



WHITCHURCH TOWN COUNCIL

Business Plan 2013/2014

Introduction

This is Whitchurch Town Council's first Corporate Business Plan which incorporates and includes an updated business plan from 2012 for the Civic Centre. It is a management tool intended to identify how the financial, human and technological resources available are to be used to achieve declared objectives set out in the Council's Corporate Strategy "Time to Lead the Community 2013-2015". The Plan concentrates on the current year but a number actions stretch well beyond this period. It is a living document which will be modified once Medium Term Financial Plan has been finalised and after this, as situations develop. It will also be adapted or supplemented to support different funding applications as opportunities arise.

The Council's Corporate Strategy, adopted following public and stakeholder consultation, is set out on page 2. Certain background information and analysis is reproduced elsewhere in this Plan, both by way of explanation and so that it can be readily updated during the life of the Strategy. It sets out how the Council will respond to issues identified either by a strategic analysis of the Town's needs or identified through the consultation process. The Strategy recognises Whitchurch Parish and Town Plan of 2011. It commits the Council to work with Shropshire Council, with other public bodies as well as the voluntary and community organisations for the good of our Town.

Modern local government for the Town was originally formed as Whitchurch and Dodington Urban District, in 1894, replacing the Local Board, which had been established in 1860. The name of the district was altered to Whitchurch Urban District, in 1895, and a Council, consisting of twelve members was formed. In 1967, it was amalgamated with Ellesmere Rural District, Wem Rural District, and the urban districts of Ellesmere & Wem, as well as Whittington from Oswestry Rural District, to form the North Shropshire Rural District Council.

At this time, Whitchurch Parish Council was formed as the local council for the civil (urban) parish of Whitchurch. The North Shropshire Rural District survived until 1974 when it was abolished under the Local Government Act 1972 to form part of a new, larger North Shropshire District, by combining with Market Drayton Rural District. At this time, the Parish Council was designated as Whitchurch Town Council, which effectively had exactly the same legal status, powers and duties as a parish council but had a civic mayor as oppose to a chairman of council.

The district and its council were abolished on 1 April 2009 when the new Shropshire unitary authority was established, as part of the 2009 structural changes to local government in England. Whitchurch Town Council remained unchanged. The historic and ceremonial county of Shropshire, England, located in the West Midlands region, has two unitary authorities as the local authorities (Shropshire Council and Telford and Wrekin Borough Council). Whitchurch Town is located within the Whitchurch and Prees Local Joint Committee Area.

Time to Lead the Community 2013-2015.

Our purpose is to be the champion for improving the quality of life for all of our community so that Whitchurch becomes a great place to live, work and relax.

To achieve this all members of the Council will work together to serve and lead the community with a determination to undertake the fullest range of services, responding to the wider need of its residents with fair and proportionate governance.

We will manage resources effectively and be an advocate and campaigning voice for the Town to be progressive.

Our vision is to grow Whitchurch to be a hub for the geographical area, a centre of excellence for its services to the local and wider community, whilst cherishing its sense of place.

To achieve this we will develop Whitchurch to realise its full potential, with good quality jobs, better homes, a vibrant town centre, a recognised tourist hub and an area which is prosperous and clean.

We will celebrate its unique heritage and facilitate more access to arts and culture and social facilities. More of the community will be encouraged to be more engaged and offered more opportunities for education, leisure, health and well-being.

Our main priorities are to help:

- **Enable more quality and sustainable jobs**
- **Engage the community and give young people a reason to stay.**
- **Provide more homes to match needs & aspirations**
- **Protect and enhance the local environment and celebrate our unique heritage**
- **Enable improved transport links and community facilities**
- **Develop the potential of the Council to deliver local services and effective leadership.**

Whitchurch Town Council promises to improve communication with the community using its power and influence as a minor local authority to further the best interests of the town as a whole.

We will listen and respect all points of view and will exercise our duties with tolerance, patience and understanding – in a fair and reasoned manner.

Whitchurch Town Council aims to lead by example, to operate effectively and efficiently, developing greater capacity and capability to achieve its priorities.

OUR CORE VALUES: The principles by which we will operate the Council are:

Democracy and openness

Equality & respect

Working with others

Value for money

Background

Whitchurch is situated in north Shropshire, close to the Cheshire and Wrexham County Boundaries and in particular the towns of Wrexham, Nantwich and Crewe. Whitchurch benefits from a railway station on the Shrewsbury-Crewe line. The town has a lively town centre and has the benefit of A49 and A525 bypasses around the town. The Whitchurch arm of the Llangollen branch of the Shropshire Union Canal is an important tourist facility bringing visitors to the town. It is the oldest continuously inhabited town in Shropshire and is twinned with the French town of Neufchâtel-en-Bray.

Originally a settlement founded by the Romans around AD 52 or 70, it was called Mediolanum, meaning the place in the middle of the plain. Roman artefacts can be seen at the Whitchurch Heritage Centre. The current name comes from 'White Church', which refers to a church from Norman period made from white stone. The current impressive church is St. Alkmund, a Church of England (Anglican) building. Dispensing with the colour tradition, it was built in 1712 of red sandstone and stands on the site of the earlier Norman architecture church. It is an important Grade I Listed building.

Whitchurch is the home of the JB Joyce tower clocks company, established in 1690, the oldest clock tower making company in the world, earning Whitchurch the reputation as the Home of tower clocks. Famous past residents of the town include composer Sir Edward German, who was born in the town in what is now a pub (the Old Town Hall Vaults). Locally, the Sir Edward German Music Festival - is hosted by St. Alkmund's and St. John's churches. Victorian illustrator Randolph Caldecott lived in the town for several years and many of the town buildings feature in his work. Buried in Whitchurch is a medieval warrior Sir John Talbot, a military commander, who in 1429 fought French armies inspired by Joan of Arc. The local secondary school "Sir John Talbot's" is named after him.

The Town centre of Whitchurch combines historic old buildings and landmarks alongside 1960s and later developments. It is an important service centre for the surrounding area and has a weekly charter market. The majority of shops are independently owned but there are some branches of national chain stores.

There is a range of community based facilities including a library, swimming pool, leisure centre, community hospital, day care centre, two community centres, youth centre, heritage centre, four places of worship (and two other Christian groups who meet in community buildings) and a multipurpose Civic Centre. Statutory education is provided by separate Infant, Junior and Secondary schools, and a private Primary school.

Whitchurch has many voluntary organisations and groups including successful sports clubs, service organisations like Rotary, youth groups, drama groups, Photographic Society, History and Archaeology Group, Wildlife Trust, and Waterways Trust. The Chamber of Trade supports local businesses, and other groups are active within the tourism sector. Many national and local charities have branches in Whitchurch. Whitchurch Rugby Club, founded in 1936, plays at Edgeley Park. The local football club, Whitchurch Alport F.C., known as the Allbran Allstars, now play in the Mercian Regional Football League.

The historic and ceremonial county of Shropshire, is located in the West Midlands region. Whitchurch is part of the North Shropshire constituency for Parliamentary elections and part of the West Midlands constituency of the European Parliament.

An overview and analysis of the Town (from the Corporate Strategy)

This Section provides a summary of available information to give context to the Council's stated priorities. More detailed information is provided in the "Whitchurch Town and Parish Plan" (2011) and the "Whitchurch and surrounding Area Place Plan". Both of these are available or have links provided on the Town Council's Website. www.whitchurch-shropshire-tc.gov.uk

Whitchurch is the fifth largest market town in Shropshire with a population of some 9,900 (mid 2010). Its population is comparatively young, with more residents under the age of 18 than over 65. 62% of the population is in the age range of 16 to 64, giving 6200 people of working age. In February 2012, the number claiming job seekers' allowance was 283, 4.6% of the working population. This is above the Shropshire, regional and national levels. Long term unemployment (longer than 12 months) is 21.8%, which is above both Shropshire and national levels, but below that for the West Midlands. The % of unemployed in the 24 years and under age group is also above the Shropshire, regional and national levels.

A higher proportion of residents work in elementary occupations or as process, plant and machine operatives than in professional, or technical occupations. The industrial estates contain some nationally and internationally known firms, but also local enterprises. Whitchurch shows a lower level of employment self-containment than other similar towns in the County with just 48.5% of the resident working population employed in the Town.

