Auckland suggest that 22% of adults aged over 16 in County Durham participate in sport three times or more a week which is on par with the average in England of 22%

While we have no statistics regarding the number of activities available in Bishop Auckland, there was consensus among those consulted that more activities were needed in the town.

Action 13

Increase the number of activities for all age groups and improve promotion of activities already taking place in a wide range of ways.

Action 14

Improve the condition of the swimming pool.

Action 15

Hold more specialist events in the town.

Summary of Actions

Social (including Housing)

Action 1

Further research is required into issues raised relating to anti-social behaviour and other problems emanating from some of privately rented households and possible solution. In addition, explore how the Town Council can advertise ways that people can report crime as well as ensuring victims of crime are confident of reporting without fear of repercussion

Action 2

Look at ways to increase the stock of affordable starter homes by working in partnership with other agencies and investigate the perception that there is a need for more social housing by collecting details of waiting lists for the area.

Action 3

Investigate controls currently on development on green space contained in the Local Plan and possibly consider the production of a Neighbourhood Plan to determine areas for redevelopment and the protection of green spaces if necessary which will feed into the County Council.

Action 4

Quantify the problem of the sale of alcohol to underage people and identify what is currently being done to resolve

Action 5

Work with young people, including students of King James I Academy, Bishop Barrington and St John's, to tackle the perceived issues of social inclusion

Environment and Transport

Action 6

Work with Ryder Architecture and Eleven Arches to look at possible park and ride options to reduce the congestion and issues with parking in the town centre.

Action 7

Speak to Durham County Council/Highways regarding the issues raised with regard to the effectiveness of traffic lights in the town.

Action 8

Further investigations into the incidences of reported litter, dog fouling and fly tipping and look at ways to reduce these as well as incidences of vandalism

Education, Training and Employment

Action 9

Work with a variety of agencies to promote apprenticeships and training programmes. Work with The Auckland Project to increase employment opportunities. Look into possibilities of tackling transport issues for people working shifts.

Natural Heritage and Urban Design

Action 10

Work with various organisations involved in the town centre masterplan to influence the outcome and encourage positive and sustainable change.

Action 11

Further information should be sought regarding reports and incidents of dog fouling and littering.

Health and Wellbeing

Action 12

Work with partners to look at reducing health inequalities

Leisure

Action 13

Increase the number of activities for all age groups and improve promotion of activities already taking place in a wide range of ways.

Action 14

Improve the condition of the swimming pool.

Action 15

Hold more specialist events in the town.

Provisional Response to Parish Plan Recommendations

	Parish Plan Recommendations	Provisional Response
Social (including Housing)		
1	<p>Further research is required into issues raised relating to anti-social behaviour and other problems emanating from some privately rented households and possible solution.</p> <p>In addition, explore how the Town Council can advertise ways that people can report crime as well as ensuring victims of crime are confident of reporting without fear of repercussion</p>	<p>Consult and work with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Durham County Council – Strategic Housing • Durham County Council – Accredited Landlord Scheme • Police
2.	<p>Look at ways to increase the stock of affordable starter homes by working in partnership with other agencies and investigate the perception that there is a need for more social housing by collecting details of waiting lists for the area.</p>	<p>Consult and work with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DCC, Strategic Housing / Planning • County Durham Housing Group (Dale and Valley Homes)
3.	<p>Investigate controls currently on development on green space contained in the Local Plan and possibly consider the production of a Neighbourhood Plan to determine areas for redevelopment and the protection of green spaces if necessary which will feed into the County Council.</p>	<p>Consult and work with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DCC Planning <p>Seek to influence via planning process</p> <p>Investigate whether the development of a Neighbourhood Plan would be practical</p>
4.	<p>Quantify the problem of the sale of alcohol to underage people and identify what is currently being done to resolve.</p>	<p>Consult and work with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DCC – Drug and Alcohol Reduction Unit • Police • Operation Aries (multi agency approach to reducing underage drinking)
5.	<p>Work with young people, including students of King James I Academy, Bishop Barrington and St John's, to tackle the perceived issues of social inclusion.</p>	<p>Explore opportunities to create a School Council / Youth Forum</p>
Environment and Transport		
6.	<p>Work with Ryder Architecture and Eleven Arches to look at possible park and ride options to reduce the congestion and issues with parking in the town centre.</p>	<p>Continue to influence through involvement within established groups such as Bishop Auckland Town Team and Brighter Bishop Auckland and with initiatives such as the Town Centre Masterplan exercise, which includes the examination of transport and parking in the town centre</p>
7.	<p>Speak to Durham County Council/Highways regarding the issues raised with regard to the effectiveness of traffic lights in the town.</p>	<p>Consult and work with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DCC Highways
8.	<p>Further investigations into the incidences of reported litter, dog fouling and fly tipping and look at ways to reduce these as well as incidences of vandalism</p>	<p>Consult and work with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DCC – Customer Services. Seek supporting evidence of number of incidents recorded on their systems to quantify problem • DCC – education and enforcement action within Bishop Auckland • Encourage residents to report incidents via DCC customer services to help quantify the issue.

	Parish Plan Recommendations	Provisional Response
Education Training and Employment		
9.	Work with a variety of agencies to promote apprenticeships and training programmes. Work with The Auckland Project to increase employment opportunities. Look into possibilities of tackling transport issues for people working shifts.	Consult and work with: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• AAP. Employment, enterprise and Training has been established as an AAP priority.
Natural Heritage and Urban Design		
10	Town Centre Regeneration Work with various organisations involved in the town centre masterplan to influence the outcome and encourage positive and sustainable change.	Continue to influence through involvement within established groups such as Bishop Auckland Town Team and Brighter Bishop Auckland and with initiatives such as the Town Centre Masterplan exercise
11	Further information should be sought regarding reports and incidents of dog fouling and littering.	See 8
Health and Wellbeing		
12	Work with partners to look at reducing health inequalities	Consult and work with: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• DCC - County Durham Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy
Leisure		
13	Increase the number of activities for all age groups and improve promotion of activities already taking place in a wide range of ways.	Promote established groups and organisations and activities on BATC website
14	Improve the condition of the swimming pool.	Consult and work with: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• DCC - Leisure Services
15	Hold more specialist events in the town.	Continue provision of current events either direct or in partnership with others. Seek opportunities to support additional events where possible

	Other Action	Suggested Response
	Democratic Representation	Investigate the feasibility of including parts of Bishop Auckland in the Town Council boundaries which are currently excluded – i.e. Etherley Moor and Etherley Dene
	Social inclusion and diversity	Work with young people via school council / youth forum Investigate possible provision of an event celebrating diversity and culture Investigate supporting links established by schools with overseas communities, eg Orosi, Spain

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