

LYDNEY FORWARD
CONSULTATION FEEDBACK REPORT
2021

DRAFT

produced by:

place

www.placestudio.com
email: info@placestudio.com
tel: 07837478699

This report was
produced by:

place

in collaboration with:



and:

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1. INTRODUCTION

This report has been prepared by Place Studio Ltd for Lydney Town Council (LTC). It provides a record of and summary of the initial community and stakeholder engagement held to inform the priorities for Lydney town centre regeneration through the Town Council's "Lydney Forward" initiative.

The purpose of the engagement is:

- to provide an evidence base of local knowledge and aspirations
- to address suggestions to help inform the future development of a town centre master plan and detailed regeneration strategy, and
- to identify both long and short term enhancement opportunities.

Report Structure

This report is structured as follows:

- Project context and background
- Approach and methodology
- Summary of findings
- Recommendations and next steps

The full set of verbatim responses received during consultation is provided at Appendix 1 and Appendix 2.

Background

In 2020 Lydney Town Council embarked upon its town centre regeneration initiative, establishing a dedicated town centre sub-committee to oversee its delivery. As an initial action, it produced a consultant brief to support delivery of three distinct components;

- i. Enabling stakeholder and community engagement within a process that would identify the town centre's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats and

identify priority actions that could stimulate and underpin the sustained vitality of Lydney town centre in response to reduced year on year falls.

- ii. Assisting in the establishment of an appropriate and bespoke business focused member organisation or Chamber of Commerce which would take a leading role in delivery of ongoing regeneration.
- iii. Advising on sources of future funding and potential programme costs for future phases, including production of the town centre master plan.

COVID-19

The impact of COVID 19 and associated restrictions has affected the regeneration initiative in three ways:

- i. Consultant appointment was delayed
- ii. The brief was amended to include priority measures to aid town centre recovery from COVID 19 impacts
- iii. The engagement approach and programme was tailored to be carried out using methods that complied with Government COVID 19 safety guidance

A copy of the revised project brief is included as Appendix 3 of this report.

Consultant Team Appointment

Place Studio was appointed as lead consultant in February 2021.

Place Studio (Vaughan Thompson, Georgina Perry and James Essery) - specialising in collaborative approaches to neighbourhood led placemaking and regeneration.

Place Studio were the lead consultant with particular responsibility for project and programme delivery and shaping all aspects of engagement.

To provide Lydney Town Council with a project team that responded as strongly as possible to the project brief, Place Studio collaborated with:

Streets Reimagined (Finlay McNab) - Specialising in collaborative approaches to street design and vitality.

Streets Reimagined had particular responsibility for analysis of high street environment and transport. Streets

Reimagined also led the design, procurement and curation of the Lydney Forward website.

Townswork (Gerald Milward-Oliver) - Specialising in enabling market town regeneration and locally based business support organisations

Townswork took lead responsibility for engagement with Lydney's business community and the shaping of a bespoke business organisation.

Place Studio Team Approach

At the start of the commission, the Place Studio team produced an approach and methodology to address each element of the Town Council's brief.

The approach, methods and outputs can be broadly summarised:

Stage 1: Analysis and Consultation

- Desktop research of previously published contextual material and previous Lydney regeneration initiatives.
- Initial "inception" fact finding and analysis validation meeting with Town Council Town Centre Sub Committee.
- Stakeholder Engagement 1; "Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats".
- Public awareness raising and initiative communication.
- Community Engagement; "Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats".
- Business stakeholder engagement to inform the optimum business organisation proposal.
- Analysis and consultation collated report

Stage 2: A Framework for Regeneration

- Collated schedule of quick win, medium and longer term initiatives to inform a coherent strategy and project planning.
- Potential sources of funding
- Business organisation proposal

Initial Desktop and Site Analysis

Each member of the consultant team undertook a section of analysis relevant to their particular role on the project.

This sub-divided analysis into evidence to inform community engagement and future master planning and evidence to support a viable proposal for supporting Lydney's business community.

Desktop analysis included review of published materials and links provided by Lydney Town Council as well as material resulting from further research by members of the team. This included a 2016 "Town Centre Urban Design Guidelines" undertaken by and submitted to the Town Council by local landscape architect Jo Johnson.