The location of Whitchurch and its good transport links provide potential for attracting and sustaining new businesses. In 2012, there were 3000 employee jobs located in Whitchurch. Excluding those who were self employed, 48.5% of jobs were occupied by men and 51.5% by women. Male full time jobs account for 39.3% of the total, male part-time 9.2%; female full time 22.4% and female part-time 29.1%. The service sector accounted for 85.7% of jobs, manufacturing 9.2% and construction 5.0%.

- The town supports above average employment in retail and wholesale (19.1% and 11.2% of all employees respectively compared with 11.9% and 4.5% for Shropshire).
- Significantly fewer are employed in manufacturing and accommodation and food services.
- A significant proportion of Whitchurch jobs are in health (17.8%) and education (9.3%).

Within Whitchurch there are approximately 500 businesses, the majority of which are small in size, with less than 10 employing more than 50 (Mint, 2012). The Town is particularly dependent on distribution, hotels and restaurants and the transport and communications sectors which absorb 45.8% of employees. National changes to pension arrangements in the future are likely to result in an increase in the number of people over 65 requiring employment. The proportion of people of working age in the Town is therefore likely to rise overall in the future.

In 2011 there were an estimated 4,085 dwellings in Whitchurch with 54% being semi-detached, 32% detached and 14% flats, maisonettes and apartments. 69% of the dwellings were owner occupied, 17% rented from a social landlord and 14% rented from a private landlord. There is a hostel near the Town centre for young people moving out of the care system.

House prices in Shropshire are higher than national and regional averages, but less so in northern Shropshire towns. However, workplace wage levels are lower, resulting in an affordability issue. Unaffordable house prices in addition to a lack of smaller dwellings and shared accommodation contributes to out-migration of the young and can make it difficult for local people to live close by their place of employment. The number of households in Shropshire is forecast to grow faster than the regional average; this will put additional pressure on the housing market and means that substantial housing developments will be needed if there is to be sufficient housing supply to meet demand.

The future growth of Whitchurch will need to ensure that housing developments, service provision and job creation are considered as a whole. In the Town & Parish Plan survey (the Survey), there was a 94% support for starter homes, 88% support for the provision of 2-3 bed family homes and 68% support for larger 3-5 bed houses. Respondents had high recognition [89%] of the need for sheltered housing to support the elderly and people in difficulty. Support for bungalows [81%] rises with age. Single persons particularly, thought there should be more sheltered housing, bungalows and starter homes. Demand [67%] for Housing Association housing and property for commercial rent was significant.

Further development is constrained by the A41/A49/A525 bypass, the Shropshire Union Canal, the railway line and Whitchurch and Waymills industrial parks. The land between the existing built up area and these barriers could, potentially, be developed. The Conservation Area in the Town centre means that the style and quality of any new building work here is closely examined. Survey respondents were keen that the green corridors remain and 44% thought that modest development on land already allocated for building should take place. 33% [51% businesses] supported development up to the line of the bypass.

A Skillsmart survey identified a total population of 45,527 living within a 20 minute drive time of Whitchurch. Analysis of consumer categories within the local population compared against the national average shows higher than usual proportions of Affluent Greys [38%], Wealthy Executives [16%] and Flourishing Families [11%]. All of these groups fall into a higher average income bracket. These statistics indicate positive possibilities for attracting relatively affluent users to the retail outlets and services in the Town.

However, compared to the rest of Shropshire, Whitchurch Town emerges as relatively deprived, with almost half of the population living in the 20% most deprived areas in the county. The 2001 Census showed low academic achievement with over one third of residents having no recognised qualifications. Increasing numbers of young people are now accessing further and higher level qualifications.

A Skillsmart survey rated the town 7th in a UK wide survey of over 80 towns on overall retail experience. The Town offers a wide range of local retail services. Retail expenditure retention in the convenience goods sector is high at 81%. The town also retains 73% of expenditure for DIY goods, 76% chemist goods and 51% on electrical. In recent years, a number of new high street enterprises have been established and continue to flourish while others have been less successful, but pressure from a stagnant economy and the internet has increased in the last two years. The Survey identified strong support for development of the retail sector in the Town, 75% by all respondent and 34% of businesses.

There was significant support for the expansion of manufacturing [49%], Higher Education and training [48%], food production [46%] and specialist trades and workshops [44%]. 51% of business respondents saw Arts and Media as important compared to 33% of respondents overall. 46% of businesses saw tourism as an important area for expansion. An increase in technology and internet based business was most strongly supported by young people under the age of 21.

There are 'cradle to grave' learning opportunities in Whitchurch, with at least two playgroups and two day nurseries listed for the Town. The NE Shropshire Children's Centre has a base at the Whitchurch CE Infant and Nursery School. There is Whitchurch CE Junior School and Sir John Talbot's (SJT) Technology College and in addition a small private school. There is a lack of capacity at the Infant and Nursery School and the buildings at the Junior School and parts of SJT are old although both are kept in generally good condition. Any proposed residential building in the town will increase the demand for school places.

After the age of 16 many young people stay on at SJT, but in order to access particular courses some young people travel to other education and training provision in nearby towns. County Training provides additional opportunities based at the Talbot Campus. A small number of adult education classes are held in the Town. More courses are available in Wem and Ellesmere for those with access to transport. It is evident from pre-Survey consultation that there is a need for more vocational and non-vocational learning opportunities in the Town. There is a very active local group of the University of the Third Age (U3A) which meets weekly. Currently some 32 different interest and activity groups meet in a variety of locations.

In the survey response, there were very high levels of support for improvements to the facilities for learning for our children and young people [91%]. There was good support for the notion that these facilities should be available for use at all the times [90%]. The need for more opportunities for learning for jobs and skills was thought to be very important by 96% of respondents. The importance of opportunities for all to undertake academic qualifications were supported by 93% of respondents.

Whitchurch has a selection of large parks and number smaller areas with play facilities that are managed either by the Town Council or residents associations. The survey shows that 91% of respondents would like there to be more facilities and organised activities to be available in the parks. 98% of Survey respondents indicated the need for stronger action to be taken over anti-social acts. These include the dropping of litter and fouling by dogs.

There are clubs in Whitchurch for a very wide range of sporting activities most of which have their own dedicated facilities where these are required. The Swimming Centre and the Sports and Leisure Centre are both open to the general public. The Civic Centre has spaces for some sporting activities including indoor bowls and badminton. Private facilities are available for exercise and fitness. There is an equestrian centre near to the town.

There is a good range of opportunities for participation in culture and the arts, including Whitchurch Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society, Whitchurch Little Theatre Group and a youth theatre group, whilst touring productions also visit. Concerts are held in both Civic Centre and St Alkmund's Church. Two Edward German Festivals have been held which have attracted wide audiences and national recognition. Films are shown at the Talbot Theatre by 'flicks in the Sticks' and also occasionally in the Civic Centre.

Whitchurch Heritage Centre has achieved museum status which will enable it to attract additional grants to enhance the collections it holds pertaining to Whitchurch. It is possible that artefacts which are at present held elsewhere could now be returned to the Town. Whitchurch Historical and Archaeological Group have a collection of local photographs. Small art exhibition space is available at a coffee shop in town, at a small commercial gallery and occasionally at the Library but generally there is insufficient space. Many people go to surrounding similar sized towns for entertainment, rather than staying in Whitchurch.

Improving local facilities and activities: 81% of all respondents felt that the 11-18 years group should have improved local facilities and activities. There was 40% support for providing more for older people and people with disabilities. Improved access for families on low incomes was supported by 36% of respondents. 35% of respondents thought that children aged 5 to 11 were a priority.

Sports facilities: 71% supported the provision of facilities for a wider range of physical activities and sports. The 22-45 years group gave this particular support [80%]. Provision of a combined swimming and sports hall on one site was considered important [51%]. Support for provision of a new swimming pool including a children's pool was particularly high with 22-34 years group [68%] and also with families [59%]. The provision of public tennis courts had 33% support. There was 24% support for the provision of more football pitches but 39% wanted to improve existing facilities for football, rugby and cricket.

