Abergele Town Centre Study

VISION & MASTERPLAN
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Contents

The Study: Purpose

What is the Abergele Placemaking Plan?

The Abergele Placemaking Plan (APP) is an ongoing process with it prepared, owned and delivered by the local community. The final APP will be the result of listening to the community, understanding what the community likes and dislikes about the town, in addition to assisting in gathering evidence base to understand the community's needs. The community will be key in preparing a supporting implementation and delivery plan (e.g. how we deliver the projects agreed) for overcoming the problem issues. Some of the issues may be big and involve development of land and some not so big. No matter how large a task it may seem, the important step is to understand what the community and the town needs to ensure a sustainable town that the community and businesses want to live, work and invest in. In a nutshell, once finalised the Abergele Placemaking Plan will set out the issues that need tackling in Abergele and will include an implementation and monitoring plan to overcome those issues – it will be the local facilitating document in achieving a sustainable and better Abergele.

It is important that the needs of the community are understood, but it is equally important to be realistic and set out how they will be funded or developed in a timely manner. A lot of work in understanding the issues facing Abergele has already been gathered and the Plan is about bringing all these areas of information, plans and delivery into one concise local document - 'The Abergele Placemaking Plan'. For example, the APP will be complemented by the strategic development sites and policies identified in the Local Development Plan (LDP) by detailing robust and positive planning requirements for the LDP development sites, including the promotion and delivery of high quality, sustainable housing and employment development, which is supported by the timely provision of necessary infrastructure. It will set out the Locality Planning priority projects in the area and the means for delivering them. There are a wide range of other corporate initiatives and strategies, including those related to development and regeneration, transport, health and wellbeing, housing, education, cultural development, climate change, as well as many others that will heavily influence the evolution of the Abergele Placemaking Plan. These initiatives and planning requirements, where they are supported by the community through transparent engagement, will contribute significantly to the aspirations of the town.

What is Placemaking?

Placemaking is a many-sided approach to planning, designing and managing new development and public open space. It is about responding to the surroundings, by understanding the history and development of a place, its function and most importantly its residents and their relationship with the town. It is then about delivering change that works towards meeting its environmental, economic and social goals. It uses a local community's assets and needs as inspiration for creating good, functional places that promote people's health, happiness and well-being. Placemaking is both a process and a philosophy. Crucially, it involves working together with those who live, work or have an interest in Abergele to discover what their needs and aspirations are and how these can be addressed through the Placemaking Plan.

The Placemaking Plan will:

- Work with the local community to understand the issues and areas of wanted change and improvement

- Create the conditions to achieve better places whilst protecting environmental assets particularly sensitive to change

- Facilitate the delivery of key development sites identified in the LDP and Locality Planning work, in addition to other key sites identified by the community

- Help to stimulate development and enable the delivery of economic potential

- Safeguard and enhance the quality and diversity of places in Abergele and identify opportunities for change

- In response to good practice, be prepared in a collaborative way with key stakeholders and local communities

- The process of producing the Placemaking Plan is intended to nurture a long lasting collaborative partnership with the Abergele community

- Act as a focus and a catalyst for improvement and for getting key agencies, landowners and partners to work together

Core Principles of the Plan:

- Empowering local people to shape their surroundings

- Being creative in finding ways to enhance and improve places in which people live their lives Proactive in driving and supporting local economic development to deliver homes, business, infrastructure and thriving local areas

- Securing high quality design and amenity for existing and future residents and visitors

- Take account of different roles and characters of different areas

- Support the transition to a low carbon future and renewable energy in a changing climate

- Conserve and enhance the natural environment reducing pollution and waste

- Encourage the effective use of land

- Promote mixed use development and encourage the multiple benefits from use of land in urban and rural areas

- Conserve heritage assets in a way appropriate to their significance

- Seek to improve health, social and cultural well-being for everyone

- Address how infrastructure requirements will be met and how other obstacles to the delivery of development sites and community project needs will be overcome, in addition to ensuring infrastructure provision is aligned with development

- Set out the key project areas going forward and the potential means and timetable for delivering them via developer contributions or other sources of external and internal funding

- Key is that the Plan going forward is based on listening to the community

What is the Focus of the Town Centre Study?

Building on comments through the Placemaking Plan process, this study aims to develop a strategic Vision and Masterplan Plan for the town centre, whilst adopting a holistic and strategic approach, linking into other projects such as Pensarn Beach-front, Abergele Library and Community Hub, Shopfront design and improvements and Abergele Town Centre highway network.

Abergele town centre also needs to manage future change, as additional housing and employment is located within the town, with the needs of existing and future residents to be considered.

Objectives

Study objectives include:

- Clarifying a vision for achieving a more prosperous and sustainable future for the town centre;

- Providing a framework to accommodate change whilst protecting Abergele's local distinctiveness;

- Examining and making proposals for improvements to the physical fabric and town, including movement and improvements to green space;

- Addressing any negative perceptions and the general vitality and viability of the town centre;

- Responding to development opportunities in the town and how these relate to the town centre;

- Providing evidence for and assisting with future applications for external funding;

- Creating a framework to encourage private sector investments amongst businesses, including their promotion;

- Strengthening the fabric and assets of the local community and how to consolidate the town centre;

- Identifying key projects, opportunities and propose actions over the next 15 years, to act as catalysts for positive change;

- Determining how the town centre can capitalise from the opportunities and regeneration benefits derived from proposed strategic developments.

Study Process
Figure 1 - Study Process - Key Stages

STAGE 1

What are the Issues and Focus for the Town Centre

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STAGE 2

What's the Vision and Ideas for the Town Centre

→

STAGE 3

What's Our Plan and How Are We Going to Deliver It?
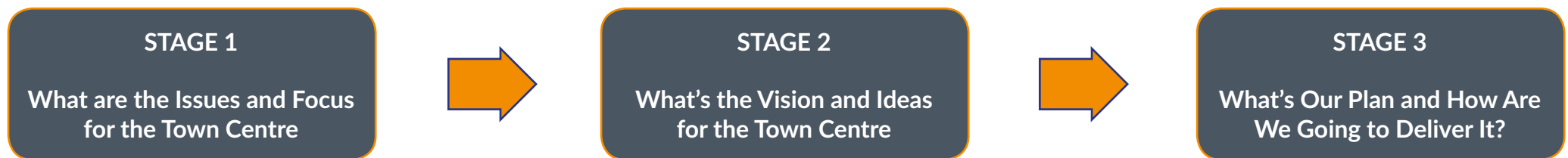
Chris Jones Regeneration was appointed by Conwy County Borough Council in July 2016 to develop the Town Centre Vision and Masterplan. The consultant team has undertaken the following tasks and activities over the course of the study:

- Review of activity and comments from the Placemaking Plan process and information including previous town centre studies

- A number of town centre visits to understand how it is used, range of shops and services, pedestrian experience, traffic and transport, linkages to parks and open space, amongst other items as well as how the town centre relates to Pensarn and to other neighbouring areas

- A series of community consultation events have been made available:

  o 8th and 9th September – Issues and Focus for the Town Centre

  o 20th and 21st October – Shaping the Vision and Ideas

  o Both events provided an on-line survey as well as structured sessions with the Local Traders Association and other town organisations

- A strategic workshop was also held on the 30th September in Venue Cymru, Llandudno for local partners to listen and provide feedback to the consultancy team

- Some Targeted discussions with some private landlords and local authority responsible on key physical assets

- The development of proposals for the final Vision and Action Plan

- Presentation to Abergele Placemaking Plan Programme Board and Abergele Town Council

CYNLLUN CREU LLEOEDD
ABERGELE PLACEMAKING PLAN

Beth hoffech chi i ddigwydd yng nghanol tref Abergele?
DWEUD EICH DWEUD!

What do you want to happen in Abergele town centre?
HAVE YOUR SAY - HERE TODAY!

CHRISJONES REGENERATION

Analysis

2. Town Centre Setting

a. Strategic-Local Policy

The following headline policy document provides the framework for the town centre.

Welsh Government Policy

The Planning (Wales) Act 2015, will require Local Planning Authorities to:

- have regard to 'Local Well-being Plans' to be published by Public Service Boards (PSBs) and ensure greater development engagement at the pre-application stage to ensure local communities are able to engage early on in the planning process to influence development proposals.

- Establish Strategic Development Plans that will focus planning for areas with matters of greater than local significance. The key will be to focus on areas where development is of a strategic nature.

The Environment (Wales) Act 2016, will require the Council to undertake a range of duties including:

- Objectives to maintain and enhance the resilience of ecosystems thereby contributing to the achievement of the well-being goals in section 4 of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015;

- To adopt the principles of sustainable management of natural resources include, managing adaptively at an appropriate spatial scale; promote public engagement; use an evidence base; take appropriate action for the short, medium and long term; prevent significant damage to ecosystems and take account of the biodiversity aspects of ecosystems;

- Seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity in the exercise of functions;

Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 will require public bodies to apply sustainable development principles with the need to demonstrate that they have used the following five ways of working:

- Integration – demonstrating a joined-up approach to communities and people, the economy, the environment and culture

- Long-term thinking - balancing current and long-term needs

- Prevention - taking action now to prevent problems in the future

- Collaboration - working with others to meet our objectives

- Involvement - involving the people affected by our actions

The Act also sets seven well-being goals to help the public sector deliver Sustainable Development – setting out a shared purpose. The Abergele Placemaking Plan will need to assess opportunities for well-being according to the following goals:

- A prosperous Wales – "An innovative, productive and low carbon society which recognises the limits of the global environment and therefore uses resources efficiently and proportionately (including acting on climate change); and which develops a skilled and well-educated population in an economy which generates wealth and provides employment opportunities, allowing people to take advantage of the wealth generated through securing decent work.

- A resilient Wales - "a nation which maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change (for example climate change)".

- A Healthier Wales - "a society in which peoples physical and mental well-being is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood".

- **A More Equal Wales** – "a society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances (including their socio-economic background and circumstances)".

- **A Wales of Cohesive Communities** – "Attractive, viable, safe and well-connected communities".

- **A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language** – "A society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language, and which encourages people to participate in the arts, and sports and recreation".

- **A Globally Responsive Wales** – "A nation which, when doing anything to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, takes account of whether doing such a thing may make a positive contribution to global well-being".

The WBFG Act will be supported by two other pieces of legislation, namely the Planning (Wales) Act 2015 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

Local Policy

The Conwy Corporate Plan 2012-17 sets out the Council's key priorities where we want to focus special attention over the next 5 years to support the needs of the citizens who live in, work in and visit the County Borough of Conwy. The Council is presently developing a new Conwy Priorities Plan for 2017-2022 that will continue to focus on its 8 citizen outcome. The Council's aspiration for the County Borough is *"Conwy - a progressive County creating opportunity".* The values which underpin the aim of supporting quality services are:

- To be customer focused

- To be respectful and fair

- To be reliable and accountable

- To be innovative

- To support and develop our team

The citizen outcomes for the Plan are centred on: 1 - People in Conwy are educated and skilled 2 - People in Conwy are safe and feel safe 3 - People in Conwy live in safe and appropriate housing 4 - People in Conwy are healthy and independent 5 - People in Conwy live in a County which has a thriving economy 6 - People in Conwy live in a sustainable environment 7 - People in Conwy live in a County where heritage, culture and the Welsh language and thrive 8 - People in Conwy are informed, included and listened to

Conwy Local Development Plan 2007-2022 covers the part of the Conwy County Borough outside Snowdonia National Park (known as the Plan Area). The Plan Area is rich in historic assets, has a buoyant tourism industry, excellent transport links, good water and air quality and a high quality natural environment (including coast and countryside). However, population and household projections have demonstrated that the population of the Plan Area could increase by as much as 7,850 people by 2022. The impact of these impending population changes creates a number of priority issues for the Council. There is a need to:

- Accommodate a sustained and deliverable level of housing and employment growth which reflects the principal natural population change, household size change and net in-migration;

- Accommodate additional employment opportunities to contribute to reducing out-commuting levels;

- Encourage a more balanced age structure and promote a more stable economic position through housing and employment offer, skills develop-ment, jobs creation and creative housing design. Whilst at the same time, adjusting to an ageing population in terms of health, social care, housing and employment need;

- Contribute to the current requirements for Affordable Housing for Local Need (AHLN) and maximise future provision;

- Protect Conwy's outstanding natural and built environment;

- Safeguard and promote the Welsh language and community identity;

- Encourage development which seeks to achieve the priority objectives of the Plan

The Vision for the LDP is that "By 2022, the communities of Conwy will be more sustainable, offer a higher quality of life and be supported by a more balanced age structure. In reviewing the spatial objectives of the LDP, the following are relevant to the Abergele Town Centre Vision and Masterplan, amongst others.

- **SO1.** To accommodate sustainable levels of population growth.

- **SO2**. To promote the comprehensive regeneration of Colwyn Bay, Abergele, Towyn and Kinmel Bay to broaden economic activity, address social exclusion and reduce deprivation through the Strategic Regeneration Area Initiative.

- **SO3.** To provide land and develop a diverse supply of housing to contribute to needs, including affordable housing for local need, and to meet the need for gypsies and travellers, at a scale that is consistent with the ability of different areas and communities to grow.

- **SO4.** Identify and safeguard land to meet the community's needs for more jobs and greater economic prosperity and reduced out-commuting levels focusing, in particular, on higher value employment opportunities and skills development within and around the strategic hubs of Conwy, Llandudno, Llandudno Junction and Colwyn Bay and in the accessible and sustainable location of Abergele.

- **SO5.** Encourage the strengthening and diversification of the rural economy where this is compatible with local economy, community and environmental interests.

- **SO6.** Develop vibrant town centre destinations for shopping, business and commerce, culture, entertainment and leisure through the protection and enhancement of the vitality, viability and attractiveness of Llandudno as the strategic sub regional retail centre, and regeneration of Colwyn Bay town centre and other key shopping centres.

- **SO7.** Concentrate development along existing and proposed infrastructure networks and, in particular, at locations that are convenient for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport.

- **SO8.** Assist tourism through the protection and enhancement of coastal and rural based tourism attractions and accommodation and further exploit the potential to develop, strengthen and encourage an all year-round tourism industry.

- **SO9.** To encourage efficient patterns of movement and to recognise the strategic role that the A55 and rail corridors will play in meeting the development needs of the Plan Area, and to give particular attention to development locations that are convenient for pedestrians, walking and cycling in Conwy to aid the reduction of transport CO2 emissions.

- **SO10.** Ensure that good, sustainable, inclusive design is delivered which includes the opportunity to design out crime, to develop strong, safe and locally distinctive communities and encourage the younger population to remain and return to the area.

The LDP identifies Abergele as a key area that serve the essential service needs of the surrounding catchment. Abergele is seen as "*a key growth area in the East to meet development needs, predominantly as a result of high flood risk constraints*". It continues by stating an "*Abergele Masterplan will form the delivery vehicle to bring all the development opportunities together holistically, providing the means to ensure that the implications of new development impact positively on the wider areas as a whole*". Over the Plan period it is projected that approximately 1,270 (20%) new dwellings will be delivered on previously developed and greenfield land in these key areas, inclusive of new homes that have already been completed or permitted. In Abergele, Towyn & Kinmel Bay (including Pensarn) approximately 6 hectares of employment land (B1, B2 & B8) will be delivered in the Abergele area to meet needs and contribute to a reduction in out-commuting levels and car usage. Abergele is also seen to benefit from improvements having been included in the Strategic Regeneration Area Initiative. A key objective in realising the development potential in Abergele and lessen impact on the town centre, is a Traffic Improvement Scheme that will manage the volume of traffic, congestion and prevent pressure on the surrounding road network.

2b. Physical Place

Location – context

Abergele lies between the sea and the hills and has always been an important junction on the coastal route along the North Wales coast – a role clearly shown in historic maps and echoed in the street pattern which remains to this day. The coast at Pensarn is a ten-minute walk from the centre, and the steep hills which contain Gwrych Castle are easily accessible to the south. The town is named from the local stream, the Gele River, which is still a visible presence in the town centre, flowing from a spring in the hills to join the Clwyd River south of Kinmel Bay. The town is still remarkable as the first place at which the coast becomes visible on the east west route of the A55, and at which the close relationship between the sea and the adjacent hills, so typical of the coast westwards, becomes apparent. The communications function has been localised as the A55 trunk road has by-passed the town, but the town centre remains a busy local attraction. The A55 brings Abergele within commuting distance of Holyhead (55 minutes), Bangor (35 mins) Chester (40 mins) and Manchester (80 mins).

Town centre

Abergele town centre remains a compact mass centred on the historic road network which dates from at least the medieval period. The streets narrow towards the centre, with successive building eras adopting the tightly enclosed pattern. This is still a low-rise town with buildings mostly of 2-3 storeys. The largest single buildings are the several churches and chapels which have a commanding presence. The town centre has an aged profile in which Victorian buildings dominate and still influence the style of newer developments, but many buildings have seen better days and are in need of repair or at least redecoration. Local limestone render and industrial brick facades are all represented, and many traditional shopfronts survive in overall form but with original detail lost or obscured. The main streets are mostly in retail use with a number of pubs at intervals. There is a more recent supermarket at the west end of centre. A group of civic buildings forms a cluster at the west end. The approach and gateway to Gwrych Castle are prominent features to the west of the town centre.

Figure 2 - Location within North Wales Coast

Because of the tight-knit street pattern there is no central space typical of a market town, and indeed very little sizeable civic space other than the Parc Gele, which flanks the River Gele, and Pentre Mawr Park to the north of the town centre. There are however sizeable areas of open space provided by churchyards, notably around St Michael's, and the bowling green. There is an unusually extensive network of off-street pedestrian routes linking these spaces to the town centre and beyond, which means that, given the small size of the town, that most areas can be reached on foot within 10-15 minutes, including the beach and railway station.