Lydney and its town centre was also visited by two members of the team who undertook an initial photographic survey of the town centre and an initial review of its business profile.

Accessibility Analysis

Lydney Town Council also commissioned "Accessible Gloucestershire" to undertake an accessibility study of the town centre, which has set out a number of recommendations to enhance access particularly for people with impaired mobility and disabilities.

This material informed the starting point for shaping key issues prior to the core project task of engagement with stakeholders and the wider community.

Publicity and Communication

Initiative Name

At the outset of the initiative LTC sub committee resolved that the initiative would be presented and promoted as “Lydney Forward”. This name would be used in all publicity, media and consultation material.

Communication Tools

In publicising Lydney Forward to local stakeholders, the community and key partners, LTC sub committee harnessed the following methods and tools:

Town Newsletter

Upon appointment of the Place Studio team an initial initiative information release was placed within the town newsletter which is delivered to all Lydney residents.

Posters and Flyers

Lydney Town Council produced and circulated A3 and A4 Lydney Forward posters and flyers to businesses and venues throughout the town centre as they were able to re-open as Covid 19 restrictions began to ease.

Stakeholder Emails and Letters

Information letters and emails (along with an invitation to a stakeholder event) were sent to known local stakeholders drawn from LTC consultation records. This included local community and partner organisations and Forest of Dean Council officers.

Letters were also hand delivered by LTC officers to all frontage business premises along the “high street”.

Engagement

The engagement took place between mid April 2021 and the end of July 2021.

There were two main streams of engagement:

- i. Stakeholder and community town centre SWOT analysis and generation of priority actions and suggestions. This is covered in Part 2 of the report.
- ii. Local Business engagement towards informing the optimum local business organisation. A summary of this distinct stream of engagement is addressed in Part 3 of this report.

PART 2:
TOWN CENTRE S.W.O.T. ENGAGEMENT

2. TOWN CENTRE S.W.O.T. ENGAGEMENT

Stakeholder Engagement

The stakeholder engagement that was undertaken involved a variety of approaches in order to:

- Maximise input from town centre businesses and other local stakeholders
- Undertake optimum engagement within changing COVID 19 restriction limitations
- Respond swiftly to changed local circumstances

Stakeholder Engagement Activities Undertaken:

- Town Councillor and Forest of Dean Officer Walking Workshop held on 23 April
- Stakeholder Workshop
- Door to Door Business Interviews (speaking to shopkeepers)

The report will contain a section describing the process and results of each of these consultation methods.

Town Councillor and Forest of Dean Council Walking Workshop 23 April

An initial fact finding “workshop” was held with Town Council Members of the Town Centre Sub-Committee and an invited officer from Forest of Dean Council (FoDC), who represented Destination Lydney Harbour.

The workshop was a pilot to inform the potential for and approach to future outdoor surveying and workshops with stakeholders and the community. But it was also an opportunity for Members and FoDC to highlight the issues, opportunities and ideas from their own perspectives.

The event was facilitated by two members of the Place Studio team. It was attended by the following Members and FoDC representative.

- Cllr Ann Hayley
- Cllr Walter Leach
- Cllr Richard Kemsley
- Richard Morgan FoDC (Destination Lydney Harbour)

The activity involved a survey, discussion and consideration of SWOT issues and suggestions whilst walking through the town centre from the Civic Offices at the western periphery to the junction with Union Street at its eastern gateway.

Each Member was also provided with a clip file containing mapping and blank paper to record comments.

Following the survey, participants returned to the Civic Office (car park) to hold a (socially distanced) discussion about:

- i. Overarching issues
- ii. Priority issues and projects
- iii. Potential quick win projects
- iv. Provide feedback on the session

A record of feedback is provided in Appendix 4.

Summary of Feedback

Feedback can be subdivided into two elements.

SWOT Feedback on the Town Centre

Feedback relating to the SWOT of the town centre was uploaded to the Lydney Forward website. This was done to “prime” the consultation with some initial comments upon which members of the community could add to. These comments are uploaded using a distinct log-in address and are therefore able to be distinct from wider community feedback.

Feedback to Inform the Feasible Preferred Approach to Stakeholder and Community Engagement

Walking the length of the town centre in both directions as well as holding conversations proved to be too ambitious within a 1hr -1hr.30min time-scale. It was resolved that any walking workshop / survey should be in one direction only.