Arts : The highest priority was for a local cinema [77%]. Support was particularly strong amongst young people. Provision of a theatre was supported by 46% and of a museum by 42%. This support was particularly strong in older age groups.

In Whitchurch there are many clubs and facilities for young people. Centre North East welcomes different aged groups on each evening of the week and on Saturdays and there are two voluntary church-based youth groups. Army and Air Cadets and Scouts and Guides and their younger and older affiliated groups meet each week. Clubs for at least eight different sports have young person sections. The Sports and Leisure Centre has many facilities open to young people and both the Junior School and Sir John Talbot's have representative teams. Young people can join the Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society and the Little Theatre Group and take to the stage in their productions.

Improving opportunities for young people came top in the list of priorities chosen by respondents to the Survey. The ordered list includes Multi Use Games Area, Drop in place like Coffee Bar, more informal meeting spaces, more green spaces for informal games, Skate Park/BMX facility, Climbing wall and other outdoor activities, Summer activities and play schemes, more opportunities to join clubs and societies, provision for regular art/music/drama and an outdoor roller skating rink.

The town centre of Whitchurch is a Conservation Area with some medieval and many Tudor, Georgian and Victorian listed buildings. The town centre has a 20mph one way traffic system along the main retail streets. The pavements have been widened and repaved and the kerbs dropped at strategic points to help wheelchair users and parents. There is a pedestrianised area in the Bullring with seating and planting. The Charter Market is held each Friday and a Farmers' Market once a month. The goods on sale are of high quality but the number of stalls has diminished over time.

Appearance: There was very high support for improvement of the appearance of the Town centre-pavements [94%], businesses maintaining the public space around their premises [92%], owners improving the building frontages [95%]. It was notable that many business respondents indicated that they are prepared to maintain areas around their premises [89%] and the frontages [97%]. There was 81% general support for more flowers and shrubs but business respondents gave 91% support.

Shopping improvements: There was a very high level of support for a wider range of shops [97%]. Overall 68% of respondents favoured the development of out-of-town shops.

Market: Whilst a majority thought that the market is good [66%] a significant minority [34%] thought that improvements are necessary. This might include more stalls [72%] and special markets [77%]. There was support [63%] for the Council paying for improvements.

Other issues: There was universal high support [89%] for improvements in access to buildings and pavements for wheelchairs and pushchairs. Most respondents [90%] supported provision of toilets in High Street and the Town centre. There was some support [75%], including businesses, for a bus stop near the Civic Centre. 67% of respondents supported the appointment of a Town Council Officer to promote the town centre and local area. 78% felt that information signs need improvement.

In total there are 109 listed buildings in Whitchurch. These are buildings of architectural or historical merit which are given special protection from unsuitable development. Most of the buildings in the central core of the town are listed and form part of the Conservation Area. Most are Grade II or II* but the Parish Church of St Alkmund is a fine eighteenth century Grade 1 listed building. Many of these buildings are older internally than their outward appearance would indicate because many older buildings were later updated and given stone or brick frontages. Unfortunately many of the buildings are in need of care and redecoration and this is an issue for many town residents. The potential for increased tourism which the attractive street scene could present should not be overlooked.

The Civic Centre Complex replaced the Victorian Town Hall [damaged by fire in 1941], the Corn Exchange and Museum and Art Gallery. The Heritage Centre was opened in 1998. Its permanent displays include pre-historic and Roman artefacts found in the Parish, clocks made by Joyce's Clocks and a small art gallery. Small temporary exhibitions of local interest are frequently assembled. It is much used by residents of all ages and by visitors. In 2010 museum status was achieved and it is hoped that the facility can be improved by returning artefacts and archive material at present stored elsewhere. 96% of respondents strongly agree that there is a need to look after the historic buildings properly.

In Whitchurch, 9.8% of residents are aged 65-74 years and 9.7% are over 75 years. Whilst many elderly people live independently in their own homes, either owned or rented, there is provision for assisted living at Fairfields, Kingsway Court and St. John's Park. There are four residential and nursing homes and both senior citizens clubs and day centres. There is a Meals on Wheels service. Many older people are active in the clubs and organisations in the Town. The Town Bus Service which allows easier access to the Town centre and its facilities is particularly well supported by older people. There are some dropped kerbs along the streets and the speed limit allows older people to cross the main shopping streets in relative safety. The

wider pavements in the Town centre mean that older people can easily use mobility scooters. There is disabled parking in the High Street, Green End and Mill Street and in all the public car parks.

There are three family doctor practices in Whitchurch. The Community Matron and District Nurses are based with both the GP practices and the hospital, which enables patients to move from the District Hospitals to either rehabilitation care in Whitchurch Community Hospital or directly into their own homes with community nursing care. Community physiotherapy and occupational therapy can also take place in the home. Whitchurch Community Hospital serves the town and the surrounding area. Its facilities have been updated several times in recent years. Sometimes this has been done with funds supplied by the very active and well supported Friends of Whitchurch Hospital. The local General Practitioners provide the medical support and the Shropdoc out of hours service has a base at the hospital. The hospital has a Rehabilitation ward – 32 beds predominantly for Rehabilitation and End of Life Care and Beech ward – a ward of 16 beds for elderly mentally frail patients. Older people are particularly dependent on this service since many in this age group are not car drivers and long distance public transport is difficult. Midwives and health visitors also hold regular clinics at the Hospital.

Whitchurch has recently lost its ambulance station which has provided a valued service. Shropshire Health Authority is consulting on future plans for Beech Ward and its services and there has been much support from Whitchurch residents for the retention of the facility. Local community health practitioners and organisations like Macmillan are coming together to provide high quality palliative and end of life care. There are three dental practices in the town and there is provision for National Health patients. There are three opticians and three pharmacies serving the town and surrounding area. A medical herbalist runs a centre in the town for alternative therapies and there are also private physiotherapist and chiropodist services.

Nearly 5 in 10 respondents placed “Extending medical and health treatment available at Whitchurch hospital and in the home” in their top 6 priorities. This suggests wide community support for the Hospital and its attendant services. It was the number one priority for people aged over 60.

Statistically North Shropshire is a relatively safe place in which to live. The crime figures are higher in the more populated Town centre of Whitchurch than in the more rural hinterland of the Parish but low in terms of a national and regional perspective. Good relations exist between the Police and the community helped by work done at Local Joint Committees and with young people in schools and youth groups. Neighbourhood Watch Schemes operate in parts of the Town. There is a police station in the Town. Whilst serious crime is very rare the more persistent and regular crimes include shoplifting and anti-social behaviour. It has been acknowledged that people’s ‘fear of crime’ is an issue which needs to be addressed. There is CCTV in the Town.

Most people feel safe during the day [93%] but many [63%] do not feel safe at night. Young people and older people [over 72] were the two groups who felt most unsafe, whereas those in the 35 – 45 age group were concerned the least. Respondents’ key concerns were related to anti-social behaviour. Many people wished to see more Police ‘on the beat’ [75%] and there was also support for improved CCTV [57%]. The highest support for the improved CCTV came from young people [67%]. 25% of all additional comments in the Survey related to aspects of Community Safety.

The Survey results indicated some positive comments about Whitchurch being ‘a great place to live and bring up a family’ and also some calls for the community itself to become more involved in creating a feeling of pride in the Town.

Whitchurch is served by three newspapers: the weekly publications the Whitchurch Herald and the North Shropshire Chronicle and the daily Shropshire Star. The free magazine Whitchurch Gossip is published monthly. The Whitchurch Town Guide is published every two years. Radio Shropshire and Beacon Radio broadcast every day to the Whitchurch area and from time to time Whitchurch FM Community Radio is

available. There are three websites serving Whitchurch: www.2shrop.net/whitchurchtowncouncil; www.gowhitchurch.co.uk , and www.whitchurchsalop.org.uk . Some clubs and organisations have their own websites.

Local authority information is available at the Shropshire Council Customer Service Point in the Heritage Centre and at the Town Council office in the Civic Centre. Further general information is to be found at the Library. There are notice boards outside the Civic Centre and some shops will display information in their windows. 90% agreed that there could be better use of the local press. 89% supported an information point in town with reliable, current and up to date information. 87% felt that a 'What's on' magazine with an events calendar would be useful. 85% thought that more regularly updated internet information on the Town would be helpful. There was rather less support [56%] for appointing an events coordinator for the Town. Highest support for this came from the 21 – 34 years age group.