2c. Economic

Town Centre Vitality and Viability (People and Places Research)

In Spring 2016, the People and Places Partnership were commissioned by Conwy County Borough Council to undertake survey of the current performance of Abergele town centre as a forerunner to this Study. There were two parts to the survey: The first part analysed core performance indicators of the economic performance of Abergele town centre benchmarked against comparable places based on a survey of all the town's businesses as well as interviews with town centre customers; the second part looked at the wider economic and social value of Abergele including community facilities, services and the visitor economy.

Core Economic Indicators

Function

The core KPIs for Abergele help in understanding its function and planning for investment and enhanced future activity. Notable KPIs that help further interpret this include:

- Half (51%) of businesses in the town centre are shops and the majority of these are comparison retailers (84%). Whilst this indicates Abergele is an established local shopping, it also suggests a potential vulnerability to competition from neighbouring centres and on-line retail.

- A low proportion of key attractors (2%) and low number of national multiples (6%) with a very high proportion (88%) of independently owned businesses.

- The responses from the town centre customers indicate that nearly half of people (47%) are over 65 and this is significantly more elderly than in comparable towns. Most people are in town for convenience shopping (45%) and a high proportion (31%) visit Abergele daily or more than once a week (39%), suggesting a core of loyal town centre users.

- A relatively high proportion (47%) of users came in to town on foot, whilst slightly less than average for small towns (42%) travelled by car. Only 16% of town centre users spend more than £20 on a visit to the town centre including routine grocery shopping.

Trends

The analysis of KPIs for Abergele trends indicates a quiet town throughout the week with adequate parking though footfall and business performance appears to vary across the centre. KPIs supporting this analysis are:

- Abergele is considerably quieter than similarly-sized, benchmarked towns nationally with between 48 and 56 passers-by per 10 minutes mid-week in central Market Street. In contrast, there were 93-107 passers-by per 10 minutes outside Tesco, whereas this fell as low as 21-23 passers-by on Bridge Street.

- The vacancy data for Abergele in March indicated an above average level of 15% across the town, though by late April this was reduced to 11%.

- The data indicates that overall Abergele is a moderately easy place to park during the week with 26% of spaces available on a busy day though there is a variation across the town with 79% of the spaces being located at the western end of Market Street and an inconsistent charging policy across car parks.

- Somewhat alarming in terms of recent business performance, is that the proportion of Abergele businesses that had increased their profitability in the last 12 months was only 18%. Only a modest proportion of businesses (28%) expected profitability to go up compared to 37% for small towns nationally, whilst a significant proportion (18%) of businesses expected profitability to continue to decrease in the year ahead.

Current Issues and Priorities

The surveys of businesses and town centre customers highlighted their positive and negative current perceptions and point to potential future priorities. Town centre customers were the more positive than businesses and highlighted slightly different priorities.

Figure 3 – Customer Perceptions

Negative Issues -Customer Perceptions
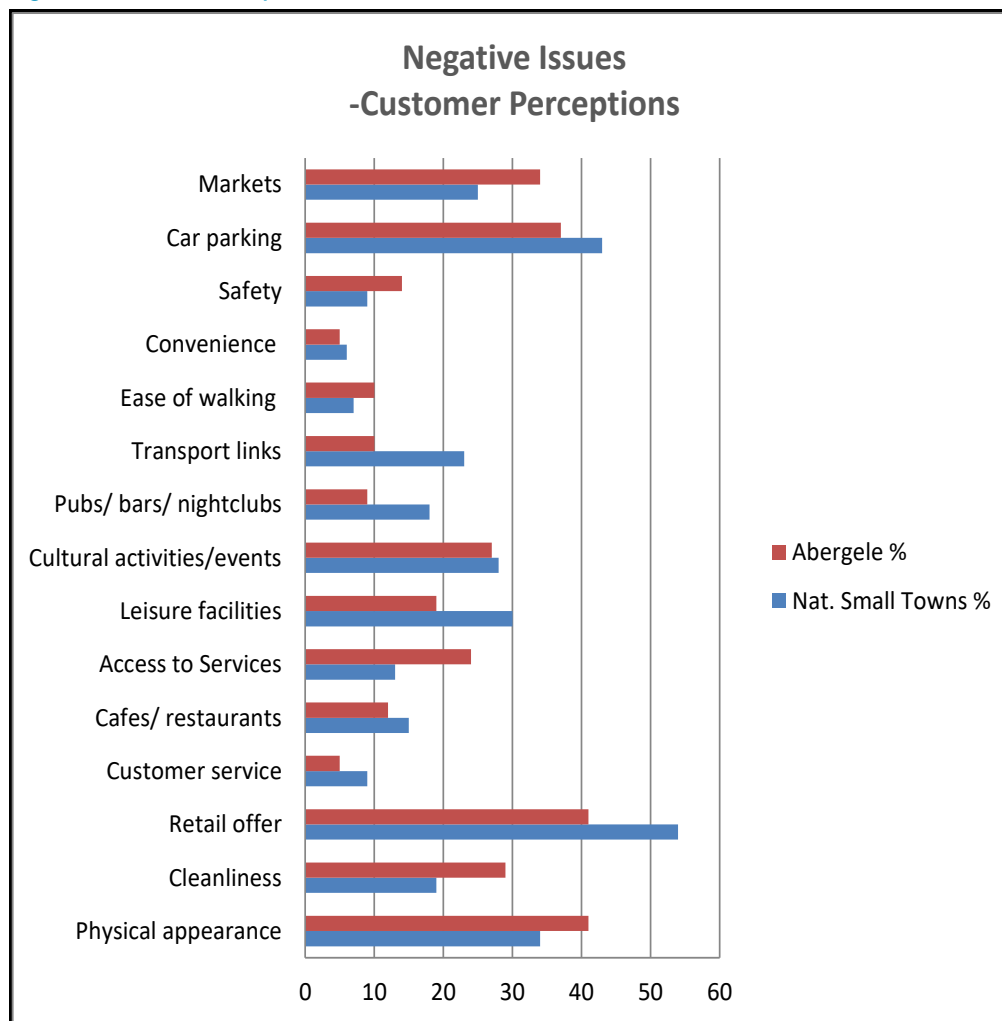
Positives

- The town's location featured prominently in the positive perceptions of businesses with potential local customers (89%), potential tourist customers (56%), transport links (47%) and geographical location (44%) considered as key positives of being located in Abergele.

- Town centre users focused more on the quality of the town centre experience with customer service (91%), convenience (89%), ease of walking (88%), safety (80%), transport links (80%) all rated positively by at least four out of five town centre customers.

Negatives

- In terms of negative perceptions about being located in Abergele town centre, 85% of businesses that responded considered parking to be a key issue and this compares to 54% for small towns nationally. This is followed by the retail mix (37%) and competition from out-of-town shopping (34%) as the next two most negative perceptions.

- In contrast over a third of town centre customers surveyed rated the physical appearance of the town (41%), parking (37%) and the lack of a market (34%) as the negative factors.

Priorities

- When businesses in Abergele were asked what two things that would improve the town centre, the main set of responses related to parking followed by the retail mix and the opportunities for improved promotion and events. The comments on parking were varied but largely focused on the different restrictions in place. Points raised around the need to improve the retail mix recognised the need for a combination of provision. Promotional opportunities mentioned included branding, signage and events that will bring new people to the town.

- When asked what two things would improve the town, significant numbers of users point to a need to improve the retail mix, the town's appearance and issues relating to traffic and parking.

Wider Economic and Social Value
Cultural and Community Function

The findings from the analysis of cultural and community function are compatible with the evidence about retail provision revealed by the core economic data and suggest that Abergele acts as a good local service centre.

- There is a high proportion of local verses area-wide cultural facilities and community services concentrated in the town that contribute to footfall and underline how Abergele serves a local catchment area with currently only a limited appeal to day visitors and tourists. The local cultural and community facilities are concentrated in Abergele town centre and are important in contributing to footfall.

- Although provision of cultural and community events in the town centre and town edge mirrors the lack of public space, there is potential for more events at Pentre Mawr Park on the town edge, the Promenade at Pensarn and the very picturesque Gwrych Castel if this can be managed in a way that leads to linked trips to hospitality in the town centre.

Built Environment

The combined indicators for visual impression and listed buildings in Abergele portray a town with a strong heritage and potential to enhance it as a local service centre and potential stopping-off point for visitors.

- Compatible with economic considerations, planning for local heritage and townscape improvement should link to access and traffic management to create an attractive environment that entices and extends footfall around the town centre.

- The allocations for extensive new housing and business development provide the potential for increased numbers of town centre users, if the town centre is made more appealing and accessible in these ways.

Economic Diversity

The series of KPIs for the town's economic diversity are key in helping to under-stand and develop Abergele's economic potential beyond the current vulnerability of its comparison shopping function and point to a need for an improved cultural and leisure offer that will attract and hold local people and visitors in the town for longer.

- This was re-enforced by analysis of the town's 'self-reliance' that shows that its retail offer is competing with key attractors in neighbouring centres whilst a limited fresh food and grocery offer is dominated by the town centre supermarkets and convenience stores.

- The presence of several well-liked pubs and independently-owned cafes/restaurants in Abergele probably serves local shoppers and has the potential to extend visitors' stays alongside other enhancements. There is very limited accommodation provision in the town centre and little prospect that this will provide any opportunity for significantly increasing footfall.

- The town is more self-reliant in terms of essential community and cultural provision and it is important that these are strengthened within the town centre to attract footfall and contribute to its function as a local service centre.

Social Diversity

The graph overleaf shows the ward level data for Abergele and Pensarn, which shows a clear differential between economic and social well-being as you move from the coastal neighbourhood of Pensarn and into the rural Gele ward. Pensarn demonstrates that it is falling behind in relation to skills and qualifications that is leading to an unemployment rate that is 500% more than Gele ward with claimant levels following a similar trend. Pentre Mawr shows a mixed housing stock with it not having the greatest owner occupation levels with incidents of crime also higher than its neighbouring wards. In looking at community demographics, over a third of households for Abergele and Pensarn are over the pensionable age, with the Gele Ward representing 40% of its neighbourhood. Pentre Mawr has the greatest number of dependent children (22.4%) being close to local schools and other family services.

These figures illustrate that any vision and masterplan for Abergele town centre needs to consider its immediate community and to provide services and unlock opportunities that are accessible and inclusive and remove barriers to social and economic well-being. The need to also ensure we create spaces and buildings that promote cohesiveness and social engagement is important as well as looking

at ways of up-skilling, promoting healthy living and improving housing quality where required.

Local Leadership, Planning and Delivery

Indicative scores for local leadership, planning and delivery reflect the resources and effort currently being invested through the Abergele Place Planning process and work with local stakeholders including the re-launched Abergele Traders Association.

- The overall score of 59% for local leadership represents the strong progress that is being made in developing the evidence base, focusing on town centre issues, influencing policy development, engaging stakeholders, providing suitable personnel and preparing a town centre strategy.

- It will be important beyond this intensive period, that processes and partnerships are put in place to attract funding and coordinate delivery of a longer-term work programme that will deliver projects and sustain success. This future thinking can begin to be defined in an organisational framework to accompany the evolving town centre strategy.

- As would be expected at this early stage in planning and delivery, initial progress focuses on securing start-up funds, addressing basics like access and car parking, assessment of the townscape and development planning to put suitable policies in place.

- Following ongoing consultation and the creation of a town centre strategy, it will be important to consider responsibilities and resources for delivering different facets of town centre regeneration including the role of the Chamber of Trade in championing improved retail provision and involvement in property enhancement. The Town Council and specific community groups will need to have defined roles alongside Conwy County Borough Council in delivering key improvements such as community and leisure facilities to strengthen the town centre's role in service provision.

Figure 4 – Socio-Economic Analysis (Census: WIMD)
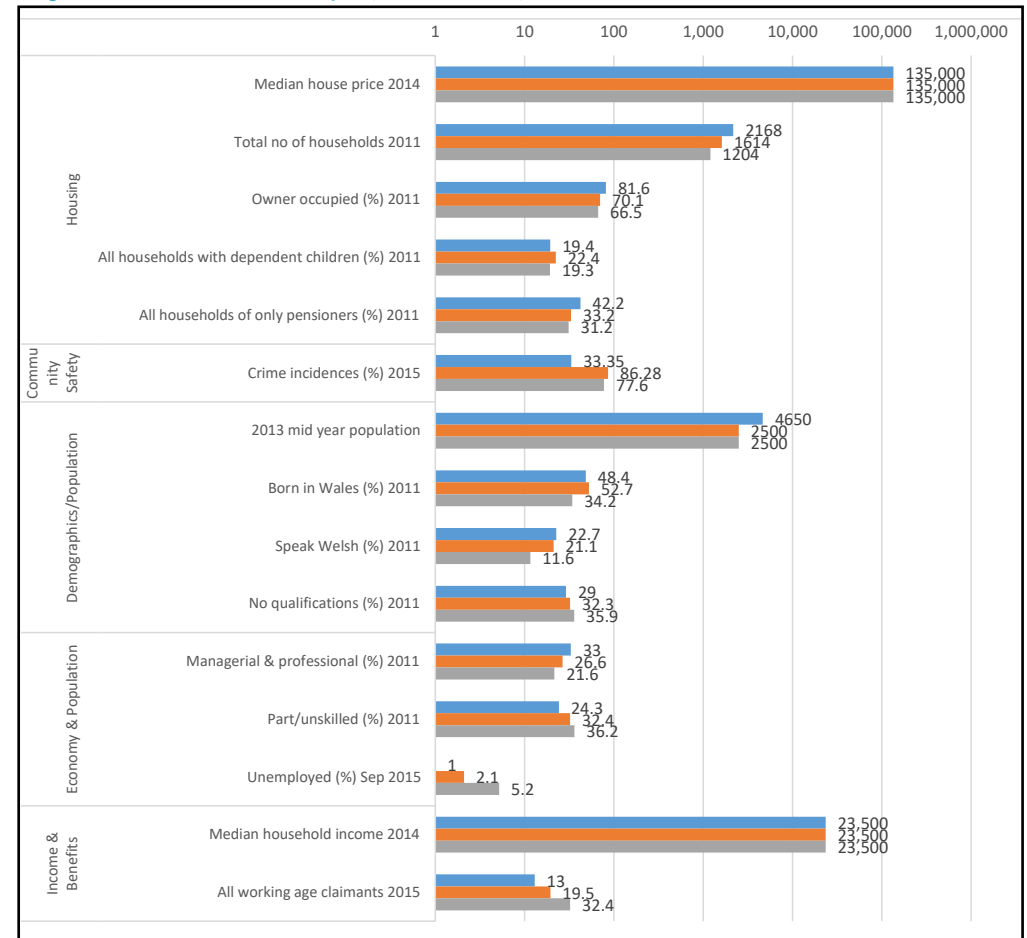
Summary of Future Opportunities

- *Traffic; Parking and Access:* The town's location is perceived as a positive opportunity by businesses though overwhelmingly they consider parking to be a key negative issue. Significant numbers of town centre users prioritise a need to improve issues relating to traffic and parking. Footfall, parking provision and business performance vary across the centre.

- **Built Heritage and Appearance:** The physical appearance of the town centre was perceived as the main negatives factor by town centre users. Planning for local heritage and townscape improvement can link to access and traffic management projects to create an attractive environment that entices and extends footfall around the town centre.

- **Welcoming Local Service Centre:** A high proportion of local community services concentrated in the town contribute to footfall and underline how Abergele serves a local catchment area. Town centre users are positive about quality of the town centre experience in terms of customer service, convenience, ease of walking and transport links.

- **Retail Mix and Markets:** The need to diversify the retail mix is considered as a significant priority by both businesses and customers. The lack of a market is perceived as a negatives factor by customers.

- **Leisure, Events and the Visitor Economy:** The opportunities for improved promotion and events are considered a priority by businesses and this could include meeting customers' demands for a market in town as well making more of the potential for more events on the town edge with linked trips to hospitality in the town centre. An improved cultural and leisure offer could attract and hold visitors, as well as locals, in the town for longer.

- **Local Leadership, Planning and Delivery:** The evolving strength of local leadership, planning and delivery reflects the resources and effort currently being invested through the Abergele Place Planning process and work with local stakeholders.

Key Place Points

- Conwy LDP 2007-2022 identifies Abergele as a key growth area with the South-East Site proposing an allocation of 550 housing units

- Abergele is located at an important junction on the North Wales coastal route

- It is a compact and low rise town centre dating back to the medieval period

- Due to its tight-knit street patterns there is little sizeable civic space or opportunities for redevelopment

- 51% of the town centre businesses are shops, with 84% of these being comparison (non-food), leading to greater vulnerability to competition from neighbouring centres and on-line retail

- The town centre has a convenience focus with 40% of users visiting more than once a week

- There is above average vacancy rate of 15% for the town centre

- Customers rate positively customer service, convenience and ease of walking

- Customers rate negatively the physical appearance of the town centre, parking and the lack of a market

- There is a limited accommodation offer in the town centre, with the cultural offer requiring more diversity

- There has been some strong progress through the Placemaking Plan process in local leadership and building a stronger business organisation

- There is a strong contrast between the town wards when looking at social and general well-being statistics that needs to form part of inclusive approach to delivery regeneration activity

- Key opportunities for future enhancement that emerge from survey work are traffic, parking and access, built heritage and appearance, welcoming local service centre, retail mix and markets, leisure, events and the visitor economy

3. Town Centre Analysis

Town Centre & Relationships

The town centre lies midway between the seafront and the hills to the south. In this location, it provides an attractive place to live with easy access to the beach, the attractive wooded hills to the south including Cefyn-yr-Ogof, Tower Hill and Tan-y-Gopa, and to nearby attractions in Conwy, Llandudno and Rhyl. The west end of the town is dominated by the historic partially ruined Gwrych Castle and its extensive stone enclosure walls. The railway station at Pensarn provides a local feeder service to the main London-Holyhead line.

The former main road, now by-passed by the A55, is still connected to the coastal route to east and west. This forms Bridge Street and Market Street in the centre. Chapel Street and Water Street provide the south north links from the centre to the coast at Pensarn, and through the hills to Llanrwst. The junctions in the old centre cause a great deal of traffic congestion, with little space for improvement without severe impact on the fabric of the town centre. Sea Road provides an alternative route to the seafront. Walking, and to a lesser degree cycling, routes are well provided for.