People with less mobility were able to undertake the survey in sections by driving between points. However, this detached them from the main group and under COVID restrictions it would not be possible to accompany a person in a car. One facilitator would need to rendezvous with a person surveying in this way.

Due to the narrow and more difficult sections of foot way and heavy traffic flows, holding walking discussions was made difficult, especially when attempting

to do so when observing social distancing guidelines.

Note taking was possible using the hard backed files provided. However, the street was not conducive to pausing for note taking.

The SWOT questions performed well in seeking more detailed comments on areas and qualities within the town centre. It was suggested that there needed to be greater opportunity for stakeholders and the public to make higher level comments on the qualities and shortcomings of the town centre.

Weather conditions were good for the pilot workshop, but were the cause of cancellation of the initial stakeholder event.

Refreshments (water) were a valuable addition to the process.

Website

During the period of COVID 19 restrictions, the Government supported the continuation of communications and consultation with communities through safe online methods. Lydney Forward therefore adopted an online approach to engagement with the community.

To enable this Lydney Town Council built a bespoke project website and consultation platform at www.lydneyforward.com. This website was launched on 22 April 2021. It is planned to continue to enable people to engage with it until the end of July 2021.

The website was advertised via posters (with a QR code) and through local networks and social media channels.

The website contained:

- Information about Lydney Forward
- A summary of feedback about the town provided in previous community consultations in 2015/6.

- A portal for people to register and then post their feedback into an interactive map of the town centre.

When providing feedback, people were prompted to respond to three questions:

- i. What good qualities should be treasured and improved?
- ii. What don't you like and needs attention?
- iii. What ideas do you have to make Lydney town centre better for everyone?
- iv. Do you know of any town centre initiatives or projects that Lydney Forward should be aware of?

Feedback

On 30 June 2021

- 2564 Site Visits
- 135 posts from 82 participants
- Good Mix of Ages - 33% of respondents under 35

Key Themes

- Value and reconnection with landscape green space and nature
- Traffic and Pedestrian Safety
- Car Parking and Bus Station
- Information and Connections
- Value and celebration of heritage and civic buildings

A more detailed summary of online feedback is provided as Appendix 9 of this report.

A full record of feedback can be made available as an excel spreadsheet by contacting Lydney Town Council.

Stakeholder Workshop 21 and 28 May

Publicity

All publicity was undertaken at least two weeks before proposed stakeholder events. The key stakeholders whose details were available through the Town Council consultation database (from its 2016 consultation and NDP) were contacted by the Town Council and invited to attend the engagement sessions.

In addition, events were publicised throughout the town utilising leaflets and posters and online using social media alongside a dedicated website.

The Town Council also delivered individual invitation letters and a flyers to all business and service provider properties along the town centre frontages in early April.

Poor weather resulted in cancellation and rescheduling of 21 May event.

Initial Engagement Methodology

The initial plan for the session was to assemble the group of stakeholders for a briefing and to perform a SWOT analysis of the “Big Issues” affecting Lydney. Following this a walking workshop was planned to observe and identify more specific issues and opportunities.

Revised Engagement Methodology

Due to COVID 19 restrictions and other factors, the response to invitations was poor and turnout was low. To secure a meaningful level of feedback, a different strategy was shaped and utilised. This ran two activities in parallel.

- i. Stakeholder workshop for those who did attend
- ii. Door to door outreach business interviews

Three teams were formed to perform the engagement exercise, each team consisting of a Lydney Town Council member and a consultant from Place Studio. One team led the briefing and static workshop while the two remaining teams undertook business interviews.



Fig. 1

Figure 1 Key

1. SWM Builders Merchants
2. Hips Social
3. Bargain Booze Plus
4. Ardens Estates
5. Aroha Properties
6. Halo Hairdressers
7. Lydney Laundrette
8. Ferino & Partners Estate Agents
9. Poppies Florist
10. Han Barbers
11. Cavendish Dry Cleaners
12. McCullagh A K & Sons
13. Imagitech Ltd.
14. Furniture Recycling Project
15. Willowdean Gifts
16. Coventry Building Society

Static Stakeholder Workshop

Stakeholders were asked to meet at the local community centre. From here there was a briefing of the aims and objectives of the workshop and following this the participants were split into two working groups.