Respondents were asked which Community Events they would support. Some of these events already take place and some would be new or revived events. Across all age groups there was a very high level of support [80%+] for annual events – Food Festival, Town Fete, Carnival, Fireworks/ Bonfire Night. Positive support was given overall to a wide range of musical concerts or festivals – Pop or Rock 71% [young people 81%], Band Concerts 75% [older people 92%, young people 60%] Classical music 60% [older people 80%, young people 39%]. There was a very high level support for Amateur productions 82% [older people 94%, young people 72%]. It was clear from the Survey and all other consultations that the community wanted more events.

The Canal and Country Park area currently stretches much of the way from Jubilee Park to the Llangollen Canal. This Green Corridor is a route into the Town for visitors cruising on the canal, a route out into the country for town residents and is also one end of the Sandstone Trail for long distance walkers. Planning Permission for a small housing development may interrupt this natural corridor. Adjacent to the canal is the Greenfields Nature Reserve which is owned and managed by Shropshire Wildlife Trust. In the Parish, the Sandstone Trail stretches from Grindley Brook through the Country Park to the Victoria Jubilee Park. This and a system of adjacent circular walks is a popular walking route.

There was a high level of support [80%] for extending the Canal closer to the Town. This support was less amongst younger people. Very high support [88%] was recorded for developing other activities like fishing and canoeing along the Canal and Country Park and for nature conservation. Most support was in the 22-34 age group. 90% of respondents wanted further development of the Country Park.

There are a range of sites of environmental importance in Whitchurch. Some are protected and managed, like the Country Park and Greenfields Local Nature reserve and some like the land to the north of Claypit Street/Alport Road and land to the south of Wrexham Road, are privately owned. Many of these sites are under threat from development and some valuable sites have already been lost or may soon be lost.

The Woodland Trust manages the recently planted woodland alongside the Canal at the former Danson's Farm. In Whitchurch Parish there are 52.8 kilometres of Public Rights of Way, but in general they are in a condition which is well below the national average. Whilst nearly one third are easy to walk, another one third are obstructed.

There are only 12.5 half-sized allotment plots within the Parish, and at least fifty people on the waiting list. In the Survey there was very high support [over 90%] across the population for maintaining and improving the natural environment and access to it through improvements to footpaths. 89% of respondents supported improved provision for allotments.

Whitchurch is well served by transport links. The town is at the junction of the A41 Chester to Wolvehampton Road, the A49 Warrington to Shrewsbury Road and the A525 Newcastle-under-lyme to Wrexham Road.

These roads are all linked by the Whitchurch bypass. They also provide a good link between the M54, M56 & M6 motorways. In and around the Town many road surfaces are very poor.

Whitchurch is on the Cardiff to Manchester main railway line. There is a range of long distance and local trains that stop at the unstaffed Whitchurch station. Currently, there are fewer northbound than southbound trains. Access to the southbound platforms is by means of a footbridge across the lines. This creates problems for users of wheelchairs, prams, pushchairs and bicycles who have difficulties with stairs, as do other passengers carrying heavy luggage. There is a frequent around-the-town bus service during the day and other routes connect to Chester, Shrewsbury, Nantwich, and Wrexham.

Of people responding to the Survey, 94% supported provision of the Town Bus service and 83% thought the service should include more of the Town. 69% of respondents wanted better bus services between towns. The train service to and from Whitchurch was considered by 97% to be essential to the Town. 89% asked for a more frequent stopping service. 96% of respondents wanted equal access to both platforms for all passengers including those with difficulties.

There was overwhelming support by citizens [94%] and businesses [100%] to keep free parking in the Town. There is a strong demand for more all day parking [87%], and for more car parks, while 60% of respondents wanted more consistently enforced parking controls. Extension of the bypass to completely encircle the Town was supported by 73% of respondents. There was no clear view on traffic calming measures, 61% versus 39%; but it was given a higher priority by under 15 year olds and families.

There was very strong support for improved surfaces of roads and pavements [95%]. The provision of more 'safe from traffic' cycleways was strongly supported [80%]. The highest support came from secondary school students [92%].

In its recent response to Shropshire Council's Revised Preferred Options for SAMdev, its Local Plan, the Town Council have suggested that Whitchurch should have an additional 1700 homes and a proportional increase in employment sites in the period to 2013, if Whitchurch is to become a thriving hub and attract the desired investment to provide high value jobs, facilities and infrastructure. They now hope to work with Shropshire Council to identify suitable sites and undertake public consultation.

Policies

The Council is not able to set out all of its policies and principles in its Strategy and is close to completing the development of a suite of supporting policy documents which support and add detail. Some of these documents will be statutory requirements, others will be best practice. All will be available in the Constitution.

Environmental Policy	Equality Policy
Information and Data Protection Policy	Community & Social Policy
Quality Policy	Child & Vulnerable Adult Policy
Grants & Funding Policy	Treasury Management Policy
Customer Care Policy	Communications & Marketing Policy
Procurement Policy	Volunteers Policy
Pensions Discretion Policy	Civic Centre Lettings Policy
ICT Policy	Complaints Policy
Markets Policy	

Stakeholders and Clients

The main stake holders in the activities of the Council are the electors, residents, and businesses of the Town, all of which benefit from an improved town environment and protected heritage, better services and improved community facilities. Other stakeholders are our partners such as the Shropshire Council, Town

Plan Implementation Group (PIC), voluntary and community groups, local trusts and other public and private organisations who work for the good of the Town.

Our clients are the individuals, organisations, visitors, tourists and users of the Council's facilities and services or who benefit from its financial support.

Capability Analysis

Appendix 1 sets out the SWOT analysis which examines the strengths and weaknesses within the organisation and the opportunities and threats which it faces. The Business Plan has built on the strengths and opportunities and develops a response to the identified weaknesses and threats. This appendix also includes a summary of the Pest Analysis which uses the four headings of Political, Economic, Social and Technological factors to assess the wider environment in which the Organisation operates.

Appendix 2 summarises the key business risks which have been taken from a more in depth exercise using a model developed by consultants Local Community Solutions Ltd. The aim will be to lower a number of the risks, particularly around the financial uncertainties and this process has already begun.

The self assessment element of the "Chamber Assure" Integrated Quality Management System which Council have resolved to adopt, will involve both staff and lead councillors. It will become a considerable influence on the future Business Plans and a key driver for efficiency and effectiveness.

It is clear the Council has a number of experienced and active Councillors many of whom also play other key roles in their communities. Together they muster an array of skills, and show a passion for the Town. Their capacity will be needed if the strategic priorities are to be realised, as the Council will not be able to afford the delivery by paid employees alone. The Council has now put in place Member Training and Development programme to ensure councillors are well prepared for the challenges ahead.

The officer establishment is extremely small and the Council have begun to build up capacity by re-defining job roles, training, development and empowerment of staff and modest recruitment. Some external support will inevitably be needed from time to time. Volunteers are also encouraged through "Friends of Whitchurch". The Volunteers Policy will ensure that the maximum advantage is gained from volunteers and that in turn they benefit from the experience and are treated fairly.

The Council is determined to increase operational efficiency and will welcome the regulation of both auditors and other accreditation bodies. The Council will aim to retain "quality town status" and seek accreditation under the "Chamber Assure" Integrated Quality Management Scheme.

The Council have almost completed a review of its governance, which includes adopting a Constitution and revising its controlling policies and regulations. It has re-defined its Information and Data Protection Policy to ensure that as much information as possible is available publically but that sensitive and confidential information is properly protected.

Whitchurch Town Council, having satisfied itself that it meets the eligibility criteria, has adopted the General Power of Competence, which not only gives it more freedom to pursue its ambitions in the future, but resolves the more immediate problem of not having a specific power to operate a museum. The Council will have to develop its services to the public gradually, allowing capacity and economies of scale to be achievable for the future. It requires more financial robustness to deliver policies and aims and its Medium Term Financial Plan will look forward 5 years and is designed to resource its Corporate Strategy.