The coast and the hill foot are both accessible within 15 minutes, often by pedestrian or at least quiet lane routes and footpaths. Cycling terrain is mostly level or gentle but the narrow town centre roads and footpaths are a constraint. The main positive is the connection to the coastal National Cycle Route (NCR5) and footpath which then gives wide and easy access to east and west. Most of the town has quiet streets giving pedestrian access to the centre, and it should be an objective in the planning of the two major developments to east and west to continue and enhance these linkages.

Figure 5 - Setting of Town Centre
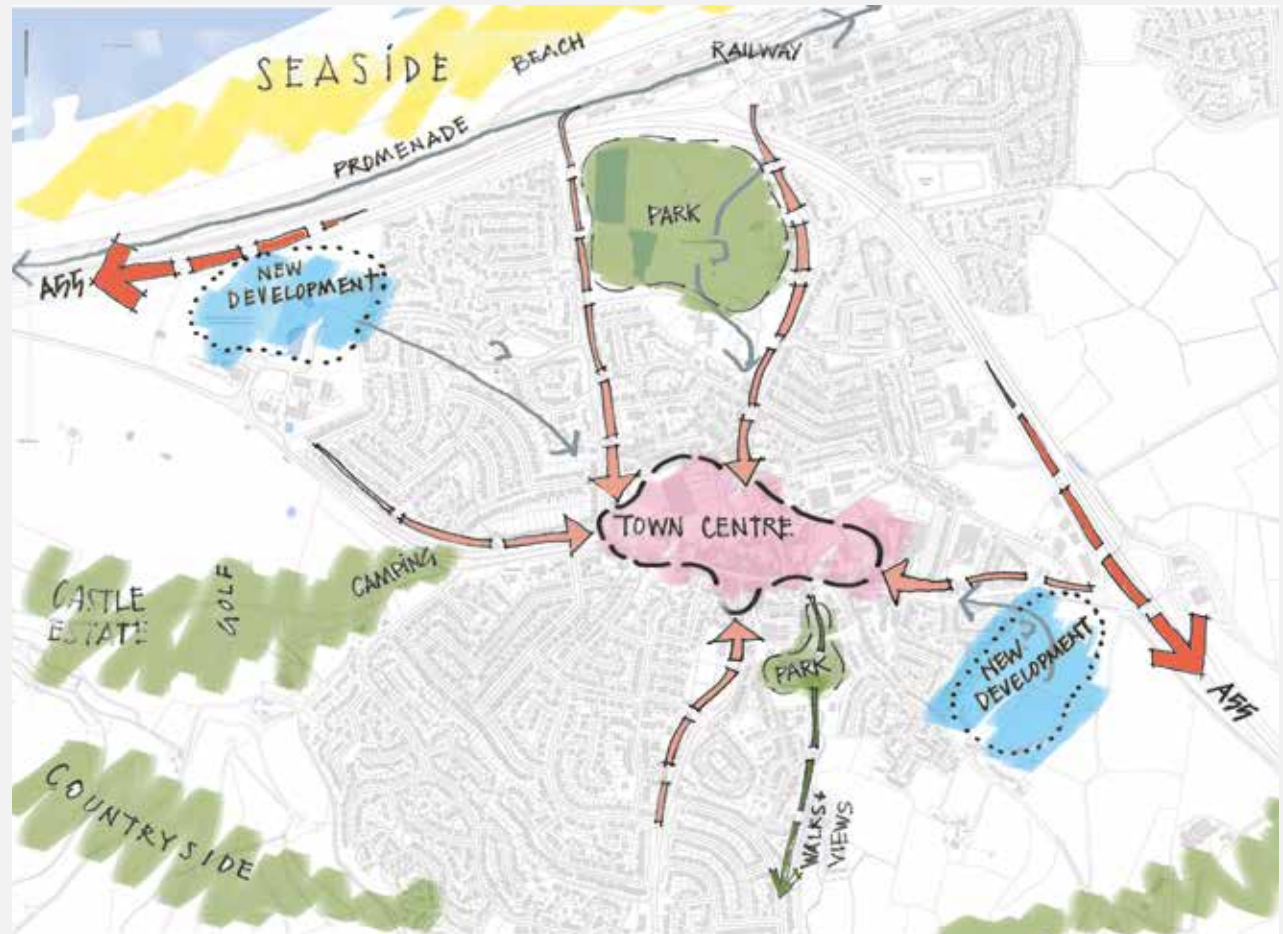
There are two substantial town parks within easy reach of the centre, which add to the attractions of the pedestrian network as well as providing play facilities and green open space for sport and exercise. However signage and way-marking is currently poor.

Image 1 - Images of Abegele Town Centre

Townscape Character

The core of the study area is centred on the cross-town routes of Market Street, Bridge Street, Chapel Street and Water Street. There are four recognisable 'threshold' spaces that define the entry points to the town centre:

- **West:** the wide-open space at the Tesco roundabout, unusual for the town centre which quickly becomes more densely built to the east. It also contains some key older buildings, characteristic of the Victorian 'estate' style such as the Old School (1871) and New York Terrace (1861).

- **North:** Water Street is another rather weakly defined local space, with potential for improvement. The chief enclosure is provided by the Church of St Michael and by terraced cottages towards the town centre.

- **South:** a densely-developed street (Chapel Street) with an opening adjacent to the dominant Mynydd Seion Chapel itself with its well-treed churchyard.

- **East:** the point at which the town centre building line narrows and becomes denser, marked by the prominent St. Paul's Methodist Chapel, dating from 1880.

Figure 6 - Character Sketchbook
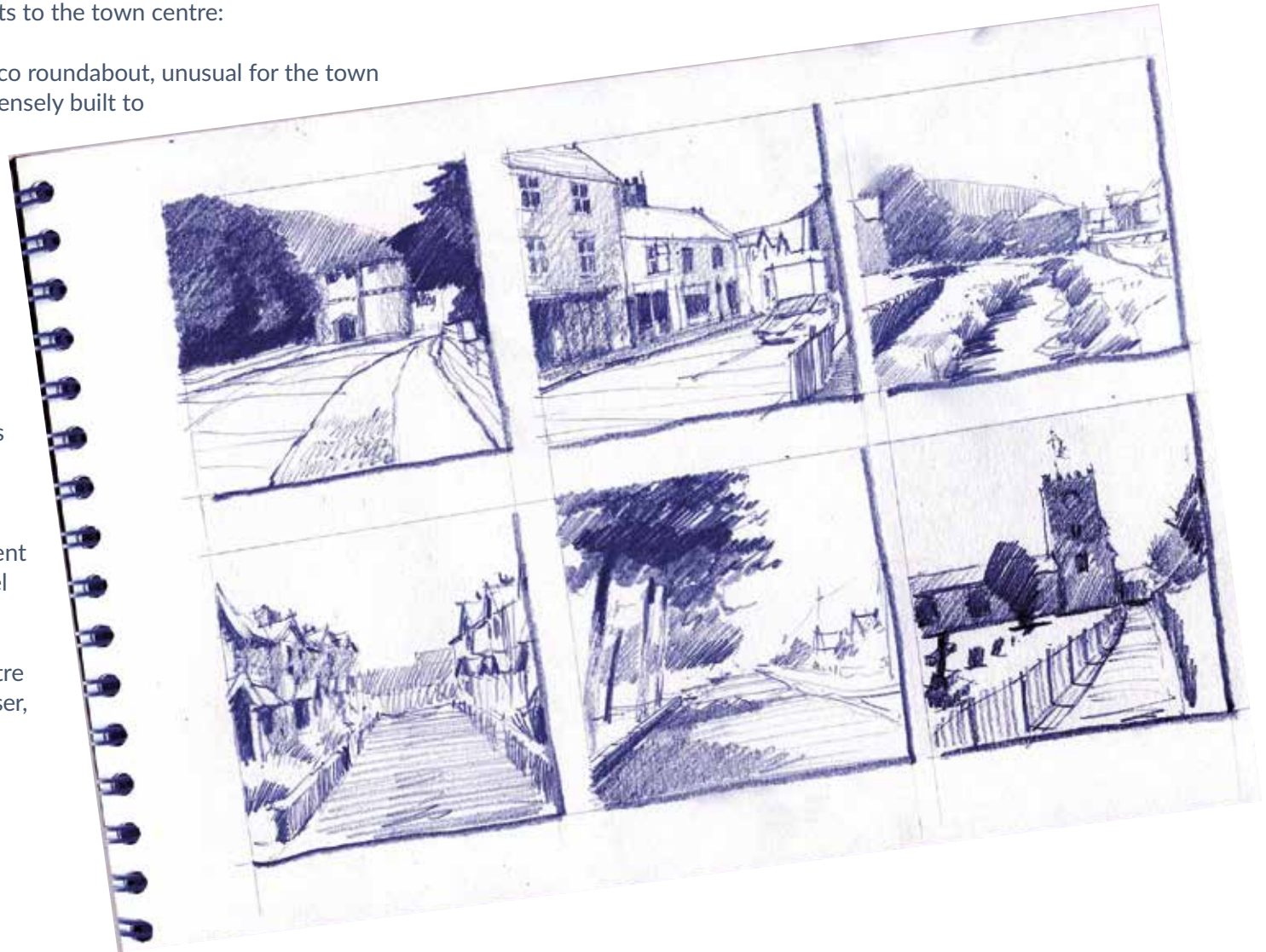
Image 2 - Old Photos of Town Centre

The character of the town in the study area is subdivided into several groups:

- **The Castle approach.** The long, straight avenue leading to the castle gateway is an impressive reminder of the influence of the Dundonald family and its connection with the town. The Castle, gateway and walls are on a massive scale dominating the scenery to the west and the avenue provides a grand approach lined by mature trees including the massive pines which are characteristic of the area.

- **Edge of town retail area.** The former cattle market site has been redeveloped to a low-rise and extensive space used by a supermarket and car dealership, with the foreground characterised by large areas of car parking. Whilst well-maintained and otherwise typical of an edge-of–town shopping area, the open-ness of the area contrasts with the dense layout and narrow streets of the town centre beyond, and allows multiple elements of street

furniture like signposts and lighting columns to add a degree of clutter to the townscape.

- **Main Streets.** Market Street, Bridge Street, Chapel Street and Water Street form the historic core and despite continuous rebuilding still retain a dense, narrow enclosed character. Building ages vary from the 16th C. onwards, but it would be fair to say that the majority of buildings date from the mid to late 19th C. The building pattern is dominated by 2-3 storey buildings in terraces with relatively narrow roads and pavements.

- **Core open space.** There is a central green space centred on the medieval St Michael's Church and preserved by its use as a churchyard. It is a quiet contemplative space, secluded but easily accessible from public paths, and forms a pedestrian connection to the main shopping streets.

Figure 7 - Character Areas

- **Greenspace.** A linear park following the line of the River Gele with larger spaces for play and exercise. The line of the River Gele can be traced in both upstream and downstream at various points.
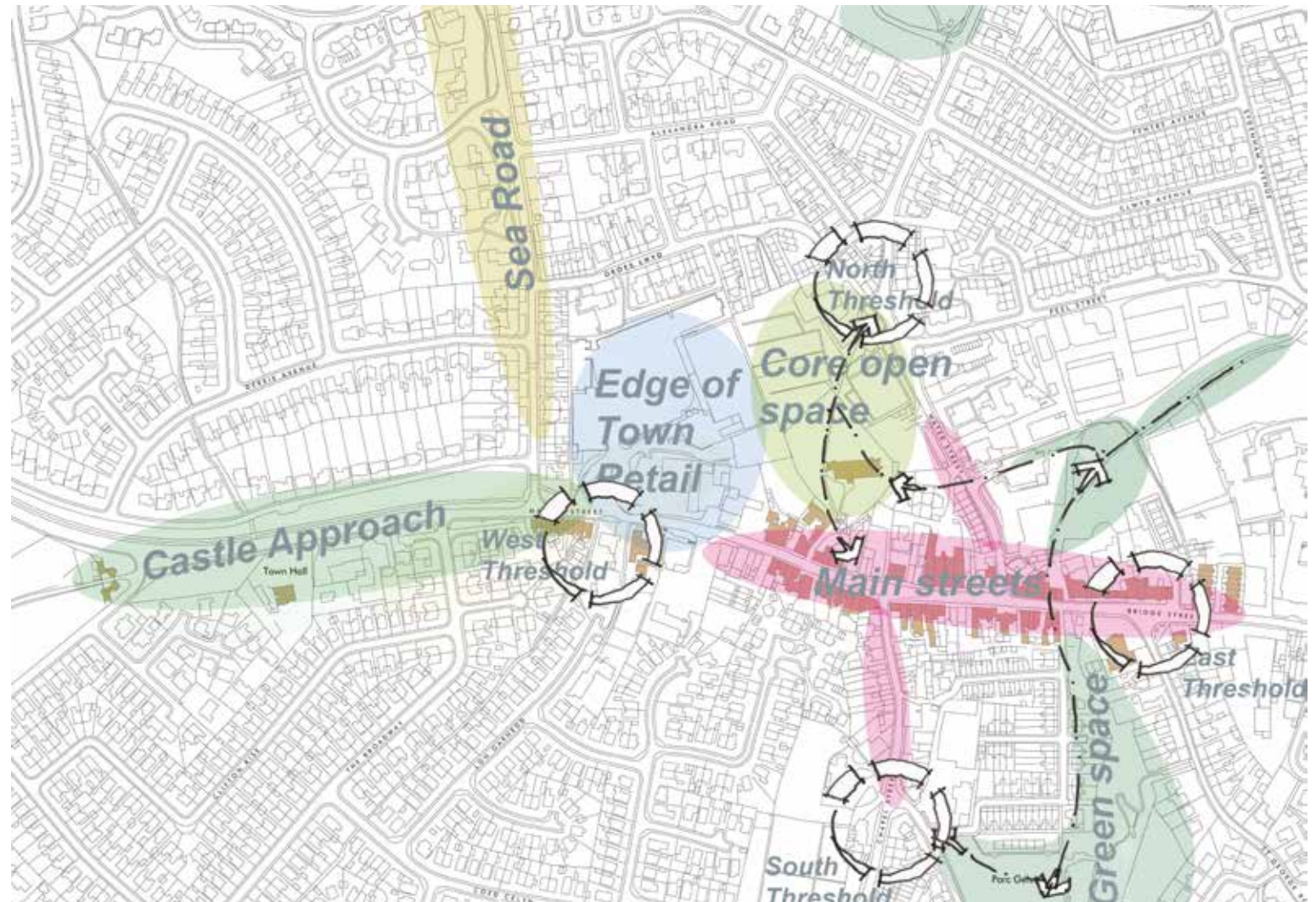
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Figure 8 - Character Area Visual Analysis
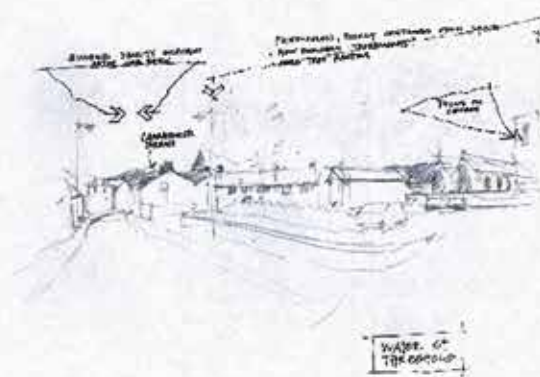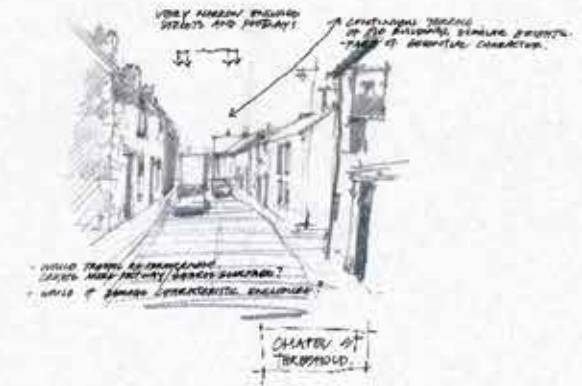
Land Use and Key Buildings

The majority of the town centre is densely packed with small shop units and the larger supermarket and car showroom. There is a limited amount of residential units above shops, but the main residential area of the town abuts the town centre and extends outwards in all directions. It consists mainly of 2-storey houses and terraces, with taller more recent apartment blocks.

The Conservation Area follows the line of the old town centre and contains a number of listed buildings. The blocks (shown red on plan) include not only listed buildings but others which have an important role in defining character and spaces. The list includes building types and materials which are typical of the old town, such as lines of stone or brick industrial terraces, major church landmarks and buildings of particular merit or interest. The green areas on plan represent open spaces, including public parks and cemeteries, which give a more expansive, if sometimes hidden feel to the centre.