The working groups were each then tasked with producing a tabletop SWOT analysis of Lydney town centre. This analysis focussed on identifying key issues and opportunities that were important to the participants. Additionally the participants were asked to identify any quick wins for the town. These were recorded by participants using a combination of post-it notes and pens on large sheets. Further to this the participants were asked to annotate local maps at a variety of scales to identify further strengths and weaknesses. The verbatim notes from this session are available in Appendix 1.

Outreach Business Interviews

Alongside the static workshop business interviews were conducted. These interviews were conducted by two teams consisting of a Lydney Town Councillor and a consultant from Place Studio. The two groups worked from each end of the High Street to ensure coverage of the entire street. Businesses surveyed are shown in Figure 1 (left).

The business interviews were undertaken by utilising simple questions to ask business owners and where owners were unavailable, their staff, to identify what they viewed as:

- Lydney's biggest positives
- The Town's biggest issues to be tackled
- Opportunities and Ideas for making the town and business more successful

An in depth methodology of the interviews is available in Appendix 5 of this document.

Summary of Responses

The following is a summary by Place Studio of the comments that were made during the consultation. Key themes were identified from the responses to the static workshop and the business interviews. These themes have then formed the headings for organising this section of the report.

“We should encourage more independent shops and food outlets to come to Lydney to create a more diverse high street”

Local Economy

It was identified that Lydney is well positioned to draw in trade and business from a wide area and benefits from a significant amount of passing trade. Business in the area is diverse.

The area does however suffer from a high turnover of businesses and business owners and managers stated that they felt there was a lack of communication between businesses in the area. In addition to this residents, while acknowledging the value of local independent business, felt there was a lack of large national and international businesses in the area meaning they had to travel often to meet their needs.

It was clear from responses that local businesses would like to see more sharing of business ideas and promotion of local businesses throughout the wider area to bring in potential customers from outside of Lydney itself.

Environment

Many respondents spoke of how much they valued the local green spaces and natural environment. The parks and the lake were the most commonly identified assets across all interviewees. The harbour and river were also mentioned as key local strengths along with local walks.

It was also noted that there are some issues with legibility in regards to these assets. The stakeholders identified that they would like to see stronger connections between the town and its river. Respondents also identified that they would like to see an improved connection between the high street and the parks (see Figure Two). Improved signage was suggested as one option to help remedy this.

Other notable mentions were the poor air quality due to the high volume of traffic, lack of flood protection and a lack of electric vehicle charging facilities.

*“Lydney’s parks
and green spaces
are a huge asset
to the town”*

*“Riverside seating to
provide a more robust
connection between
waterway and the
town.”*



Fig. 2

Community

The community spirit in Lydney was mentioned time and again with residents proud to speak of how friendly local people are and that people say “Hello” to each other in the streets. Some valued community hubs were identified in particular Taurus Crafts and Lydney hub. There were some concerns about people becoming isolated, which has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. It was also identified that there was a demand for some more community based clubs for example a gardening club and seed exchange.

*“There is too much traffic
which is too noisy”*

Transport

Transport in Lydney is a major point of friction within the community. Alongside praise for the park, dissatisfaction with the traffic and transport situation in Lydney was one of the most frequently mentioned issues during consultation.

T.1 Traffic

It is felt that the speed, volume, and physical size of traffic for Lydney High Street is too high. While the bypass is a valued asset it is noted by many that it is not being used due to the need for many larger 8 wheel trucks requiring access to the Forest which is not possible via the bypass. These trucks are instead using the High Street (see Figure 3) to the detriment of the overall experience of Lydney Town Centre. The junction at the Tesco supermarket was also identified as a major problem in regards to congestion. Some respondents suggested traffic lights at the Tesco junction could be a quick win to improve this area. One

business owner also suggested that speed cameras would be a welcome addition to the High Street to help control the speed of traffic.

T.2 Roads and Cycle infrastructure

The roads in general were identified as needing improvement with regard to potholes. The cycle path was identified as an asset by some but others felt like it was still too dangerous for them to use. It was also noted that there is no secure cycle storage to support the cycle infrastructure. The roads (along with their accompanying pavements) were seen to be too narrow to support their current use. Several respondents suggested a scheme of pedestrianisation could be explored with regard to improving the safety and quality of the high street.