The detailed Risk Assessment has its biggest risk as maintaining its two main buildings, the Heritage Centre which it owns and the Civic Centre, Sports Hall which it leases from Shropshire Council. Before it can decide on the long term investment for the Civic Centre Complex it will be necessary to obtain a 99 year lease or

preferably the freehold. This will not only secure any investment but open up more grant opportunities. Community Infrastructure Levy will also provide a source of capital for infrastructure in the longer term.

When the Receptionists/Tourism staff move in to the refurbished Civic Centre Foyer in February 2014, there will only be volunteers in the Heritage Centre to operate the Museum. An early decision will need to be made about whether the Council operates the Museum directly or through a separate Trust, where the Museum is to be housed and the future of the Heritage building.

The Grounds Maintenance Contract is due for renewal in August 2014. Members have already decided to introduce contract monitoring for the current contract and gradually raise standards. The new contract will be based on outcome standards. The Contract is likely to be packaged more effectively, with some work being undertaken by the Handyman Service. Discussions have commenced with Shropshire Council about other works such as roundabouts being undertaken by the Town council.

The Handyman Service will be shortly launched as part of the Facilities Section. It will provide a small but essential resource to keeping the Town clean and tidy, something which has been shown to be important to both residents and businesses.

Marketing & promotion

Whitchurch Town Council's main areas of promotion are:-

The Town - Promotion of the Town to attract day visitors, shoppers and tourists
 Promotion to attract people looking to live in the Town
 Promotion to businesses looking to invest in the Town

The Council- Statutory and other information to help residents and businesses understand its decision making.
 Marketing of its services to ensure accessibility for all

The Council will develop a Communications and Marketing Strategy. Communications activity is a key driver in public perception of overall Council performance. Research suggests that keeping residents informed, listening to their concerns and involving them when making decisions has a significant impact on their satisfaction with the Council and its services.

The Council will promote the Town on its Web-site, by improving signage, by supporting local events, by supporting local tourism and business initiatives and by helping local organisations with media articles and press releases.

The Council will market its services and promote local governance through its website, by providing a newsletter and notice boards and by supporting promotions of other public bodies and the voluntary and community organisations. It will adopt a new logo which reflects the corporate image of the Council and firmly routes at in the Town and at the hub of the community.

The Council will investigate the need for translation of information into other languages or for the visually impaired and will promote Whitchurch as "disability friendly".

ICT Provision

Whitchurch Town Council considers e-business as vital to its efficiency. It will ensure it keeps abreast with technology, and will adopt it where it delivers a proven benefit.

The Council has two PC's functioning on Windows 7 and a dated laptop. A new laptop is available for presentations. Storage is on a NAS drive rather than a Windows based server. This is also used to save a copy of files manually and as a data backup provision.

The Web Site will be reviewed during the next two months and will be developed with more information and a full range of governance documents as they are finalised. The Website will most likely be developed alongside the Town and Tourism site, with more links and a shared identification. The Council have just opened a Facebook page for promotional material.

The Council will retain its Omega Accounting software and upgrade it as necessary. It currently has a support package in place for this.

Staff Development

Whitchurch Town Council has adopted the collective agreement known as the "Green Book" issued by the NJC for Local government Services (comprising representatives of employers & employees). It has recently revised its local conditions and personnel policies, determined Pension Discretion Policies and issued a new Employee Handbook.

The Council sets out to reward the commitment of its staff, consistent with its financial resources and to provide a satisfying and flexible working environment in which all staff have the opportunity to develop.

The Council has a core team of 7. Pete Cooper, the Locum Town Clerk holds the CiLCA qualification. The Council is currently recruiting a new permanent Town Clerk who it is hoped will take up post in October. Zoe Dean is Assistant Town Clerk and Town Centre Manager, a revised role which will include public relations and marketing. Morris Childs is Facilities Manager responsible for the Civic Centre Complex, Markets and monitoring the Grounds Maintenance Contract. There is also a Facilities Officer, a Public Realm Officer (Handyman) and two Receptionists who operate from the Heritage Centre and administer the Tourist Information Centre and jointly with Shropshire Council staff, the Shropshire Council Information Point. The Council are currently considering appointing an Administration Assistant/Accounts Clerk.

All of the Team will be expected to work to personal and team targets, related to Business Plan objectives. An appraisal system is established and staff will have regular team briefings. The Council will develop an annual training plan based on the needs identified from appraisals. All staff will undergo basic Health and Safety training.

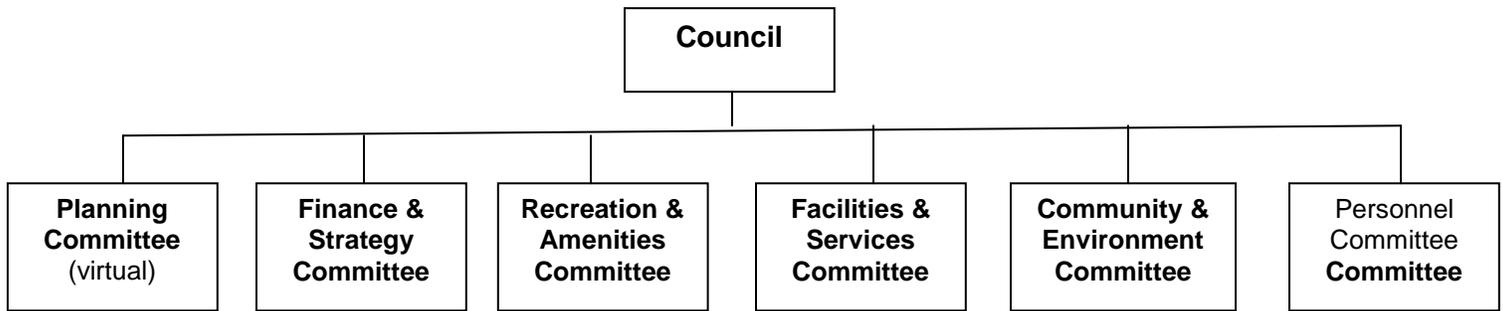
Member Development

Members bring a vast range of skills and experience to the table, however both local government and the business world are fast changing. The Council in recognition of this, are introducing a formal Development Programme for Members based on the following approach:

- Seminars & Workshops to raise general awareness of topical issues.
- Training or awareness raising prior to making a key decision or policy
- Skills development for individual members or groups of members.

During 2012-13, councillors were able to attend sessions as part of a strategic planning day on:
Localism Act and the Public Services White Paper
Strategic Thinking
Medium Term Financial Plans and concurrent functions
How to deliver Quality.

Committee Structure



Council has 6 standing committees. Finance and Strategy Committee and the 3 service committees meet on a quarterly cycle. Personnel Committee meets as and when business dictates. Planning Committee operates as a “virtual” committee, with members being consulted electronically on applications and committee meeting for contentious or strategic matters. All councillors are members of the Strategy Working Group which acts as a “think tank”, but is not a decision making body.

Each Committee has a Terms of Reference and specific delegation.

Financial Appraisal

This Corporate Business Plan is intended to be read alongside the 2013/14 Budget and emerging Medium Term Financial Plan.

As a result of consistent budgeting, particularly the regular provision of Capital Funds within the Precept, the Council is financially sound. The cost of settlement with the former Clerk, and the significant contribution to Phase 1 of Civic Centre (£127K), both of which have been met from General Reserve without jeopardising the council’s General Reserve minimum target (+/- £90K). The Council has more than adequate Earmarked and other Project Funds (£190K) to move into the future. Priority must be given to establishing a Medium Term Financial Plan as an essential part of strategic planning, and to assess the overall adequacy of the Project Funds currently being provided through the Precept. Detailed work on the Council’s Asset Register is necessary to bring it fully in line with best modern practice.

Sound Treasury Management, Investment & Borrowing policies have recently been put in place.

Key Achievements

The new Council has progressed quickly since May 2013, firstly by improving its governance and reviewing its operations and them by introducing new or improving existing services.