Significant buildings and spaces
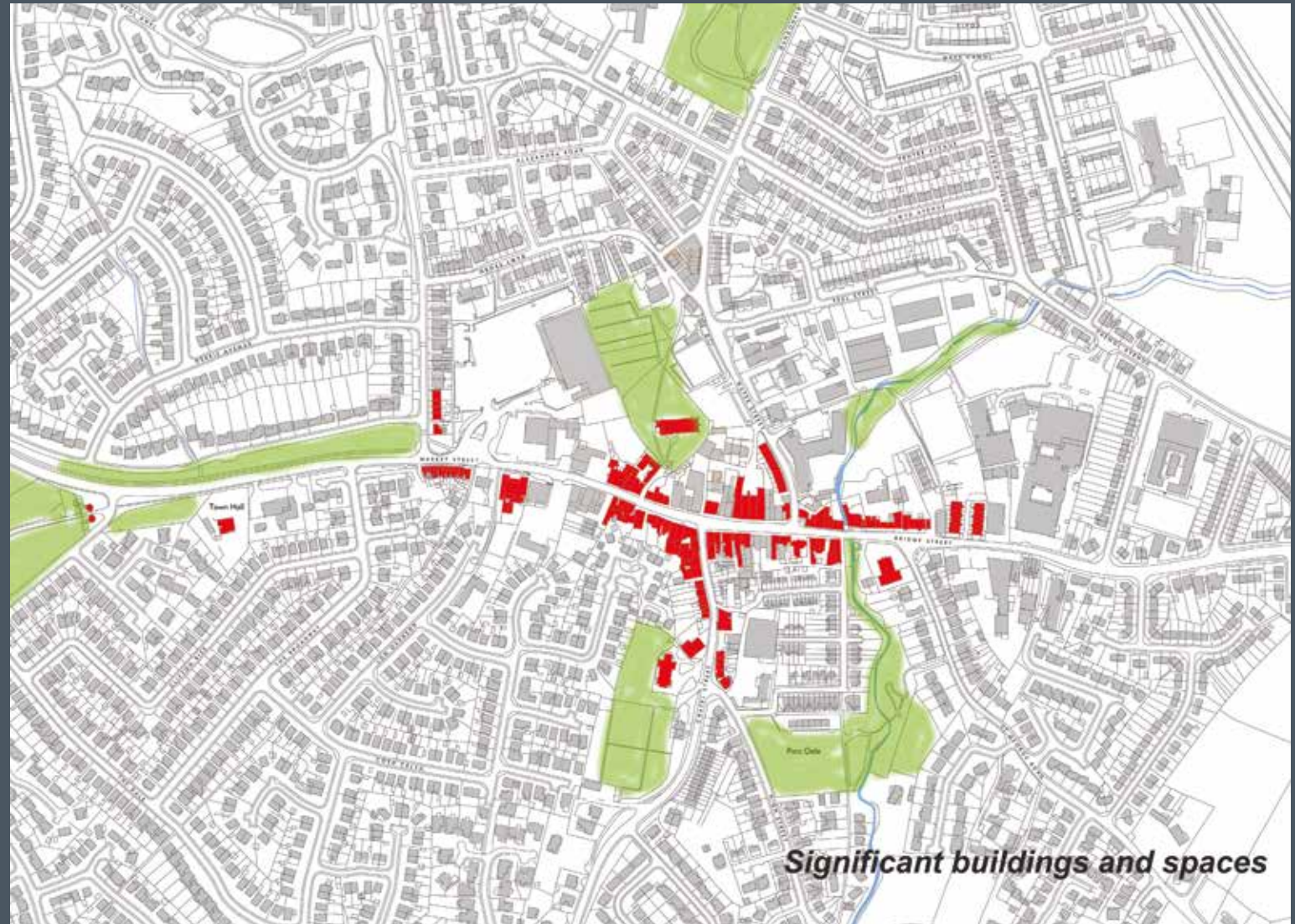
Figure 9 - Location of Key Buildings and Spaces

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Coastal Path and Cycle Route

15 minute walk

Links to the Coast and Railway

Links to the Hills

10 minute walk

The Walking Town

Figure 10 - Connectivity and Walkability

Road Networks/Pedestrian Spaces/Permeability/ Pedestrian Circuits

The 'Walking Town' plan shows the comparatively small scale of the town, with the concentric rings representing 10 and 15 minute walks from the centre. The ten-minute radius show that most of the town's residential areas are easily accessible on foot, mostly on easy gradients.

The fifteen-minute zone includes the seafront, railway station, and the edges of walking areas in the wooded hills to the south. Within these areas, there are no major threats to permeability, which is further enhanced by a somewhat disjointed network of pedestrian routes. Signposting could be improved to link the outside points of contact, such as the railway station, to the centre.

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Key Place Points

- Attractive place to live with easy access to beach, wooded hills and nearby attractions in Conwy, Llandudno and Rhyl

- Junctions in old centre cause a great deal of traffic congestion

- Coast and hills are within 15 minutes' walk of town centre and need to be made more of, in addition to the two substantial parks

- The character of the town centre can be subdivided into "The Castle Approach", "Edge of Town Retail Area", "Main Streets e.g. Market Street", "Core Open Space e.g. St Michael's Church" and "Greenspace e.g. Gele Brook adjacent Glanrafon"

- The majority of the town centre is densely packed with small shop units and the larger supermarket and car showroom, with a limited amount of residential units above shops

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Consult

4. What People Said – Community Consultation Event 1

In early September 2016, a number of opportunities to talk about key issues and priorities were made possible, specifically:

- A two-day open community consultation event held in the Youth and Community Centre on Market Street which over 100 people attended

- A structured session with Abergele Traders Association to understand their specific issues, ideas and how they wish to work in the future

- An online survey was completed by over 140 respondents

- Emails, correspondence and phone calls were also received

- The consultation sought views on how people rated the town centre, where people tended to shop and visit town centres and to understand those aspects that need to be addressed if the town was to have more appeal.

The chart overleaf shows the range of responses from people when asked why they don't regularly use Abergele town centre for shopping and other activities. Respondents tend to mainly visit other town centres and destinations for a better range of shopping, with better grocery, other services such as banks and facilities such as culture and leisure. Parking and a more attractive environment are also singled out as determinants in deciding where to shop which corresponds with the views from the business survey undertaken by People and Places Partnership.

Figure 11 - Consultation Promotional Poster

Figure 12 – Reasons for Not Visiting Abergele Town Centre (On-line Survey)

Category	Value
Ensure town centre groups continue to work together towards a common vision…	30
Investment in town centre events and festivals	35
Co-ordinated information on the town centre for local residents and visitors	14
Ensuring suitable parking is available and accessible to all town centre users	47
Broaden the evening time offer in terms of cafes, restaurants and bars	26
Attract notable gaps in town centre shops, food and drink and other services	56
Enhance the appearance of town centre shopfronts	52
Safeguard and maximise community assets e.g. library	38
Increase the amount of public realm e.g. squares	18
Improve the condition of footways and public space	17
Deal with current and future traffic in the town centre	75
Improve the announcement of the town centre to visitors	16
Improve links between Pensarn Beach and the town centre	8

Figure 13 - Rating of Town Centre Aspects

Aspect	Very poor	Poor	No opinion	Good	Very good
Information on the town centre, e.g. map, town guide, etc	15	46	27	9	1
Town centre events and activities	20	49	17	10	1
Other attractions e.g. Pentre Mawr Park, Pensarn Beach	6	12	10	60	10
Availability and cost of parking	17	38	12	22	9
Safety	2	13	21	53	9
Convenience - e.g. near to where you live	0	7	11	56	24
Ease of walking around the town centre	3	10	7	66	12
Availability and frequency of public transport	1	8	33	39	15
Road links	12	25	9	39	13
Cultural activities/events	12	46	27	11	2
Leisure facilities	4	29	18	42	5
Evening time offer e.g. restaurants, pubs and bar	10	32	19	32	5
Day-time cafes/restaurants	7	23	16	44	7
Customer service	3	14	20	49	11
Retail offer	20	53	9	15	1
Cleanliness	2	21	12	57	6
The physical appearance of the town centre	12	43	3	37	3

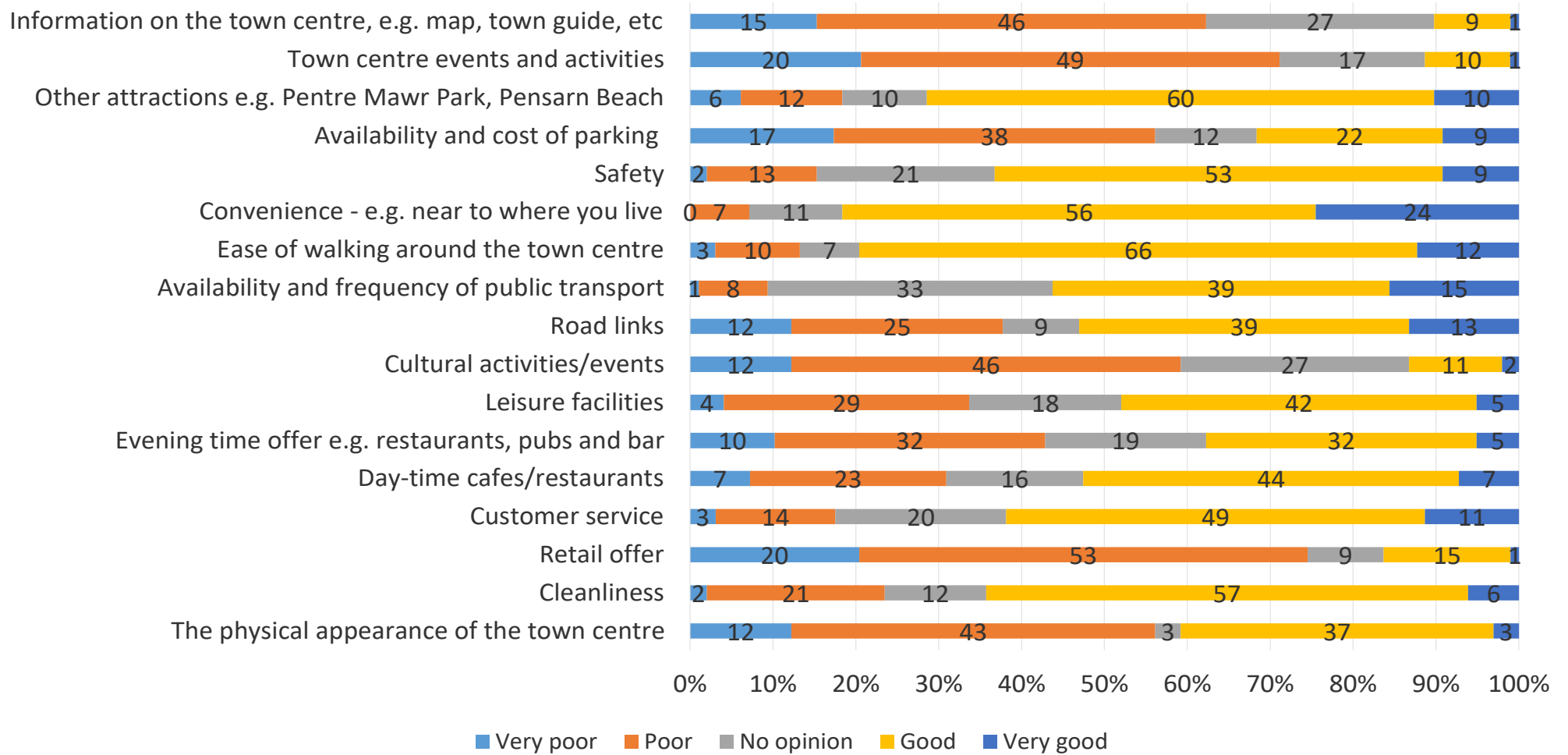**Figure 14 – Abergele Town Centre Now (word cloud)**

Figure 15 – Abergele Town Centre Future (word cloud)

The figure above shows the rating of various aspects of the town centre experience, with those areas of improvement focussed on the physical appearance, the retail offer (choice, quality and range), lack of cultural activities/events, town centre events and activities and a lack of information on the town centre. Those aspects that are being mostly good to very good include the town's convenience from where people live, availability and frequency of public transport, road links and customer service, amongst others.

When asked for a single word for how people sum up the town centre now, the following word cloud[1] highlights that people see the town as "tired, boring, sad and congested" with the only positive words identifying as being "friendly".

When asked about the future of the town centre, respondents were more responsive with "vibrant, hopeful and improving" being key words with less encouraging words of "uncertain, congested and dwindling" highlighted.

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1   Word clouds count the frequency of words and show more dominant words in a larger typeface

Figure 16 - Key Priorities for Abergele Town Centre
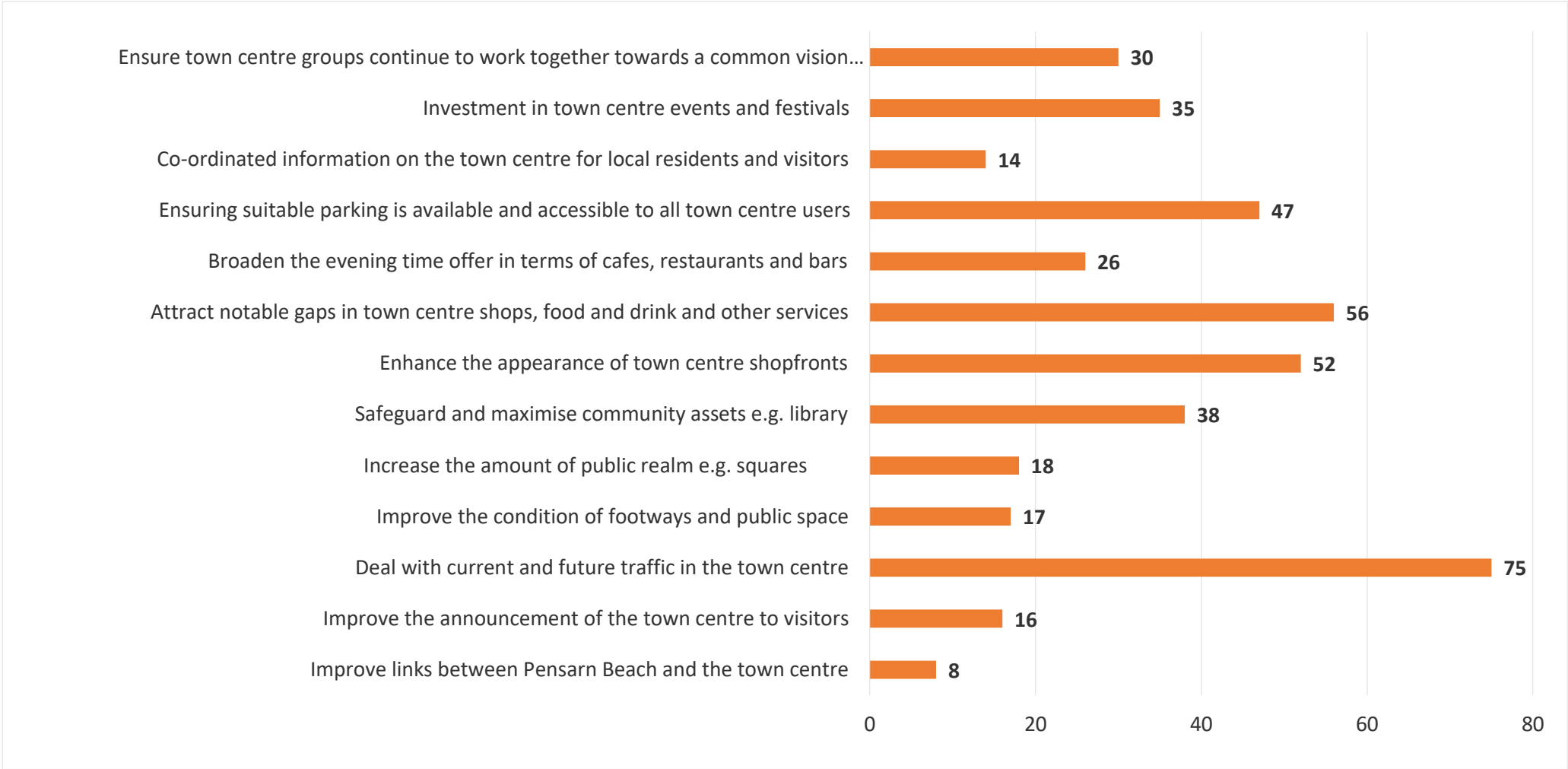
In looking towards future priorities, the chart above highlights that the main priority is to deal with current and future traffic in the town centre, followed by notable gaps in the town centre shops, food and drink, and other services. Linked to why people shop elsewhere other than Abergele town centre, the chart shows us that the appearance of the town centre followed by parking that is available and accessible is important. Community well-being is prioritised with the need to safeguard and maximise the use of community assets such as the library and youth/community centre, along with investment in events and festivals.

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Key Place Points

- The majority of the town centre is densely packed with small shop units and the larger supermarket and car showroom, with a limited amount of residential units above shops

- Quality and range of offer could be better but sites and buildings are limited to accommodate new retail/new uses; need to focus on Abergele as a local centre – quality, independent, service and community facilities

- Current emotions see the town as not going anywhere with environmental quality as the key issue

- Improved traffic management is a key priority by all; this can unlock physical barriers, appearance, movement, access to parking and reinforce convenience

- The community recognises that an asset led approach is key to its success – maximising what the town has and understanding needs of new and existing residents

- Future emotions see the character of place as having potential and as an attractor: quaint, bustling, vibrant which needs to be built on

- This engagement reinforces the understanding of the issues identified in the earlier surveys of businesses and town centre users of with traffic; parking and access; built heritage and appearance; a welcoming local service centre; retail mix and markets; leisure, events and the visitor economy again being prominent in the responses received.

Image 3 – Images from Consultation Event

5. SWOT Analysis

The following SWOT analysis provide a summary of our baseline assessment of the town centre.