"One of the things holding Lydney back is the volume of fast traffic on Newerne and High streets. It's not a nice place to shop. could there be another way to reduce the traffic?"

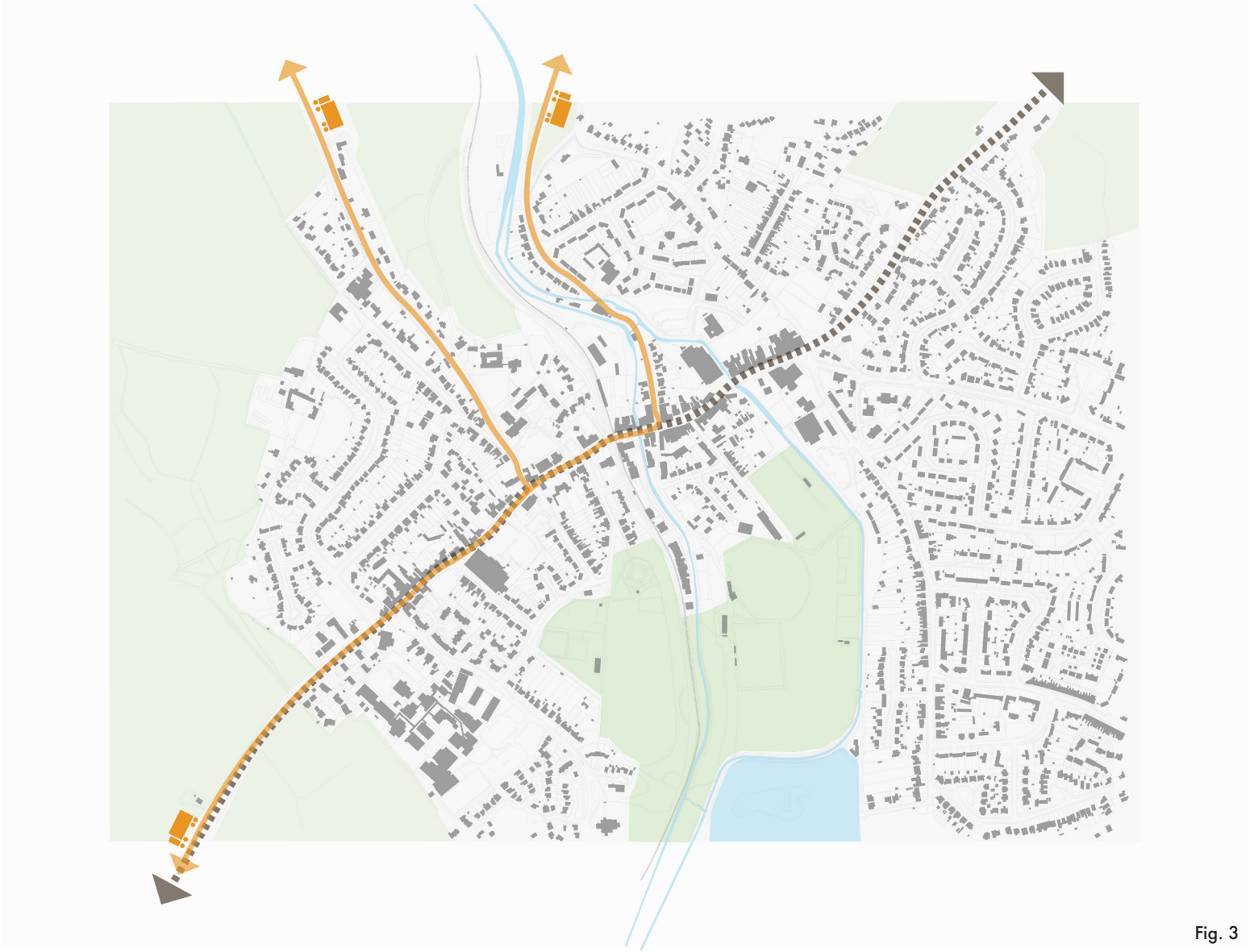


Fig. 3

T.3 Parking

While there was praise for the volume of parking available in Lydney there was some dissatisfaction with where it was located and the cost to use it. Residents and business owners felt that illegal on street parking was an issue and wished to see more traffic wardens.