- Introduced Constitution, Standing Orders for Contracts, revised Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.
- Adopted Corporate Strategy
- Introduced a suite of policies to support the Corporate Strategy.
- Adopted Codes of Conduct for both Members & Officers and a joint protocol.
- Introduced Town Handyman Service
- Introduced Town Centre Manager
- Developed Communications and Marketing Policy
- Substantial training for Members & Officers
- Locked Park & gardens at night to reduce vandalism
- Reviewed standards in Park, play areas and green areas and introduced contract monitoring.
- Re-opened public toilets in Jubilee Park
- Increased public participation opportunities at meeting.

- Increased electronic distribution of committee papers, making all available to every councilor and on Web Site.
- Begun work on Heritage Centre.
- Committed to refurbishment of Main Hall and Changing facilities at Civic Centre

The Way Forward

The key actions for 2013/14 are set out below in Priorities and Targets. The Business Plan really is about ensuring the goals and actions set out in the Corporate Strategy “Time to Lead the Community 2013-2015” are delivered and properly resourced.

The Council is determined to provide strong community leadership, strengthening its local governance role in anticipation of gradually increased powers and a working partnership with Shropshire Council and local community organisations. It will also be involved in the provision of an increasing number of services either directly or in partnership, as resources allow. This will be on the basis of gap filling or adding value.

Whitchurch Town Council are determined to see the Town develop into a hub for the area, increasing sufficiently in size to attract investment, jobs, facilities and infrastructure. They will work closely with the planning authority and the community to determine where that growth will go and to prioritise investment in to the Town. Town Centre management will underpin the revitalization of the High street and the promotion of the Town

Sustainability and energy reduction are of growing importance both for the Council directly and for the Town as a whole. The Council will support community groups dedicated to promoting sustainability, preserving the local environment and pursuing a low carbon approach. As the Town develops over the 13 years of SAMdev, the Council will work with Shropshire Council to ensure sustainability and low energy are integral to the growth. In the longer term the Council will investigate the practicalities of becoming a Transition Town.

The Council will also look forward to working more closely with Shropshire Council and reaching agreement on the delivery and funding of local services and ownership of community assets.

The Council are developing a keen performance management approach, and will continue to report on progress against the Business Plan to each Council cycle and to secure both its status as a quality town council and its accreditation with Chamber Assure.

Lead Officers: TC= Town Clerk, ATC=Assistant Town Clerk/Town Centre Mgr, Con=Consultant, FM=Facilities Manager			
Priority 1	ENABLE MORE QUALITY AND SUSTAINABLE JOBS		
	<u>Conceptual Indicators</u>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. No increase in unemployment levels B. Additional Employment sites C. Increased tourism D. Increased number of businesses E. Reduction in empty shops 		
ACTIONS & OUTPUT TARGETS		LEAD OFFICER	DATE
1. <u>Working in partnership to create jobs</u>			
1.	Work with & support PIC to deliver Town and Parish Plan objectives to ensure new businesses are attracted to the Town and that existing businesses continue to thrive.	TC/ATC	To March 2014
2.	Support the delivery of the Shropshire Economic Growth Strategy 2012 in Whitchurch.	TC	To March 2014
3.	Facilitate the development of high quality business locations through neighbourhood planning and the SAMdev.	TC/Con	To March 2015
4.	Support improvements to business infrastructure including electricity supply to employment sites and next generation broadband, the Place Plan & Neighbourhood Planning.	TC	To March 2026
5.	Work with partners to develop a brand for Whitchurch and to promote Whitchurch Town as a place to live, work, shop and visit.	TC/ATC	To March 2014
6.	Support those without jobs to help them develop their skills and provide access to training, so as to improve their readiness for work.	TC/ATC	To March 2014
7.	Work with local training providers to help develop skill sets for the workforce by providing a venue.	TC/ATC	To March 2015
8.	Lobby for better adult education opportunities, to include vocational, academic and leisure courses.	TC	To March 2014
2. <u>Working to create a tourism hub</u>			
1.	Work with the Tourism Group to promote tourism and Whitchurch as a destination not to be missed, capitalising on our heritage and location to visit places of interest in the locality.	TC/ATC	To February 2014
2.	Work with the Tourism Group to deliver priority actions from the Whitchurch Tourism Strategy	TC/ATC	To February 2014
3.	Provide tourist information at the Heritage Centre until completion of the Civic Centre Phase 1	ATC	To February 2014
4.	Provide a new Tourist Information Point at Civic Centre	ATC	from February 2014
5.	Develop our parks and open spaces, to increase the tourist trade.	TC	To March 2015
6.	Develop the Town Council and Town/Tourism Websites with common image and links	ATC	June 2014

<p>3. <u>Working to create a successful and vibrant town centre</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We will work with partners to support retail businesses and promote the Town Centre. 2. Introduce a Town Centre Manager 3. Introduce a Handyperson service to help make the public realm more attractive. 4. Facilitate the Blackberry Fair. 5. Facilitate the Christmas Lights event 6. To work with partners to develop and promote the Farmers Market 7. Review the Friday market and revise Market Policy 8. Increase promotion of Market 	<p>ATC ATC Con ATC ATC ATC ATC/TC ATC</p>	<p>To March 2014 September 2013 October 2013 October 2013 November 2013 To March 2014 October 2013 To March 2014</p>
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<p>Priority 2</p>	<p><i>ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY AND GIVE YOUNG PEOPLE A REASON TO STAY</i></p> <p><u>Conceptual Indicators</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. No decrease in active community and voluntary organisations during Year B. No of volunteers in Friends of Whitchurch C. No of actions delivered from Town Plan D. New public disabled toilets delivered E. No. of young people on Youth Committee 		
<p>ACTIONS & OUTPUT TARGETS</p>		<p>LEAD OFFICER</p>	<p>DATE</p>
<p>1. <u>To support, develop and empower the community & voluntary sector</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support and help develop community and voluntary groups which assist us to achieve our goals and those of the Whitchurch Town and Parish Plan. 2. Establish a Friends of Whitchurch 3. Support the Whitchurch and Prees Local Joint Committee by appointing a Councillor to it. 4. Support Whitchurch Town and Parish Plan Implementation Group (PIC) in delivering the Action Plan. 5. Support communities having a greater input to the management of local services. 		<p>TC/ATC TC/ATC TC TC/ATC TC</p>	<p>To March 2014 August 2013 To March 2014 To March 2014 To March 2014</p>
<p>2. <u>To promote community cohesion</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Adopt an Equality policy to recognise and celebrate the diversity in the Town's communities. 2. Operate openly and share information through our website, community newsletter, notice boards and the media. 3. Promote fair trade in the Town. 4. Partner Shropshire Council in its neighbourhood working. 5. Ensure service accessibility to the deprived or hard to reach sectors of our communities. 		<p>Con TC TC/ATC TC/ATC TC</p>	<p>May 2013 To March 2014 To March 2014 To March 2014 To March 2014</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6. We will support better access and facilities for those with disabilities, including new disabled facilities at Park Toilets and Civic Centre 7. Help deliver increased housing, including affordable and low cost houses in SAMdev. 8. Engage the older generations by encouraging them to apply their knowledge and skills within both the workforce and 3rd sector, use their spending power within the Town as well as being an advocate for those in need 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TC TC TC/ATC TC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To March 2014 To March 2014 To March 2026 To March 2014
<p>3. <u>To promote health and fitness amongst our residents and workforce</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support the development of sport and leisure activities which promote a healthy life style, or engage young people. 2. Review Fitness provision in Jubilee Park 3. Lobby strongly for local health provision and services which are essential to or desired by our residents and work with enablers and providers on all health issues. 4. Encourage Health related activities in to our Civic Centre Complex. 5. Promote at least one health campaign through the year 6. Promote at least one home safety campaign during the year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TC TC TC ATC/FM TC TC TC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To March 2014 June 2014 To March 2014 To August 2013 February 2014 January 2014 December 2013
<p>4. <u>To give young people a reason to stay</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We will establish a Youth Committee and facilitate “young councillor” events. 2. Consult young people and take account of their views in developing policies and facilities. 3. Support youth organisations and facilities, and be an active advocate for improved services. 4. Keep young adults in the Town by encouraging more rewarding local jobs, improving leisure provisions and other activities and lobbying for sufficient affordable housing. 5. Support an improved range of formal and informal opportunities and facilities to better meet the needs of young people. 6. Introduce Film nights and live streaming of concerts into the Civic Centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TC TC TC TC TC TC/ATC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> December 2013 To March 2014 To March 2014 To March 2014 To March 2014 May 2014