Strengths	Opportunities
• Close to the coast and hills – diverse setting • Good connectivity with North Wales and beyond – road and rail • Compact town centre that is generally accessible from immediate neighbourhoods – "walkable town" • Some keynote buildings and heritage that underpin the character of the town centre • Key community facilities still in the town centre e.g. library • Significant amenity and recreation space close to the town centre that retains activity and community cohesion • Active community organisations that provide key services	• The Abergele Placemaking Plan process – a new focus • Emerging Abergele Traders Association that want to make a difference • New housing and its residents can bring activity, custom and new thinking • Chance to change role of town centre: not just retail • Window of opportunity with former Glyn Cinema building for sale • Need to be proactive and strategic with planning for schools, health and community infrastructure
Weaknesses	**Threats**
• Roads have outgrown the town centre with modern day traffic pressures • Poor pedestrian experience and lack of public realm • Vacancy rate of 15% is above the national average • Inconsistent shop frontages • Some missing shops, services and uses that people choose to visit other town centres for • No breadth to food and drink offer • Lack of a calendar of town centre events and festivals • Poor linkages between key attractors e.g. Tesco • Lack of a vision and knowing where the town needs to be • Perception from younger people that the town centre is not appealing	• New housing could be disconnected and not belong to Abergele community • Population growth will have implications for services and infrastructure • Close to other competing centres that are investing and present a better alternative

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6. Key Themes/Focus/Strategic Direction

In listening to members of the public, local businesses, stakeholder organisations and from independent physical assessments by the consultancy team, the following key themes were identified to form the focus of developing ideas and proposals for the town centre. These are grouped below by three separate but interlocking themes and the 'glue' of local leadership that will turn ideas in to reality:

Enterprise and the Economy

- Traffic; Parking and Access
- Retail Mix and Markets

Community and Services

- Welcoming Local Service Centre
- Leisure, Events and the Visitor Economy

Built and Natural Environment

- Heritage and Appearance

Local Leadership

- Planning and Delivery

The diagram alongside shows a cycle of unlocking opportunities for the town that is based on the foundation of *managing traffic and movement* which is a key factor to its environmental quality and experience. Looking at ways of diverting or promoting alternative ways of travel will enable *opportunities to improve public space and business frontages*. Linking green infrastructure and opening up pockets of urban space as well as enhancing under-used space is of priority to *increase use, footfall, dwell and overall town centre experience*. This experience isn't just about retail anymore but about creating social spaces, local enterprise, well-being activity, co-ordinated events and festivals and appealing to visitors through distinctive and memorable times. It also needs to be about evening activity as well as daytime. By stimulating activity, there is a need to *support existing businesses and facilities and encourage new investment* which are about local solutions with the public sector enabling the environment to do business, a culture of entrepreneurship and the role of community asset building. Finally, by adopting an approach that is Abergele centred that builds on physical and human capital, the town centre can *build a local identity that appeals to residents and visitors*.

Figure 17 - Logic of Managing Change in the Town Centre

Manage traffic and movement

Opportunities to improve public space, business frontages

Increase use, footfall, dwell and overall town centre experience

Support existing businesses and facilities and encourage new investment

Build a local identity that appeals to residents and visitors

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7. What People Said – Community Consultation Event 2

In late October 2016, a number of opportunities to view and talk about emerging proposals for the town centre were made available, specifically:

- A two-day open community consultation event held in the Youth and Community Centre on Market Street which over 140 people attended; this event showed a number of ideas for the town centre, focussed around a large map with a series of engaging illustrations of ideas and feedback surveys provided

- In conjunction with the open sessions, invites were sent out via the Abergele Placemaking Plan mailing list to attend more themed sessions about:

  - Abergele as a Hub for Community Life – children and young people;

  - Improving the Town Centre for Business;

  - Abergele as a Hub for Community Life – buildings and facilities;

  - Abergele as a Hub for Community Life – leisure, culture and events

  - An online survey was completed by respondents

  - Emails, correspondence and phone calls were also received

Public Comments

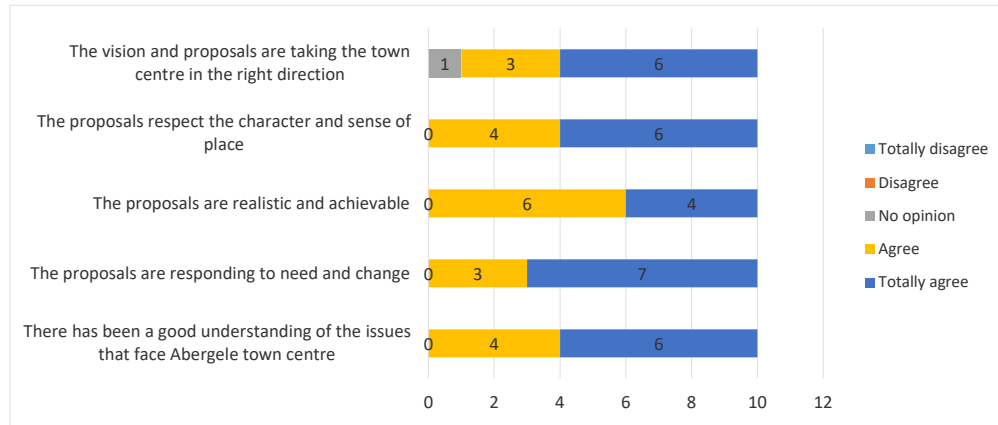A summary of the main areas of comments from the open community session included:

- Broad consensus on the need to bring life back into keynote buildings such as the former Glyn Cinema and maximise use at the Youth and Community Centre

- The need to tidy up and enhance first impressions and frontages into the town centre e.g. Bridge Street and CAB building adjacent to Glanrafon

- Develop events that celebrate the assets of the town e.g. the suggested Gele Ring walking festival

- The need to use green infrastructure for the well-being of the town centre e.g. growing space, sport clubs, dwell space

- The town centre needs an identity that it can promote that isn't just a badge but a story that underpins the experience

- Finally, traffic management is key to unlocking the prosperity of the town centre's future and is a number one priority for local residents.

The online survey did not receive the volume of response as the initial September survey but from those views submitted, there was general satisfaction with the content and direction of the action plan.

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Figure 18 - Rating of Proposed Action Plan (On-line Survey)

iv. Help organise specialist markets within the town such as a Christmas market and local craft/produce markets over the summer months

Longer-term possibilities in liaison with Conwy Council

i. Bridge Street Enhancement, incl. enhance building frontages along Bridge Street: improve junction with St George Road; introduce inner gateway feature with Gele Brook/Glanrafon: to create small civic open space. Central Market Street incl. open an Arcade link to the Bowling Green Car Park; use of artwork, lighting and introduction of active uses within the Glyn Cinema Arcade and onto street; explore feasibility of reuse of upper storey of former Town Hall/Glyn Cinema; improve footways and treatment of carriageway at Chapel Street to create a more pedestrian friendly space

ii. Old School/ Library/Car Park site including undertaking a feasibility study of the Youth and Community Centre, Library, former Health Centre and car park site that finds ways of unlocking new development and reuse of existing historical assets; transformation of car park in to a dual purpose space for weekly markets and events that should include the current staff car park; landscape design and redevelopment should co-ordinate with proposals for Bee Hotel side of Market Street

iii. Improving parking and traffic incl. better signs to and from car parks, esp. Water Street's Bowling Green car park; similar charging policy in Library and Water Street car parks; improve on-street parking provision and enforcement for quick turn-around; identify appropriate workers' parking in surrounding streets; identify pop-and-shop parking on Bridge Street; changing timing of traffic lights to make it easier for pedestrians to cross

Town Centre Businesses

Abergele Traders Association-led Potential 'Quick Wins'

The reemergence of the Abergele Traders Association coinciding with this study, provides the opportunity for an ongoing dialogue about issues and the chance to explore how businesses can collectively become involved in delivering "quick win" projects and helping to shape longer term infrastructural improvements. The following opportunities have begun with the Traders Association and its members.

i. Improve appearance of the town centre by initially encouraging landlords and businesses to make cosmetic improvements. A design guide commissioned by Conwy Council could follow and help determine more significant improvements

ii. Explore Abergele identity, branding and develop a possible shop local promotion (this is something that we can share other examples of)

iii. Design and construct orientation panels for key gateway sites such as car parks

Community

In order to develop a consensus on community-based projects and their development, the recent engagement process came-up with the following sequence as steps for quickly developing capacity by creating an 'Abergele Community Forum'.

i. Compile a contact list for representatives of organisations

ii. Invite representatives to a first meeting hosted jointly by the Town Council and Itaca to discuss coordinated involvement in the Placemaking process and the function of a Forum more widely

iii. Develop suitable mechanisms for communicating between groups, to strategic bodies and with the wider public

iv. Seek representation of the Forum at the Placemaking Programme Board alongside existing representation by the Town Council

v. Undertake an audit of existing community buildings, facilities, use and demand

vi. Seek to agree involvement and responsibility for project delivery as appropriate

Achieve cohesion and strengthen communities of interest within Abergele through communication and raising awareness

Investment in and support community resources will play a key role in establishing a new and motivated community

Brand the town as either a place rich in history or the gateway to Snowdonia

Invest in and support community resources will play a key role in establishing a new and motivated community

Create a town centre which is pedestrian friendly

Tackling traffic is main priority in making progress

Vision & Plan

8. Town Centre Vision

Between coast and hills, Abergele is known as a town centre community that has a heart and is memorable for a diversity of activities taking place as well as base to explore from

Belonging

- Provide local facilities for existing and future residents that bring about well-being

- Ensure amenity and recreation provision is linked physically to the town centre

- To provide cultural and learning opportunities for all

- Develop linkages between the coast, town centre and hills that enables mobility for work, rest and play

- Create a town centre that is easy to get around

- Embrace technology that directs people to spend time and money in Abergele businesses

Linking

Vibrancy

- Create an environment that stimulates activity and local growth

- Animate spaces with markets, events and social opportunities

- Develop an identity and a story that people want to be part of

- Provide a place that has an economic, social and cultural heart

- Create spaces for inter-generational activity

- Develop a diversity of events and festivals, day and night

- Use local assets that build a story and human activity within the town centre

Prospering

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Aims & Objectives

- We need to manage traffic in order to create a quality environment that is distinctively Abergele

- We need to ensure Abergele is convenient and appeals to existing and future residents

- We need to provide local services within that appeals to young and old, now and in the future

- We need to encourage new enterprise and investment

- We need to maximise Abergele's location between the coast and hills and build this into town centre experience

- We need to celebrate its sense of heritage, arts and culture to unlock diversity and activity

- We need to develop a cross community partnership to deliver small and big ideas for the town centre

9. Town Centre Action Plan

The Plan

The Town Centre Action Plan is a response to the key findings from desktop and physical assessments of the town centre, underpinned by the Placemaking Plan team and listening to views from the community and stakeholder organisations. This has helped shape the focus, tone and type of actions that Abergele town centre needs to ensure its vibrancy and sustainability over the next 15 years.

*The Plan is structured in the following way:*

Big Ideas

These are ideas and proposals that require conversations, development and co-ordination through a partnership approach that will take time and resourcing. They are ideas that aren't just about bricks and mortar but about people and their relationship to streets, public spaces, buildings and other local assets. These proposals are shown across the town centre with a focus on the eastern edge incorporating the South-East development site, the western edge as you approach from Gwrych Castle and finally the central area of the town centre around Market Street. These proposals are a mixture of traffic management, public realm, keynote buildings, enhanced pedestrian routes, amongst other interventions.

Small Steps

Big ideas can take time to become reality, so small steps are needed to ensure the Vision and Action Plan is about "action" and making a difference. There are some active organisations in Abergele that are focussing activity and investment in the town centre, but at times it can appear disjointed and lacking co-ordination. A series of smaller projects and initiatives and therefore proposed that include supporting town centre activities, creating a tidy and attractive town, improvements to parking and finally working in partnership.

Figure 19 –Location of Town Centre Proposals
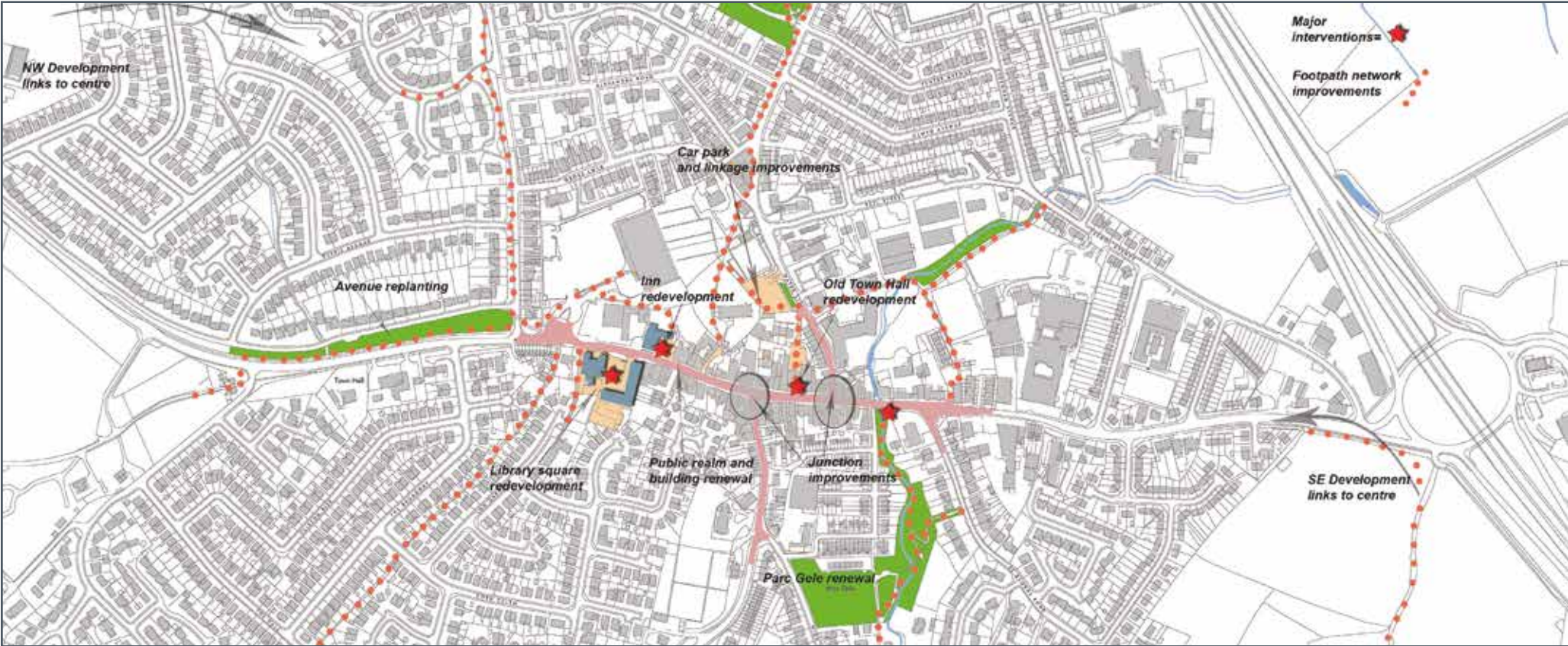
Managing Traffic

Dealing with current and future traffic in the town centre is identified as the number one priority for local residents through the community consultation which has centred around the volume of traffic and how this is managed, specifically through the junctions on Bridge Street, Water Street, Market Street and Chapel Street.

This action plan does propose a number of actions that are about enhancing the pedestrian experience, identifying opportunities for opening up public space and increasing pavement frontages, in addition to town centre users easily finding both on and off street parking. In addition, there is also a need to enhance cycling and walking routes across the town centre with improved links and signage to NCR5.

For the town centre to become more vibrant, prosperous and have better linkages, Conwy County Borough Council needs to undertake a town wide transport assessment.

This assessment needs to include:

- An understanding of traffic behaviour: types of vehicles, their origin and destination

- An assessment of the highway network: strategic and local highways, their present and future capacity

- Analysis of ideas/proposals that have been developed by the Council and identified through this Placemaking Plan process:

  ○ Explore transport plan for the South-Eastern development site: encourage walking, cycling and use of public transport linkages

  ○ Would gateway and traffic calming features change driver behaviour and non-essential trips through the town centre?

○ Will adjustments to the traffic lights on Market Street have a positive benefit on traffic flow and distribution of vehicles?

○ Model designs e.g. reintroduce two lanes on Market Street (eastbound)

○ Would the introduction of a gyratory system generate a positive cost-benefit for the town centre?

An integrated approach would help understand long term plans and identify some short term practical solutions.