T.4 Public Transport

During the consultation the bus station was identified as a valued asset to the town. However it was also mentioned that people felt that the transport network was disconnected. Additionally the bus stops were identified as needing improvement in regard to positioning and aesthetics. Local residents would also like to see improvements to the transport networks in regard to making them suitable for use by children and young people. A dial-a-ride service for taking younger children to local facilities was suggested. It was also raised that stronger public transport links to nearby major hubs would be

beneficial to youths looking to travel out of town, enabling them to gain some independence.

T.5 Crossing Points

Crossing the high street was viewed as difficult for many with some respondents suggesting that more crossing points were needed. In particular it was suggested that there should be a crossing point outside the Co-Op and a Zebra crossing at the bottom of Highfield Road hill.

“Buy the car park from the District Council, take over the toilets, make it the permanent home of the market and encourage new traders”

Retail

The retail offering in Lydney is an area that respondents had a lot of praise for but also many suggestions for improvement.

R.1 Current Retail offering

The local community felt that there were too many hairdressers and charity shops. Many also mentioned that the current shop fronts were looking “tired” and “scruffy” and there was concern around the number of empty units. One of the more common quick win suggestions was to improve the High Street shop fronts.

R.2 Aspirations for larger chains

In general the local community has aspirations for larger national and international businesses to open shops in Lydney. While it was often mentioned that the independent local businesses were of value, many respondents stated that they wished to see the larger businesses arrive

in Lydney. There was general praise for the arrival of B & M, Greggs and the soon to come Lidl store with others going further in saying that they hoped for more chain stores to arrive on the high street. Particular mentions include; Asda, Iceland, Costa Coffee and Superdrug.

R.3 Local Market

It was not just the larger businesses that were desired for Lydney however and the lack of a local greengrocer was identified as an opportunity for the high street. To expand on this support was also shown for a local farmers and craft market for local produce.

Hospitality And Entertainment

Local independent coffee shops and cafés were identified as an asset to the town. Many of those interviewed stated that they would travel out of town if they were looking to meet friends or have a meal out. This was due to a lack of restaurants and bars in Lydney. It was stated many times that locals would like to see more of an offer in this area. Ideas for improvements in this area included the potential for a restaurant by the lake.

The lack of cinema in the town was highlighted as a potential quick win by respondents.

It was also noted that there was a lack of accommodation for tourists in Lydney and that tourism in general could be supported more to help boost the local economy.

Sports and Leisure

Sports and leisure facilities within Lydney were identified as strong local assets that people were happy with. There were particular positive mentions of the yacht club, leisure centre and the facilities in general.

Schools

The quality of schools was mentioned as a positive aspect of Lydney. There was a mention that the Primary School provision was lacking. There was also a perception that large amounts of new housing were on the horizon for Lydney and a concern that local facilities such as the schools, doctors and urgent care could become overwhelmed.

Signage and Street Furnishings

Several respondents wanted to see more seating available around the town. More bins were cited as another quick win in this area.

There was a lot of praise for the local planting and many supported seeing more. Signage and way finding were identified as an area of improvement for the town and many felt improved way finding could help to connect the town with its park, harbour, natural and heritage assets.

“Street clutter and signage in combination with narrow footpaths creates pinch points. Can be difficult to traverse.”

Logistics/Layout of the Town

The layout of the town presents both strengths and weaknesses. The linear high street was highlighted as a positive feature by business owners however the migration of the centre of the town toward the east has resulted in clusters of activity separated by dead zones. This is exacerbated by the topography of the high street sloping toward the east.

Many residents identified the lack of a clear town centre or town square as something they would like to see improved.

The separation of the harbour, the parks and the high street were highlighted as something to be improved upon, improved signage was a common suggestion.

“It has long been suggested that Lydney needs a focal point, or a town square”

“The High Street feels fragmented.”

- Entertainment Quarter
- Historic Centre
- Park
- Current Centre



Fig. 4



Fig. 5

Additional Community Engagement

Resulting from the relaxation of the COVID-19 regulations the Town Centre sub-committee resolved to supplement the existing community engagement with an on street drop-in event. The intention of this event was to capture the views of any local community members and residents that may not have been reached using the other methods.