<p>Priority 3</p>	<p>PROVIDE MORE HOMES TO MATCH NEEDS & ASPIRATIONS</p> <p><u>Conceptual Indicators</u></p> <p>A. More new homes B. More affordable homes C. More starter homes D. More energy efficient homes</p>		
<p>ACTIONS & OUTPUT TARGETS</p>		<p>LEAD OFFICER</p>	<p>DATE</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work closely with Shropshire Council through SAMdev to ensure we achieve target of 1700 new homes to meet the needs of residents and those wishing to move to the Town. 2. Ensure that there is a balanced development brief to include the various types of affordable homes, starter homes, self build and other homes to ensure retention and attraction of a workforce associated with the higher value industries and the particular needs of the young and elderly. 3. Commence preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan. 4. Maximise our share of the community Infrastructure Levy from development and also lobby Shropshire Council to use the new Community Infrastructure Levy creatively for the benefit of the Town through influencing the Place Plan. 5. Lobby to ensure that as the number of homes increases, proper provision is made for additional demands on services and infrastructure. 6. Lobby Shropshire Council and work with landlords to increase home conversions in Town Centre 		<p>TC TC TC TC TC ATC</p>	<p>March 2014 To March 2026 To March 2015 To March 2014 To March 2026 March 2015</p>

Priority 4	PROTECT AND ENHANCE THE LOCAL ENVIRONMENT AND CELEBRATE OUR UNIQUE HERITAGE <u>Conceptual Indicators</u> A. Lower energy consumption in Council facilities B. Lower Carbon footprint for Council C. More listed buildings improved D. More people visiting the Museum.		
ACTIONS & OUTPUT TARGETS		LEAD OFFICER	DATE
1. <u>Protecting and enhancing our Environment:</u> 1. Improve the public realm through the Civic Centre Phase 1 refurbishment 2. Reduce litter, fouling and graffiti through the Handyperson service 3. Promote the greening of our urban areas and ensure that planning takes account of the need to retain open green space and wildlife habitats. 4. Seek to influence others to look after our environment, through governance, responding to consultations and by example. 5. Act as advocates for alternative energy measures, as an integral part of development in the Town. 6. Improve energy efficiency in our own facilities and operations and where possible include alternative energy sources, including improved installation/ equipment to Civic Centre. 7. Review heating arrangements to the Heritage Centre. 8. Review heating arrangements to the Civic Centre 9. Support projects and organisations to address the challenge of climate change. We will comment on licensing and planning applications where consulted by the principal council. 10. We will be an advocate for the maintenance, improvement and protection of the natural environment and access to it. 11. Work with a range of partners on crime reduction and community safety initiatives. 12. Be an advocate for the development of community policing. 13. Support the principal council on emergency planning and disaster recovery.		TC FM TC TC TC TC TC/FM TC/FM TC TC TC TC TC	February 2014 To March 2014 To March 2014 To March 2014 To March 2014 To March 2014 January 2014 December 2013 To March 2014 To March 2014 To March 2014 To March 2014 To March 2014
2. <u>Protecting and enhancing our Heritage:</u> 1. Promote and support local heritage schemes in the Town and lobby to protect them where appropriate. 2. Lobby for a review of the Town Centre Conservation area and development of a Management Plan. 3. Support the reviews and maintenance of both listed buildings and development of a local list. 4. Develop a Design Guide as part of the Neighbourhood Plan. 5. Support the re-accreditation of the Museum 6. Determine the long term operational body for the Museum 7. Determine the long term location of the Museum		TC TC TC TC TC TC TC	To March 2014 To March 2014 To March 2014 December 2014 To May 2014 December 2013 January 2014

Priority 5	ENABLE BETTER TRANSPORT LINKS AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES		
	<u>Conceptual Indicators</u> A. More safer routes to Schools C. More users of events in Civic Centre E. More young people using the Park B. More cycle routes in Town D. More use made of CCTV evidence		
	LEAD OFFICER	DATE	
1. <u>To enable better transport links</u> 1. Facilitate the development of a Local Transport Strategy for Whitchurch to ensure all transport services meet the needs of all residents and businesses. 2. Campaign for an integrated transport system and encourage use of busses and trains 3. Provide up to date information on transport services available on our website and in printed form 4. Encourage in all new development, safe and convenient pedestrian and cycle routes in and around our Town 5. Be an advocate for improved public transport links and development of inter-modal links. 6. Help develop safer routes to schools 7. Seek to identify Whitchurch as a disability friendly town. 8.	TC TC ATC TC TC TC TC	March 2015 To March 2015 To March 2014 To March 2014 To March 2014 To March 2014 To March 2014	
2. <u>To develop better community facilities</u> 1. To re-open the public toilets in Jubilee Park. 2. To provide a Skatepark/Amphitheatre in Jubilee Park. 3. To improve CCTC coverage in the Park 4. To raise standards on all green areas through a revised Grounds Maintenance Output Specification 5. To re-let a re-packaged Grounds Maintenance Contract 6. We will seek to identify Whitchurch as a disability friendly town. 7. To upgrade the CCTV system in the Town 8. To let a new maintenance contract for streetlights 9. Redecorate Sports/Market Hall & toilets 10. Complete Phase 3 Facelift to Main Hall/Changing Rooms at Civic Centre 11. Prepare Vision for use of Civic Centre 12. Prepare funding Bid for Phases 2 & 4 at Civic Centre	TC/FM TC TC TC TC/FM/Con TC/ATC TC TC FM TC/FM TC TC	August 2013 April 2014 March 2014 April 2014 September 2014 To March 2015 December 2013 November 2013 February 2014 March 2014 January 2014 November 2014	

<p>Inward facing priority</p>	<p>DEVELOP THE POTENTIAL OF THE COUNCIL TO DELIVER LOCAL SERVICES AND EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP.</p> <p><u>Conceptual Indicators</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Excellent audit reports B. Retaining Quality Town Council Status C. Establishing an integrated quality system & action plan D. Reduced accidents E. Increased number of staff with key skills F. Increased external funding to Council 		
ACTIONS & OUTPUT TARGETS		LEAD OFFICER	DATE
<p>1. <u>To develop capacity and a diverse skill base within the Council</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop an active Member Training and Development Programme. 2. Deliver Member Training and Development Programme. 3. Undertake Business Risk Assessment. 4. Undertake Safety Risk Assessments & prepare Action Plans 5. Funding bids for Phase 3 at Civic Centre. 6. Appoint Town Clerk. 7. Review Staffing Structure 8. Develop a Staff Training and Development Plan. 9. Deliver the Staff Training & Development Plan 		<p>TC TC/Con TC Con TC Con Con Con Con TC/Con</p>	<p>June 2013 March 2014 February 2014 October 2013 October 2013 September 2013 September 2013 August 2013 To March 2014</p>
<p>2. <u>To deliver excellent services according to both need and consumer choice</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review services and facilities according to outcome based standards. 2. Open discussions about devolved services and funding with Shropshire Council to achieve local control and higher standards. 3. Become eligible and adopt General Power of Competence 4. Develop the Civic Centre as a service hub for the Town. 		<p>TC/Con TC/Con TC/Con TC</p>	<p>December 2013 August 2013 July 2013 February 2013</p>
<p>3. <u>To achieve high performance by taking a more integrated approach to management</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduce an Integrated Quality System and achieve level 1 accreditation 2. Retain Quality Town Council status. 3. Adopt Corporate Strategy after public consultation. 4. Prepare Business Plan 5. Have Performance Management system operational 6. Develop personnel policies and review conditions of service. 7. Adopt Medium Term Financial Plan 		<p>Con/TC TC Con Con Con Con Con</p>	<p>October 2013 March 2014 August 2013 August 2013 September 2013 July 2013 September 2013</p>

<p>4. <u>To have excellent communications and transparency</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review and revise Town Council Website. 2. Issue a newsletters at least quarterly 3. Review our Publication Scheme and publish an Information Guide 4. Publish an Information and Data Protection Policy 5. Review how residents can become more involved in our decision making 6. Report to each meeting on any decisions which have not been implemented 7. Report progress on our business plan to each meeting cycle 	<p>ATC TC Con Con Con TC TC</p>	<p>February 2014 October 2013 July 2013 June 2013 May 2013 May 2013 May 2013</p>

Appendix 1: S.W.O.T Analysis.