Figure 20 - Framework for Developing Traffic Management Proposals

Possible Gyratory system

'Gateway'

'Gateway'

Traffic signal improvements

Possible Gyratory system

Pedestrian links

Pedestrian links

Development Site road links
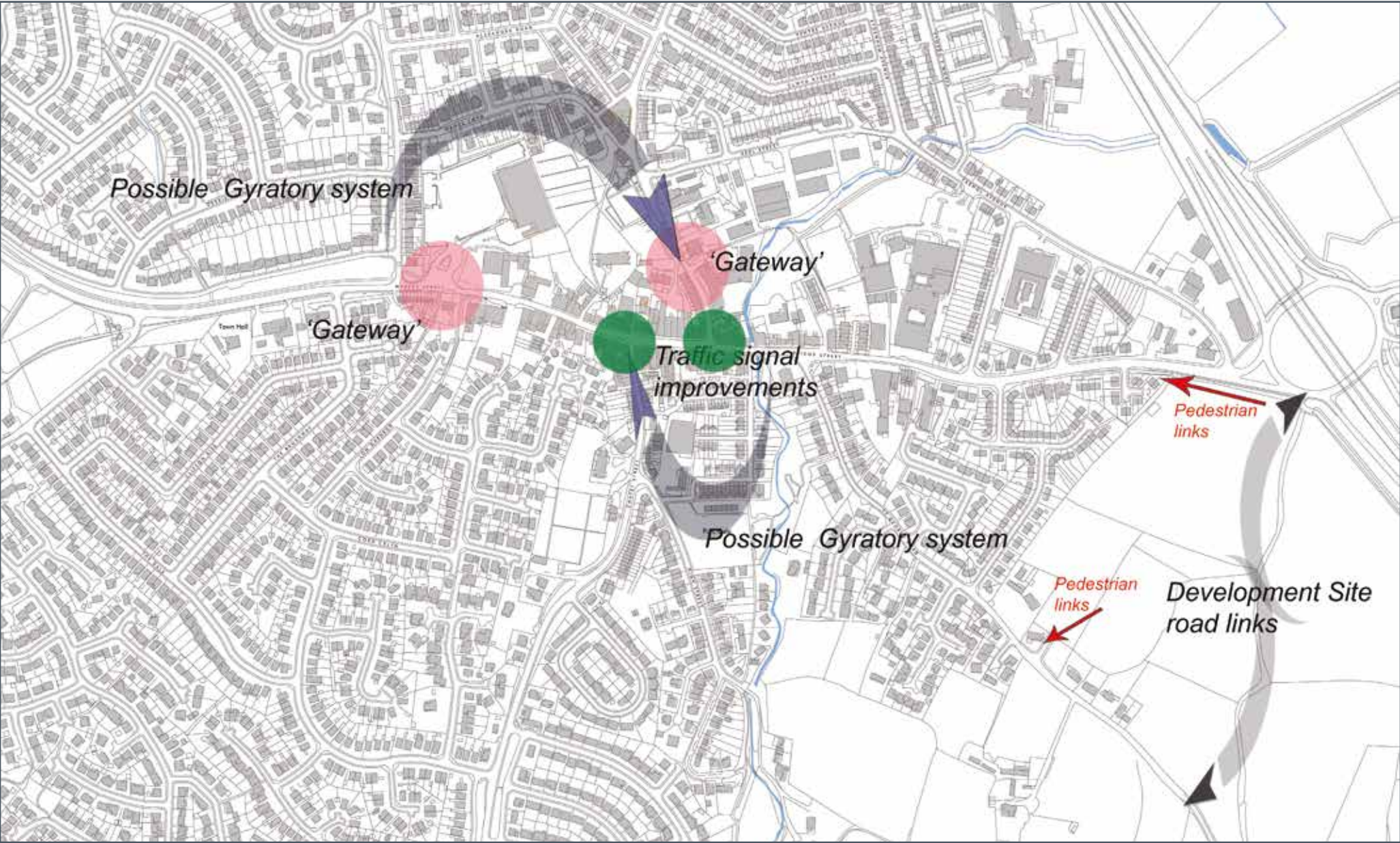
Big Ideas

Eastern Area
Key Issues

- Need to link proposed SE development site to town centre in order to maintain sense of community and prevent the leakage of economic and social activity

- Need to provide alternative means of transport to and from town centre due to limited capacity of highways

- Lack of announcement of the town centre and limited opportunities to connect into Gele Park and leisure centre for well-being and recreational uses

Proposals
A. South East Development Site

i. Provision of pedestrian/cycle linkages at South East LDP Development Site through Bryn Hyfryrd Grove, St George Road and Rhuddlan Road

ii. Public transport services along the new link road into the town centre that are frequent and allow for users

iii. Limit the size of the proposed retail convenience store to encourage links to the town centre

iv. Improvements to traffic lights and associated monitoring in the town centre during the first phase of the LDP development

B. Rhuddlan Road Improvements

i. Make improvements to Rhuddlan Road to encourage cycling and walking so that they have a greater priority

ii. Announce the town centre to users through advanced and directional signage and introduction of outer gateway features

C. Bridge Street Enhancement

i. Enhance building frontages along Bridge Street: elevations, signage, pavements frontages, lighting columns, etc.

ii. Improve junction with St George Road: treatment of carriageway, informal pedestrian crossing points, landscaping, town centre signage

iii. Introduce inner gateway feature with Glanrafon: remove existing CAB building (relocate provision to library site and proposed integrated building), create small civic open space next to Brook and a link to Park through bridges and boardwalks, signage and interpretation onto footpaths following the course of the River Gele and Tower Hill

iv. Enhance pedestrian links to Leisure Centre and School site via Brook

v. Enhance gable trade murals/signage to add colour and animation

D. Gele Park

i. Provide a focus in Gele Park on earthwork bowl/amphitheatre as an informal events space: lunchtime, start for guided town walks, local arts and cultural performances, pop up space for community

ii. Provide a community growing space in the underused south west corner of Park that is accessible and is linked to community enterprises, local markets, "soup" type networks

iii. Review Trim Trail and reorganise area

iv. Continuity signage for walks out to hills and course of the river
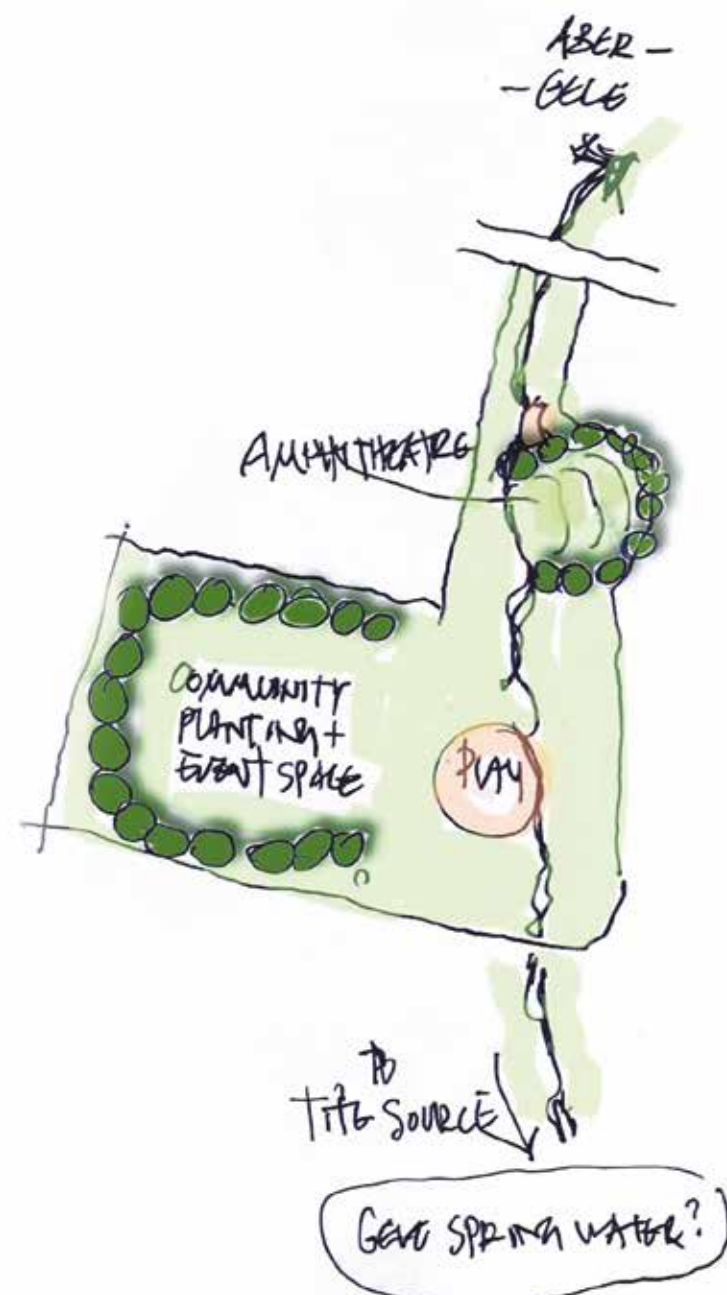
Western Area

Key Issues

- First impressions are of an edge of centre retail park: lots of vertical clutter, large expanse of tarmac but strong focal points e.g. church

- Need to announce key building groups and their purpose

E. Market Street Western Gateway

i. Enhance inner gateway at Sea Road/Market Street/ Tesco approach: decluttering/ rationalise signage, carriageway treatment, better linkages across the road and introducing pedestrian priority area

F. Gwrych Castle Approach

i. Introduce tree planting on south side of Market Street between Gwrych Castle to re-enforce avenue approach
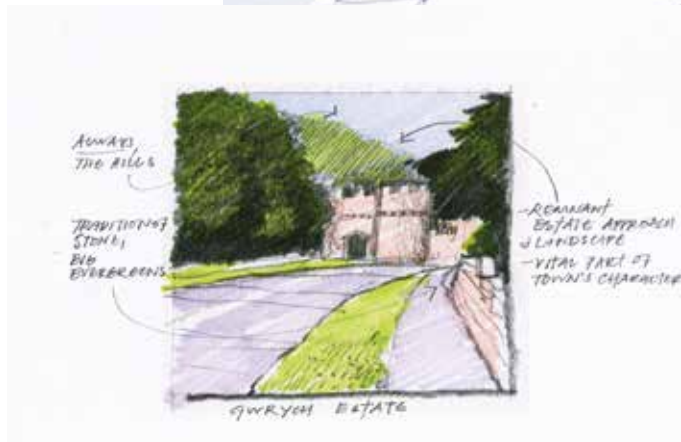
Central Area

Key Issues

- Traffic is dominating pedestrian experience

- Poor commercial frontages

- Lack of public space and places to dwell, seating and planting

- Some key community buildings that are in a poor condition and require refurbishment or integration into a new building

- Poor pedestrian linkages from Tesco

- Lack of way-marking and maps across the town centre

- Vacant buildings at key arrival points – poor first impressions

- Some distinctive businesses let down by neighbouring properties

- No space for regular town centre events

Labels on map: Car park and linkage improvements; replanting; Inn redevelopment; Old Town Hall redevelopment; Library square redevelopment; Public realm and building renewal; Junction improvements; Parc Gele renewal / Parc Gele

CHRISJONES
REGENERATION
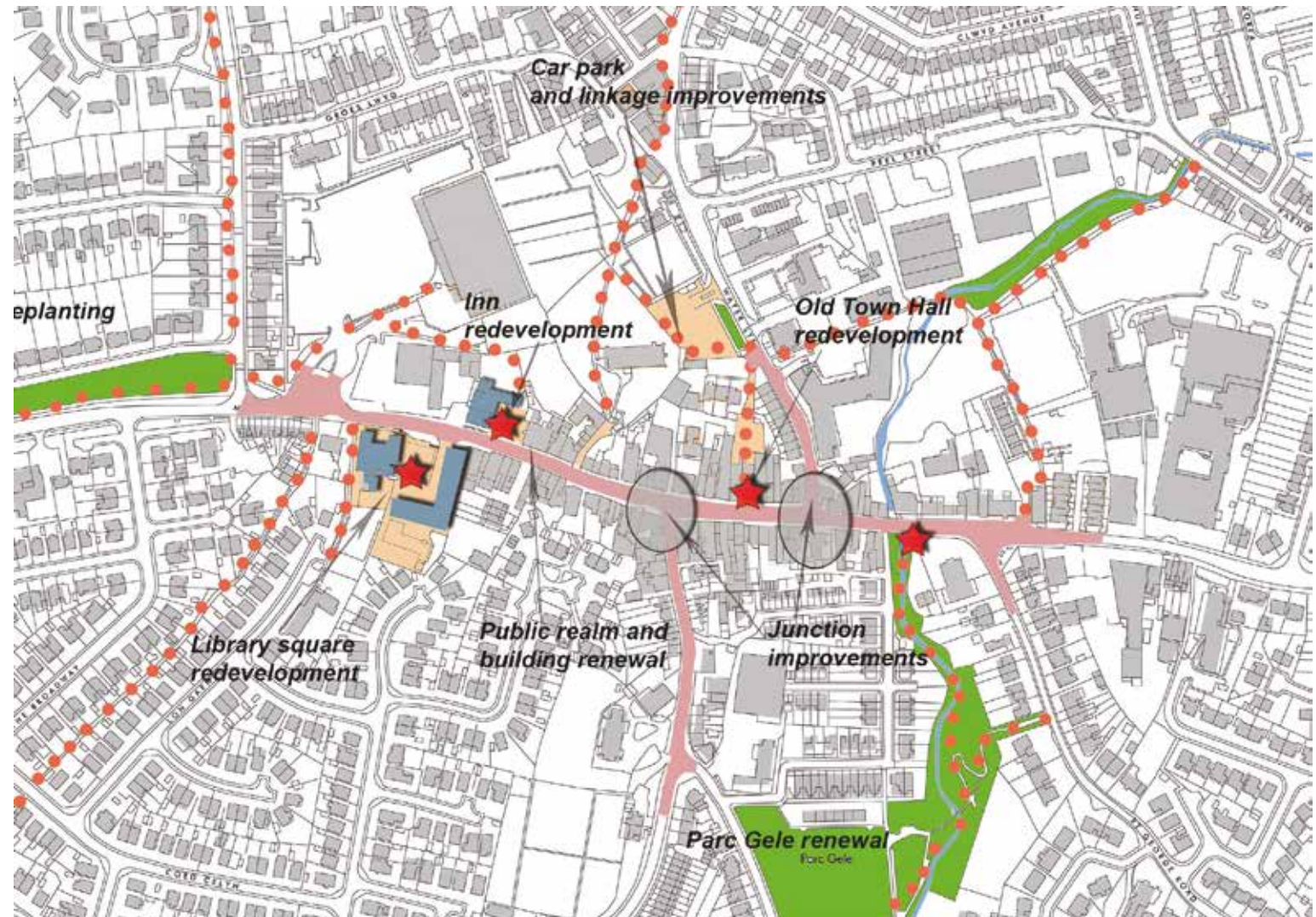
G. Central Market Street

i. Reopen an Arcade link to rear service yard and onwards to Bowling Green Car park; use of artwork, lighting and introduction of active uses within the Arcade and onto Market street

ii. Explore feasibility of reuse of upper storey of former Town Hall/ Glyn Cinema; use and activity could include:

    a. Creative enterprise space

    b. Flexible community space: meeting space, community cinema, gallery, live music venue etc.

    c. Residential flats

iii. Rear courtyard developed as a space for pop up markets, events and provide an active link to Water Street cark park

iv. Repave main carriageway e.g. block-work to signal centre of town centre and pedestrian environment

THE OLD TOWN HALL

OLD TOWN HALL
CHAMBER - EVENTS?
AUDITORIUM?

CHURCHYARD FOOTPATH

LINK TO CAR PARK

YARD - CAR PARK
- MARKETS

PASSAGE THROUGH ARCADE/
GROUND FLOOR RETAIL
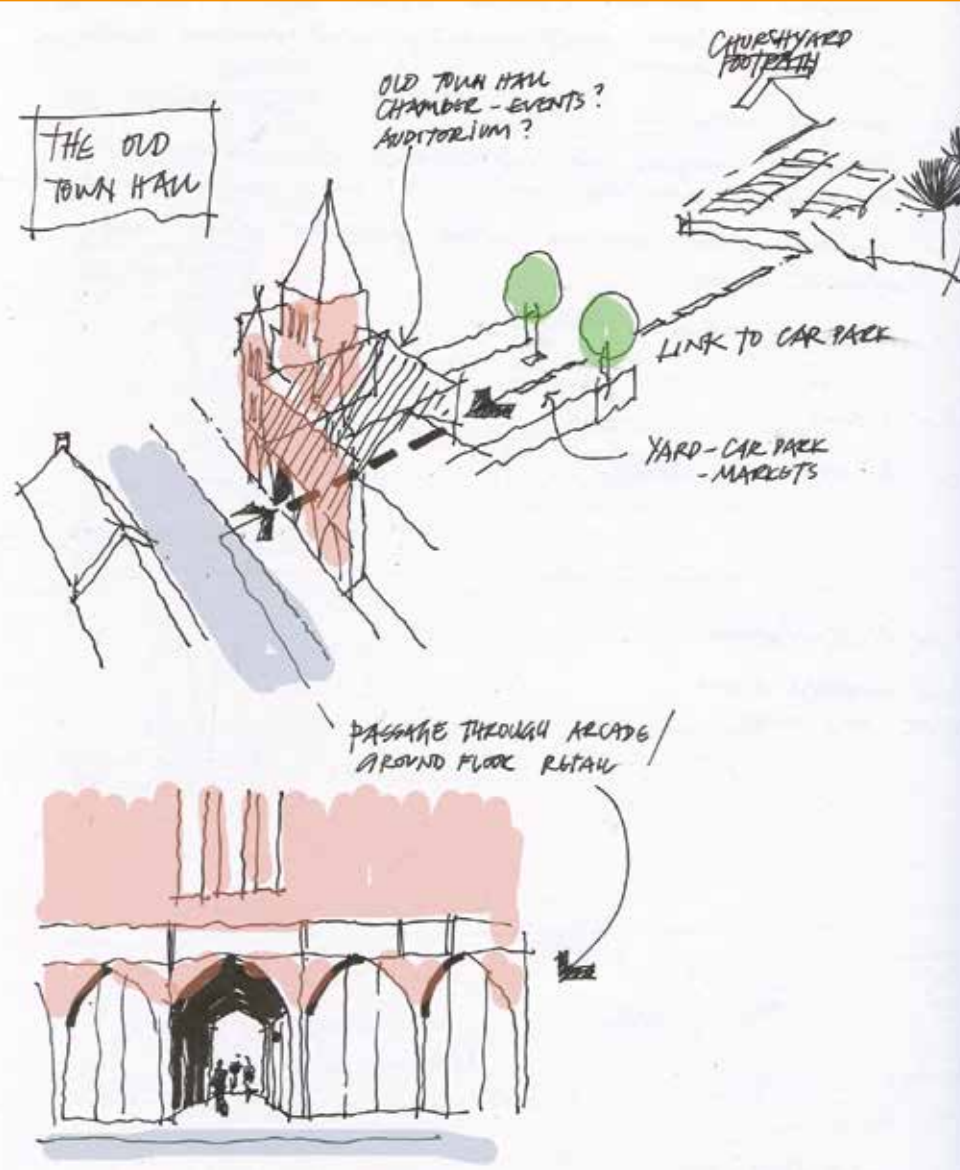
v. Look at ways of extending pavement frontages and re-enforce convenience of on-street parking and places to dwell including seating

vi. Enhance building frontages along Market Street: ground and upper storey elevations, use of a town palette, signage, use of canopies, etc.

vii. Improve footways and treatment of carriageway at Chapel Street to create a more pedestrian friendly space that maintains same materials and palette as Market Street/ Bridge Street enhancement

viii. Enhance Bowling Green car park:

a. Improve pedestrian links to town centre from southern edge onto proposed link through Market Street arcade and through St. Michael's Church area

b. Explore whether more parking spaces could be created

H. Bee Hotel/Stable Block/Tesco Linkage

i. Enhance external appearance of Bee Hotel as a keynote building on western entrance and present it as a destination place for accommodation and food/drink

ii. Improve immediate frontage of Bee Hotel and adjoining parking area so that it contributes to street scene and announces the Bee Hotel better

iii. Refurbish former stable block and introduce complementary uses as a courtyard development for small independent retail, café, holiday accommodation etc.