POSITIVE



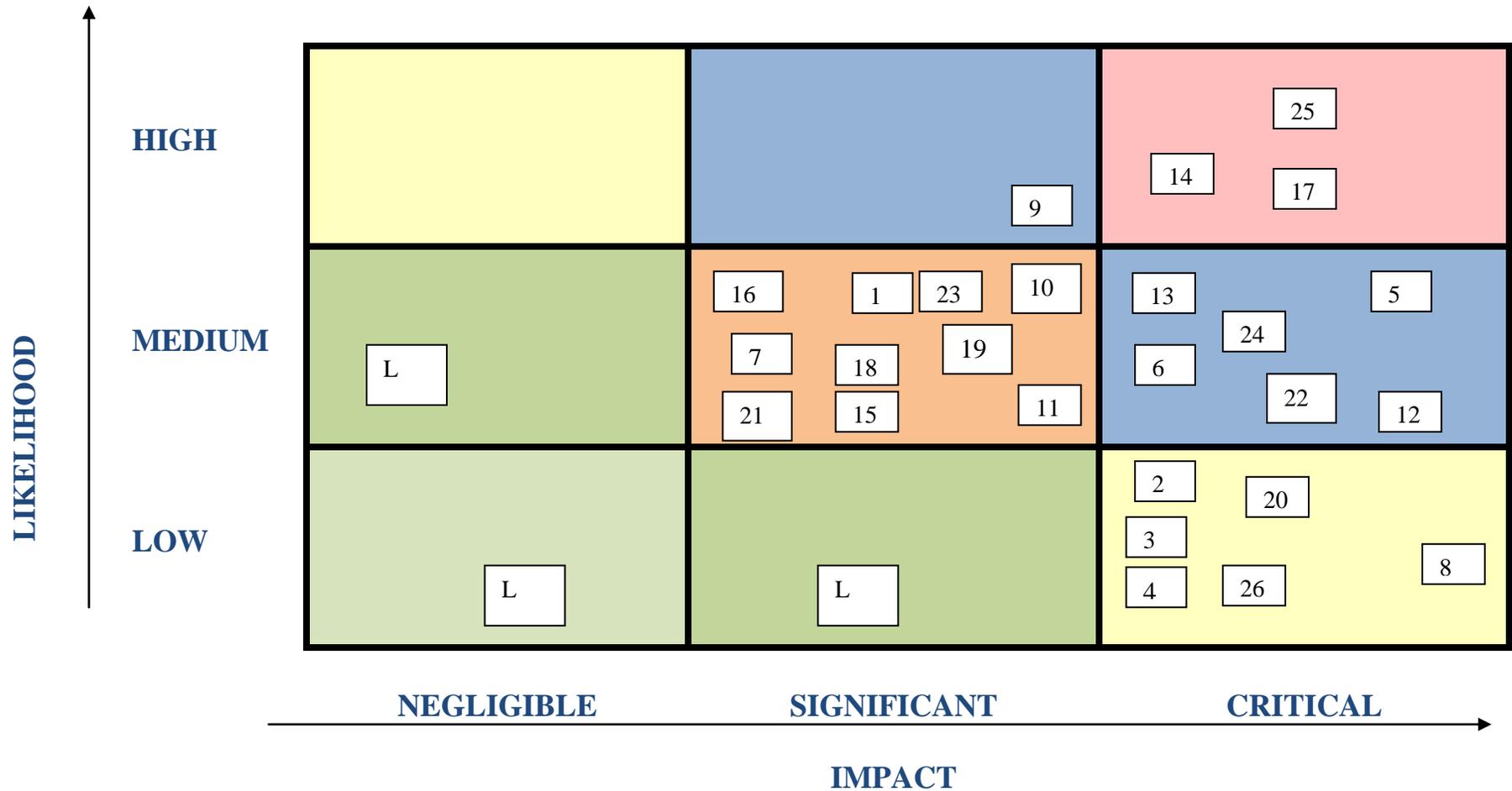
NEGATIVE



<p>INTERNAL</p>	<p>Strengths.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good track record working with other Councils & community groups. • Common Purpose. • Low cost, high quality life in Town. • Clearly defined boundaries. • Passion for Whitchurch. • Strong Voluntary Organisations. • Large and Successful organisations in the Town. (some are philanthropic) • Contributing local businesses. • Good sports clubs. • Play areas and civic facilities well maintained and used. • Great Heritage • Town has potential. • Location as a hub. • Transport Infrastructure. • Green and pleasant Environment. • Fantastic Primary Schools. • Contained politics, & good relationship with Unitary council • Council has sound financial base • Willing and able staff 	<p>Weaknesses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient local jobs. • Utility infrastructure. (electric/water/ drainage) • Community Apathy/negativity. • Poor secondary school, in special needs. • People who shop in the Town have a low spend. • No tertiary education. • Poor public perception of Town Council. • Difficult media relations. • Varying and differing perception of what being a Councillor is all about. • Management leadership lacking • Capacity of staff • Lack of vision, strategy & financial plan
	<p>EXTERNAL</p>	<p>Opportunities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism • Branding • Developing relationships with Shropshire Council. • New Council—New ideas. • Developing opportunities for the youth. • Development of SAMDEB. • Redundant building grant for high street shops. • Development opportunities for shops. • Localism opportunities. • CIL and neighbourhood plan. • Opportunity of support from large local industry.
<p>P.E.S.T</p> <p>A</p> <p>N</p> <p>A</p> <p>L</p> <p>A</p> <p>S</p> <p>I</p> <p>S</p>	<p>Political</p> <p>Government funding cuts to local government & communities Uncertainty of approach of coalition government to local councils (Localism Bill, Public Services White Paper) BANES not over committed to strengthening local councils</p> <p>Social</p> <p>Pockets of deprivation in a reasonably prosperous community Recession & public sector cuts biting residents & businesses Strong community spirit in Town Low interest in local government Social Media</p>	<p>Economic</p> <p>Weak national economy Consumer spending is low Effects of global economy Demand for grants outstrips availability Reduction in public spending in some critical areas Local wage rates low in Town</p> <p>Technological</p> <p>Fast developing e-technology More E-business as a method of trading IT soon becomes obsolete Social Media</p>

Appendix 2

Summary Map of Risks facing Whitchurch Town Council



There are also a number of low risk matters which have been assessed but require no action.

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KEY

1	Allotments-duty to provide if demanded, high cost	18	Newsletter/PR-cost to provide & general Marketing/communications
2	Committee Services-Procedures outdated, legal risks.	19	Play Areas-contract monitoring & Investment plan
3	Cost of bus shelters if take on	20	War Memorial-Inspection of Cenotaph.
4	Burial services-duty to take on closed church yards	21	Planning-Training, review procedures & Neighbourhood Planning
5	Crime Prevention-Civic Centre Security & CCTV maintenance	22	Public Lighting-New contract and specification.
6	Economic development & regeneration-cost to turn around	23	PublicToilets-Monitor & Supervise Contract
7	Employment-New legislation, review policies/procedures	24	Street Cleaning & Public realm –cost & obligations of new service
8	Entertainment & Arts-review security & Licensing	25	Civic Buildings- Phase 1 & Phase 2 Improvements, Bar contract, Lease liabilities.
9	Financial Management- Medium Term plan, Investment income. RFO, operating procedures. Asset Register. Trusts	26	Tourism-Moving TIC, Promotion of Town
10	Governance-review of documents, training, capacity		
11	Grants-demand & lack of policy		
12	Grounds maintenance-Monitoring. New contract & specification		
13	IT & Data Protection-FOI, review of processes		
14	Land Holdings & Landlord responsibilities for buildings		
15	Management Systems-Review of systems		
16	Markets-protection of charter. Develop Flea & Farmers markets		
17	Museum-powers, future operations & building.		