iv. Enhance area of land to rear of former stable block so that a safer and more legible route is developed for pedestrians that are moving between Tesco and the town centre
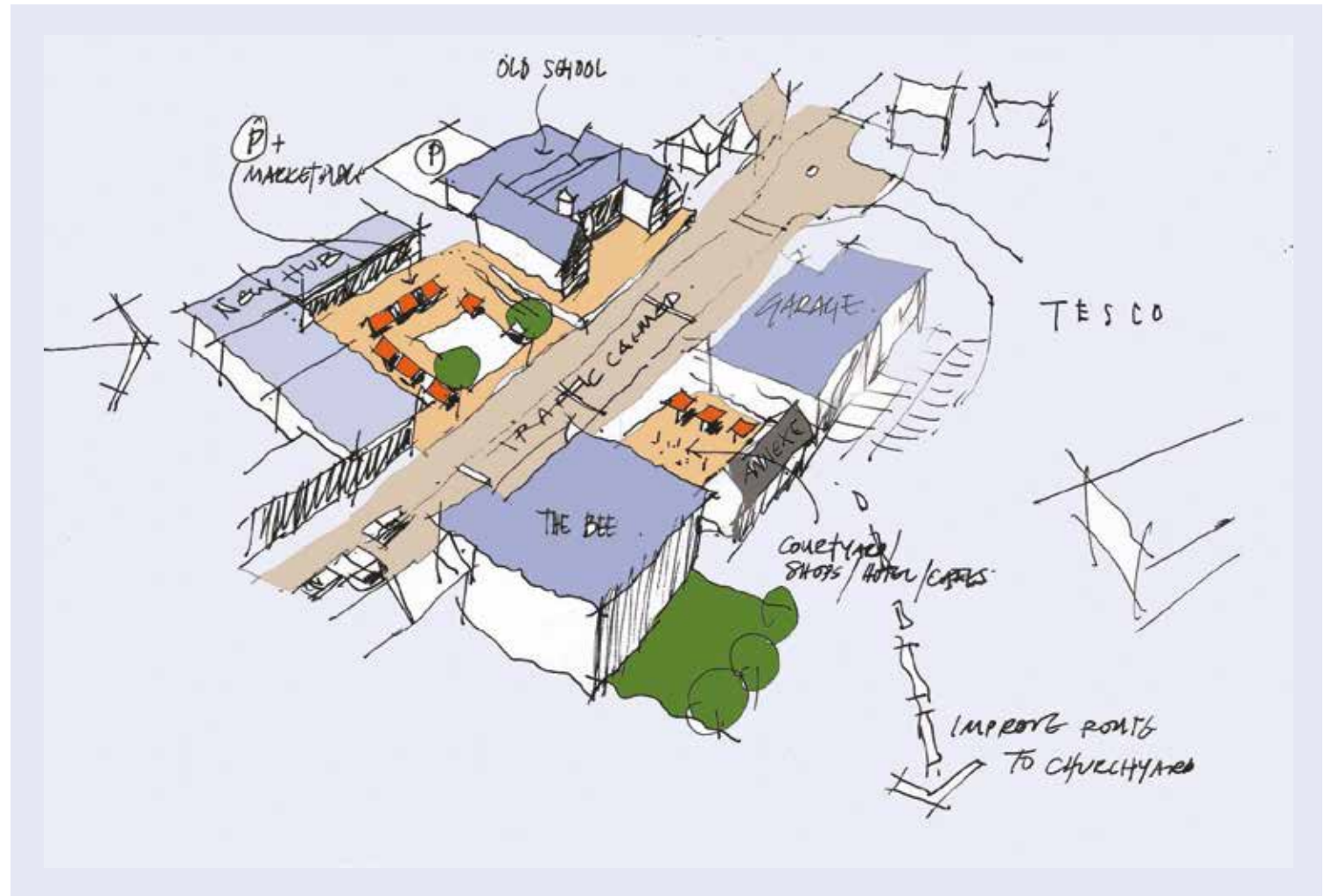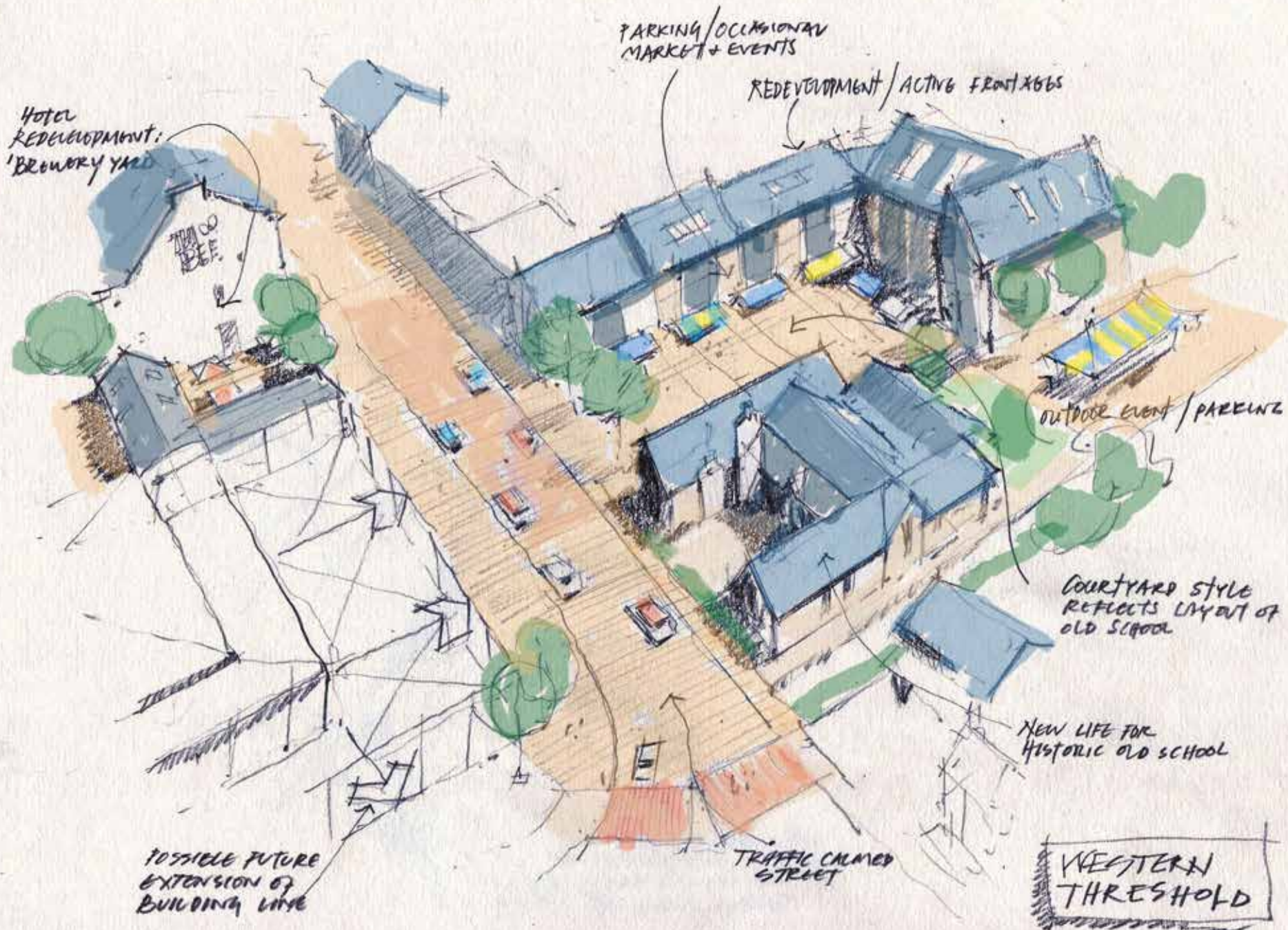
I. Old School/ Library/Car Park site

i. To explore retention of community meeting space that is presently provided within the existing Youth and Community Centre elsewhere within the town centre so that local residents socialise, stay healthy and develop skills/interest

ii. To replace the existing library with a 21st century facility that integrates with other community needs

iii. To undertake a feasibility study of the Youth and Community Centre, Library, former Health Centre and car park site that finds ways of unlocking new development and reuse of existing historical assets: study should explore:

a. How existing provision can be accommodated within the town centre e.g. arts groups, mothers and toddlers, etc.

b. Future use for the Youth and Community Centre could include an arts and crafts centre including gallery, studio space, retail and coffee shop, small enterprise units, in addition to an activity hub e.g. bike hire, outdoor shop as well as residential uses

c. The integration of community uses into a hub type building that may include a new library, one stop shop for Conwy Council/Police/Health Board, community resource, meeting room space, enterprise units, retail and active food and drink uses

iv. The study should also look at how the car park is maintained for shoppers but also is a dual-purpose space for weekly markets and events and should include the Council employee car park to the rear of the Youth and Community Centre

v. Landscape design and redevelopment should co-ordinate with proposals for Bee Hotel side of Market Street

PARKING/OCCASIONAL MARKET & EVENTS

REDEVELOPMENT/ACTIVE FRONTAGES

HOTEL REDEVELOPMENT: 'BREWERY YARD'

OUTDOOR EVENT/PARKING

COURTYARD STYLE REFLECTS LAYOUT OF OLD SCHOOL

NEW LIFE FOR HISTORIC OLD SCHOOL

POSSIBLE FUTURE EXTENSION OF BUILDING LINE

TRAFFIC CALMED STREET

WESTERN THRESHOLD

Other Areas of the Town

Key Issues

- Pentre Mawr Park is a key link space between the coast and the town centre, that has a role for sports, activity, events and festivals – year round

- The streetscene within the town centre is poor at key junctions and frontages creating a sense of disinvestment and lack of continuity in shop windows and in the quality and use of upper storeys

- Street furniture and signage lacks co-ordination and relationship to the town centre

J. Pentre Mawr Park

i. Improve signage to Pentre Mawr Park from Dundonald Avenue for first time visitors

ii. Allocate parking as a park and walk provision to town centre with linkages through Sea Road or via Water St

iii. Develop for community and regional events and festivals that is linked into town centre offer

iv. Toilet provision for sports and recreational users

B. General Streetscene Improvements

i. Target commercial frontages through a co-ordinated design manual

ii. Adopt a standard suite for street furniture for the town centre

iii. Develop an integrated signage system that links vehicular, pedestrian and cycling modes for advanced, directional and informative/interpretation signage that way finds within the town centre and connects into more rural and coastal trails
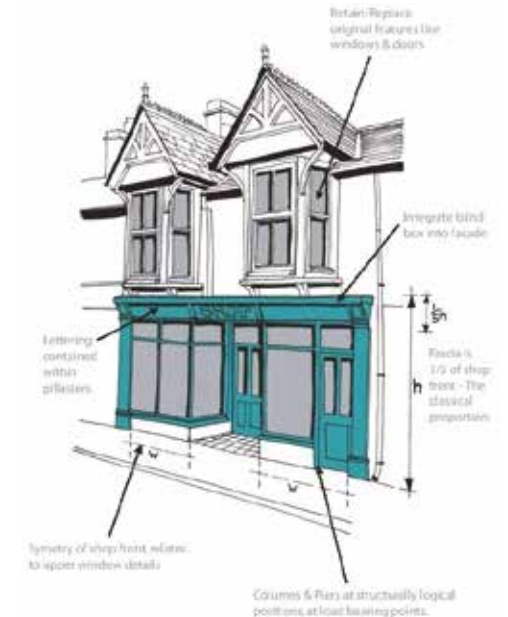
L. Pensarn

i.   Establish Pensarn Train station as coastal hub for activity:

    a. Bike hire, visitor information point, and signs visitors to Abergele via Sea Road and onto town centre;

    b. Potential to link in with feasibility study for Youth and Community Centre Building as dual hub run by a community enterprise

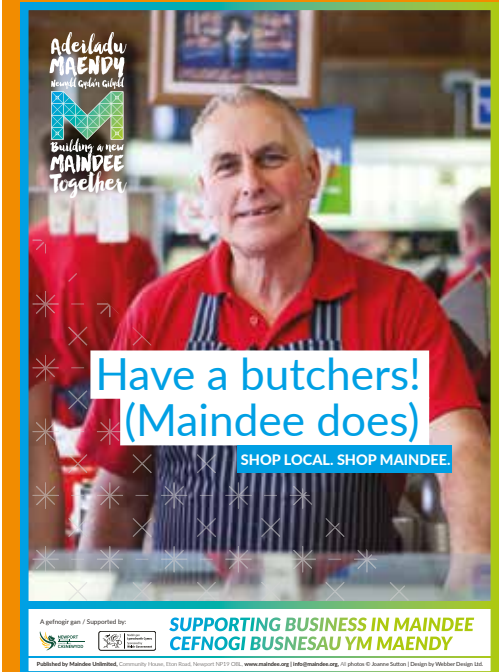   c. Develop a landmark piece of sculpture that is a way-marker and milestone device for Abergele and Pensarn

Small Steps

Key Issues

- The town centre needs to discover its identity that reflects its future role and function

- The Abergele Traders Association needs support in becoming a coherent and cohesive organisation that promotes the town centre along with key partners

- The town centre needs to link itself into new business opportunities through the future housing development

- There is a need to stimulate new businesses in seeing the potential in Abergele town centre through events and "meanwhile" type activity

A. Support Town Centre Businesses

i.   Develop a brand/identity for the town centre that supports the need to shop/eat/buy local in the town centre; this is not just about a logo but about the town's personality, its story and set of values that key stakeholders own

ii.   Roll out a campaign with material such as a buy local guide, posters, promotions, taster events, new town centre maps, amongst other initiatives

iii. Develop a parallel digital campaign for Abergele town centre to include a website, use of social media, web promotion and explore feasibility of Abergele "local" card that could be voucher based or explore a local currency that would direct activity and local expenditure

iv.   Engage in Small Business Saturday – December 3rd; the annual event provides a focus and a spotlight on independent businesses

v.   Develop a new homeowner pack that raises awareness of Abergele town centre to new residents in conjunction with local estate agents and residential developers

vi.   Develop tester/starter business events through outdoor markets, pop ups in vacant buildings

Have a butchers!
(Maindee does)

SHOP LOCAL. SHOP MAINDEE.

SUPPORTING BUSINESS IN MAINDEE
CEFNOGI BUSNESAU YM MAENDY

SH♥P LOCAL

B. Events and Activities

i.   Develop a town centre events programme between the Abergele Traders Association, Town Council and community organisations. Ideas to include:

a.   Events linked to street markets and on-street activities

b.   Outdoor concerts, cinema (cycled powered), events in Pentre Mawr Park

c.   Consider a large sporting event that has a re-gional pull e.g. duathlon using Park and outlying countryside

d.   Gele Park – small plays, storytelling, guided walks

e.   Community walking or cycling festival – "Gele Ring" – linked to town centre – coast to hills – local charity fundraiser

f.   Music, street theatre and busking in front of Community Centre

g.   Series of concerts and 'gigs' in local churches, chapels, pubs and public parks

C. Attracting New Businesses

i.   Organise regular outdoor markets promoting local produce and arts/crafts supported by weekly 'click-and-collect' or food box scheme

ii. Develop tester/starter business events through pop-up shops, live music, gallery space in vacant buildings

iii. Work with landlords to fill gaps in retail offer to diversify and broaden appeal to young people and new residents

D. Creating a Tidy and Attractive Town

i.   Work with local businesses and landlords to repaint shop fronts and make minor repairs

ii. Continue to give priority to litter picking and organise quarterly rubbish collections, shrub planting, hanging baskets, railing painting etc.

iii. Themed window dressing for St David's Day, Halloween, Christmas etc.

E. Improving Parking and Traffic

i.   Better directional signs to and from car parks, especially from Water Street

ii.   Clarify interpretation of new signs about enforcement in Tesco car park, including extensions for community events

iii. Discuss with Conwy Council and Health Trust as to whether clinic car park can be made available in evenings and weekends

iv. Similar charging policy in Library and Bowling Green car parks

v.   Improve on-street parking provision and enforcement for quick turn-around of use

vi. Identify appropriate workers' parking in surrounding streets that are accessible

vii. Identify pop-and-shop parking on Bridge Street including outside St Pauls Methodist Chapel (by negotiation)

viii. Changing timing of traffic lights to make it easier for pedestrians to cross at junction Market Street and Water Street

F. Working in Partnership

i.   Create a partnership involving the, Town Council, Abergele Traders Association, local community groups and Conwy County Borough Council to coordinate and deliver a programme of planned improvements and activities in Abergele town centre.

10 Actions, Fit, Priorities & Funding

Action Table Summary – Big Ideas

Area	Theme	Proposal	Cost	Lead Enabler	TIMESCALE		
	+				2017-2020	2020-2025	2025+
Eastern Area	BNE	A. South East Development Site	£££	Conwy CBC/Housing Developer		■	■
	BNE	B. Rhuddlan Rd Improvements	££	Conwy CBC		■	
		C. Bridge Street Enhancements					
	BNE	a. Enhance Building Frontages	££	Private Sector/Grant	■	■	
	BNE	b. St George Rd junction improvement	££	Conwy CBC	■		
	BNE	c. Inner gateways feature, civic space, links to Gele Park	££	Conwy CBC/Grant/Community	■		
	BNE	d. Enhance pedestrian links to leisure centre	£	Conwy CBC	■		
	BNE	e. Enhance gables with trade murals and signage	£	Private Sector/Conwy CBC	■		
	CS	D. Gele Park	£	Conwy CBC/Community	■		
Eastern Area	BNE	E. Market Street Gateway	£	Conwy CBC/Landowners	■		
	BNE	F. Gwyrch Castle Approach	£	Conwy CBC	■		

Themes: EE – Enterprise and the Economy | CS – Community Services | BNE – Built and Natural Environment | LL – Local Leadership

CHRISJONES REGENERATION

Area	Theme	Proposal	Cost	Lead Enabler	TIMESCALE		
					2017-2020	2020-2025	2025+
Central Area	BNE EE-CS	G. Central Market Street	£				
	BNE	a. Glyn Cinema building	££	Conwy CBC/RSL/Private/Community	■	■	
	BNE-EE	b. Carriageway/footway enhancements	£££	Conwy CBC	■	■	
	BNE	a. Enhance building frontages	££	Private Sector/Grant	■	■	
	BNE	b. Enhance Water Street car park	£	Conwy CBC/Community		■	
Central Area	BNE-EE	H. Bee Hotel/Stable Block/Tesco Linkage	££	Private Sector/Grant	■		
	CS	I. Old School/Library/Car Park site	£££	Conwy CBC/Grant/Private sector/Community	■	■	
Other Areas	CS	J. Pentre Mawr Park	£	Conwy CBC/Town Council/Community	■		
		K. General Streetscene Improvements					
	BNE-EE	a. Target commercial frontages	£	Private sector/Grant	■		
	BNE	b. Adopt a standard suite for street furniture	£	Conwy CBC/Town Council	■		
	BNE	c. Develop an integrated signage system	£	Conwy CBC/Town Council	■		
	EE	L. Pensarn	£	Community Enterprise	■		

Themes: EE – Enterprise and the Economy | CS – Community Services | BNE – Built and Natural Environment | LL – Local Leadership

Action Table Summary – Small Steps

Area	Theme[2]	Proposal	Cost	Lead Enabler	Timescale 2017-2020	Timescale 2020-2025	Timescale 2025+
Small Steps		A. Support Town Centre Businesses					
	EE	a. Develop a town centre brand and roll out campaign	£	ATA/ATC/Conwy CBC	■		
	EE	b. Develop digital and print material e.g. homeowner packs	£	ATA/ATC/Conwy CBC	■		
	EE	c. Develop tester/starter business events	£	ATA/ATC/Conwy CBC	■		
	EE-CS	B. Events and Activities	£	ATA/ATC/Conwy CBC	■		
	EE	C. Attracting New Businesses	£	ATA/ATC/Conwy CBC	■		
	CS	D. Creating a Tidy and Attractive Town	££	Private Sector/ATA/ ATC	■		
	BNE	E. Improving Parking and Traffic	££	Conwy CBC/ATA/ ATC	■	■	

Themes: EE – Enterprise and the Economy | CS – Community Services | BNE – Built and Natural Environment | LL – Local Leadership

Local Leadership and Delivery

In a town regeneration initiative, such as this; half of the proposals depend on close involvement of the local authority and other strategic bodies; half can be achieved by local organisations taking the lead in project development and delivery.

The Abergele Placemaking Plan and this study, is being undertaken in a way that combines strategic level planning led by Conwy County Borough Council and in-depth engagement with organisations and individuals at the local level. This is being achieved in a way that seeks to coordinate activity through the Placemaking Plan and Programme Board and builds local capacity by strengthening the role of local organisations.

The Abergele Traders Association is taking the lead in bringing businesses together to focus on the town centre economy; Abergele Town Council and Itaca as an established community enterprise, have begun to bring community-based groups together to consider how social issues might be addressed. Environmental issues, such as the quality of the streetscape and open spaces in Abergele, could be considered as cross-cutting issues linking both these groupings.

As Placemaking proceeds it will be important to build on this approach to develop a delivery model that evolves the role of the Programme Board and these local, themed-based groupings. Such a model for project development and delivery should ensure:

- Creating local capacity to deliver projects, especially 'quick wins'

- Integrating strategic thinking and solutions between council services

- Fund raising and financial management at the appropriate level to maximise resources

- Coordinating communications between partners and wider promotion of the town.

Figure 21 - Next Steps in Delivery

Strategy (Conwy Council):

planning; regeneration; open spaces; highways; libraries; youth services...

Development & Delivery:

economy; community; environment

Local engagement

Town Council; Traders' Association; Itaca; Action Group...

Working Towards Well Being Goals

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 does place emphasis on public bodies to think more about the long term, work better with people and communities and each other, look to prevent problems and take a more joined-up approach. Key values and ways of working focus on i) integration, ii) long-term thinking, iii) prevention, iv) collaboration and v) involving the people affected by our actions. Using the key goals of the Act the following assessment has been of the specific town centre proposals and to what degree they meet these objectives.

Figure 22 - Assessment of Action Plan Against Well Being Goals
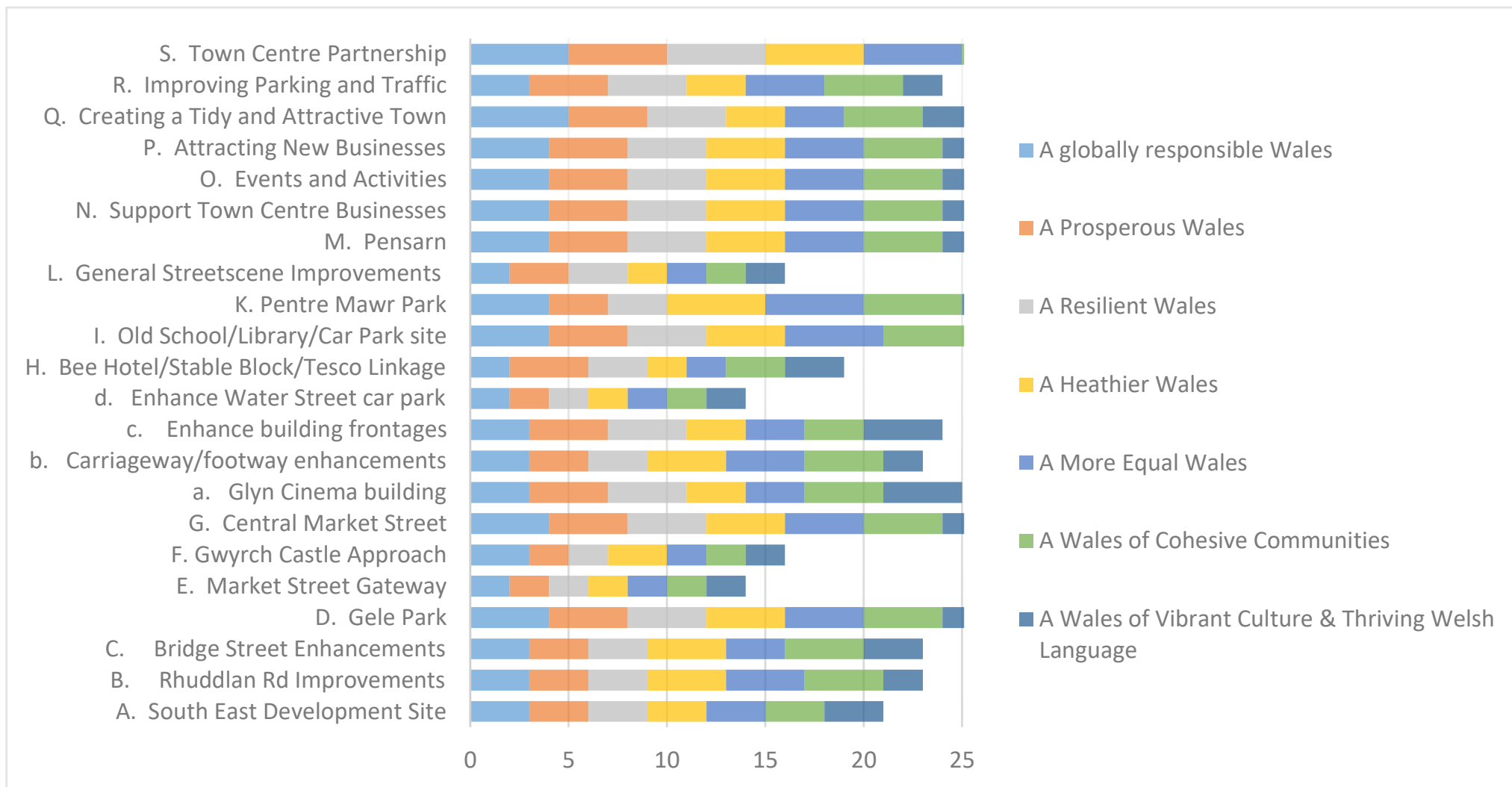
Funding

The following outlines the range of funding available for town centre focussed investment.

Welsh Government

Vibrant and Viable Places

Vibrant and Viable Places has been Welsh Government's programme for town centre regeneration. Local authorities have shared more than £100m for regeneration schemes from 2014 to 2017, with the fund invested in town centres, coastal communities and Communities First areas. In addition, £7m has gone into town centre related projects that tackle poverty which has been ring fenced for projects in the top 10 per cent most deprived areas in Wales. A further £1m has been allocated to the Town Centre Partnership Fund which has helped to boost 20 town centres across Wales. No announcement has been made on Vibrant and Viable Places 2.

http://gov.wales/topics/housing-and-regeneration/regeneration/vibrant-and-viable-places/?lang=en

Community Facilities Programme

This capital grant fund aims to develop and improve facilities for communities in order to tackle poverty and its effects. Up to **£500,000** is available for facilities which are:

- needed and used by the community and offering services not duplicated in the surrounding area

- providing services which prevent or mitigate poverty and its effects

- reintroducing or preventing the loss of community services

- supported by and developed along with the local community

- strategic and can demonstrate this by evidencing it has the support of the local authority, local County Voluntary Council, Local Health Board or similar partner

- sustainable over the medium to long term

- providing, safeguarding or re-introducing a valuable community service such as access to a credit union, post office, library, last shop/retail outlet in the area, amongst other eligibility criteria

Welsh Government encourages applications that are community led and developed in partnership with community, public and private sector partners. The co-location of organisations providing services such as credit union access, local health services, post office services, youth services, sports facilities, library services, etc. is encouraged. Potential applicants will be expected to work with local authorities and Community Voluntary Councils as well as the local community in order to develop applications.

http://gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/communities/grants/community-facilities-programme/?lang=en

Tourism Investment Support Scheme (TISS)

Up to £500,000 is available for eligible capital investment projects. TISS is an investment fund comprising a mix of repayable and non-repayable finance, targeting eligible capital investment projects in the Tourism Sector in Wales. It can be used either to upgrade existing or create new high quality product. The fund range is from £25,000 to £500,000 (support) with job outputs, economic benefit and quality being key criteria and considerations.

http://gov.wales/topics/tourism/tourism-investment-support-scheme/?lang=en

Rural Development Programme for Wales 2014-2020

This programme is funded by the European Union's European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and by the Welsh Government. The Welsh Government Rural Communities – Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 was adopted by the European Commission on 26 May 2015. It is a 7-year investment programme supporting a wide range of activities which contribute to the following objectives:

- fostering the competitiveness of agriculture

- ensuring the sustainable management of natural resources, and climate action

- achieving a balanced territorial development of rural economies and communities including the creation and maintenance of employment

All projects funded by the Programme must align with one or more of the following 6 European Rural Development Priorities with one key area being the "promotion of social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas".

Expressions of Interest (EOIs) must be submitted using the relevant form for each scheme. They should provide an outline of the proposed investment, explaining how the project will deliver against each of the assessment criteria for that EOI window. Applicants that are successful at EOI stage will be invited to second stage to submit a full application. The scheme that is of relevance to rural areas such as Abergele is the Rural Community Development Fund with its next EPO deadline of January 2017

http://gov.wales/topics/environmentcountryside/farmingandcountryside/cap/ruraldevelopment/wales-rural-development-programme-2014-2020/?lang=en

Lottery Funding
Coastal Communities Fund

The Coastal Communities Fund (CCF) encourages the economic development of UK coastal communities by giving funding to create sustainable economic growth and jobs. Since the start of the CCF in 2012 we have awarded grants to 218 organisations across the UK to the value of £125 million. This funding is forecast to deliver over 12,000 jobs and help attract over £240 million of additional funds to coastal areas. The Big Lottery Fund is delivering the CCF on behalf of UK Government and the Devolved Administrations in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. The UK Government announced in 2015 that the CCF will be extended to 2021 with at least £90m of new funding available for the period 2017/18 to 2020/21.

Round 4 of the CCF opened to applications in England on 22 May 2016 and in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland on 4 July 2016. The application deadline has now passed for all countries. One further funding round in England, Wales and Northern Ireland is expected to open in 2017. Details regarding future funding in Scotland are still to be advised.

https://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/global-content/programmes/uk-wide/coastal-communities

People and Places Programme

The People and Places programme has an annual budget of £17.8 million to fund capital and revenue projects that support co-ordinated action by people to make their communities better places to live. It will support local projects and projects that operate in more than one geographical area, regionally or throughout Wales. People and Places aims to: "Enable people to work together for strong communities, social justice and better rural and urban environments." People and Places can fund projects that achieve one or more of the following programme outcomes:

- revitalised communities
- improved community relations
- enhanced local environments, community services and buildings

Organisations can apply for funding between £5,001-£1 million over a period of up to five years. The programme can fund a mix of revenue and capital projects.

https://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/global-content/programmes/wales/people-and-places

Rural Programme: Community Grants

The Lottery Programme is inviting community groups to apply for funding to tackle rural poverty in Anglesey, Gwynedd, Conwy, Denbighshire, Powys, Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire, Carmarthenshire and Monmouthshire.

Grants of between £10,000 and £350,000 are available for groups whose work will benefit a community with a population of 10,000 or less. Although the types of activities that could be funded are not being prescribed, applications would need to show how groups are doing any of the following to address poverty:

- Improving well-being

- Raising aspirations

- Building social capital – enhancing skills available in the community

- Increasing resilience to challenging circumstances.

This could include themes like employment and income, transport and access to services, poor broadband and digital exclusion, housing and fuel poverty and demand for welfare and advice services.

https://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/global-content/programmes/wales/rural-programme-community-grants

Townscape Heritage

The Townscape Heritage programme is for schemes which help communities improve the built historic environment of conservation areas in need of investment across the UK. We support partnerships of local, regional and national interests that aim to regenerate economically disadvantaged historic areas for the benefit of local residents, workers and visitors. You can apply for a grant from £100,000 to £2million. The application process is in two rounds.

We fund schemes that make a lasting difference for heritage, people and communities in the UK. A Townscape Heritage scheme is made up of a balanced portfolio of projects that together have the potential to regenerate and transform conservation areas in need of investment. These schemes should aim to halt and reverse the decline of historic townscapes by creating attractive, vibrant and interesting places where in the future people will want to live, work, visit and invest. This will be achieved by funding physical works to repair and enhance the historic area in order to encourage business confidence, by providing local people with the opportunity to learn new skills, and by inspiring the local community to take an interest in and get involved with their townscape heritage.

https://www.hlf.org.uk/looking-funding/our-grant-programmes/townscape-heritage

Visualising and Measuring Outcomes

It is important for any future activity and investment to be monitored as part of the development and delivery process. A selection of indicators is outlined below which range from National type indicators down to core economic and added social and economic value. The programme board would be responsible for the monitoring and analysis of this data.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	METHODOLOGY
Well Being and Future Generations "national indicators"	
Environment	
Levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO2) pollution in the air.	Transport roadside pollution counts
Percentage of dwellings with adequate energy performance.	Household energy performance surveys
Economic	
Percentage of businesses which are innovation-active.	Business Wales/local business survey
Percentage of people in employment, who are on permanent contracts (or on temporary contracts, and not seeking permanent employment) and who earn more than 2/3 of the UK median wage.	Local business survey
Social/Community	
Percentage of people living in households in material deprivation.	Census/well-being survey
Percentage of people in employment.	Census
Percentage of people in education, employment or training, measured for different age groups.	Census
Percentage who feel able to influence decisions affecting their local area.	Well-being survey
Percentage of people satisfied with their ability to get to/ access the facilities and services they need.	Well-being survey
Percentage of people feeling safe at home, walking in the local area, and when travelling.	Well-being survey
Percentage of people satisfied with local area as a place to live.	Well-being survey
Percentage of people agreeing that they belong to the area; that people from different backgrounds get on well together; and that people treat each other with respect.	Well-being survey
Percentage of people who volunteer.	Well-being survey
Percentage of people attending or participating in arts, culture or heritage activities at least three times a year.	Well-being survey
Percentage of people who speak Welsh daily and can speak more than just a few words of Welsh.	Well-being survey

Percentage of people who can speak Welsh.	Census/well-being survey

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	METHODOLOGY
Well Being and Future Generations "national indicators"	
Core Economic Indicators	
Commercial Units	
KPI 1: Use Class	Visual Survey
KPI 2: Comparison/Convenience	Visual Survey
KPI 3: Trader Type	Visual Survey
KPI 4: Vacancy Rates	Visual Survey
Cross-town Trends	
KPI 5: Markets	Visual Survey
KPI 6 & 7: Zone A Retail Rents	Valuation Office Agency/ Local Agents
KPI 7: Prime Retail Property Yields	Valuation Office Agency/ Local Agents
KPI 8: Footfall	Footfall Survey on a Market & Quiet Day
KPI 9: Car Parking	Audit on Busy and Quiet Day
Stakeholder Surveys	
KPI 10: Business Confidence Surveys	Postal Survey
KPI 11: Town Centre Users Surveys	Face to Face Surveys/ Online Survey
KPI 12: Shoppers Origin Surveys	Shoppers Origin Survey
Added Social and Economic Value	
Cultural and Community Function	
KPI A: Cultural Facilities	Online and Local Research
KPIB: Community Services	Online and Local Research
KPI C: Cultural and Community Events	Online and Local Research
Built Environment	
KPI D: Impressions Score	Visual Survey
KPI E: Number of Listed Buildings	Online Research
KPI F: Development Land	Online Research
Economic Diversity	
KPI G: Evening Economy	Visual Survey

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	METHODOLOGY
KPI H: Local Food and Drink	Visual Survey
Well Being and Future Generations "national indicators"	
KPI I: Accommodation	Online Research
KPI J: Self-reliance	Online Research
Local Leadership and Delivery	
KPI K: Partnership Progression	Telephone Interview
KPI L: Planning and Delivery	Telephone Interview

CHRIS JONES

REGENERATION