Methodology

The event was arranged to allow the public to vote on matters relating to Lydney that they identified with. Attendees were asked to identify:

1. Things that they love about Lydney
2. Priorities for change in the short term
3. Priorities for change in the long term

Using the information gathered from previous engagement events a number of options were identified and presented to the public to choose from. The participants were asked to choose the three options they identified with the

most from each section of the given lists. Additionally the participants were given the opportunity to identify their own options under a "what have we missed section?".

The attendees were able to participate in two ways:

1. Tabletop material was produced with the options for voting available on large A1 sheets of paper. Pens were provided and the participants were encouraged to place ticks next to their top three choices. Post-it notes were also available for the participants to add their own ideas.
2. Facilitators were given clipboards with questionnaires containing the same questions and options that were available on the tabletop material. Space was also provided on the questionnaires for participants to add their own suggestions and ideas as with the tabletop material. See Appendix 8 for questionnaire.

Large presentation boards were also produced to draw in attention of passing members of the public and to explain the intentions of the event, outline the mission of the Lydney Forward initiative and to provide examples of the issues being discussed.

The event was supported by two facilitators from Place studio in collaboration with Town Council members. There were a minimum of 4 facilitators available throughout the session enabling good engagement with passers by.



PHO.1

Attendance

Attendance was good with over 65 responses received. Some from individuals and some from small groups who worked together to complete their answers.

Event Feedback

Overall people responded well to the event, the participants were motivated to have their opinions heard. The prompts provided were well received and people identified strongly with them.

The clipboard questionnaires were popular and enabled multiple facilitators to run discussions with the participants simultaneously. This proved to be invaluable during busy times. Allowing participants to use post-it notes to present their own ideas was valuable and well used with the A1 tabletop material providing a good base for this.

The large graphic boards proved to be valuable for drawing in eyes and giving an overview of the goals and purpose of the event.

Publicity

The event was publicised via the lydneyforward.com website alongside the Lydney Town Council and social media. It was held in prominent central location with large displays to attract passing members of the public.



PHO.2

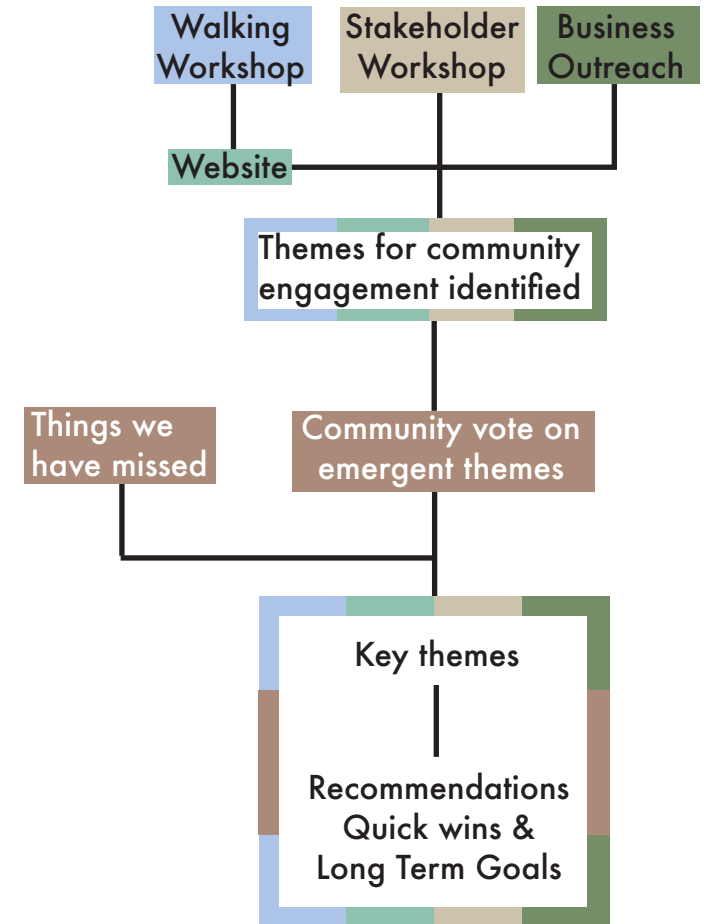


Fig. 6

Results

The following pages will showcase the results of the public votes in chart form allowing for clear understanding of the popularity of the individual priorities of the people of Lydney. This is followed by a summary of the responses drawing out the emergent themes.

WHAT DO YOU LOVE ABOUT LYDNEY?

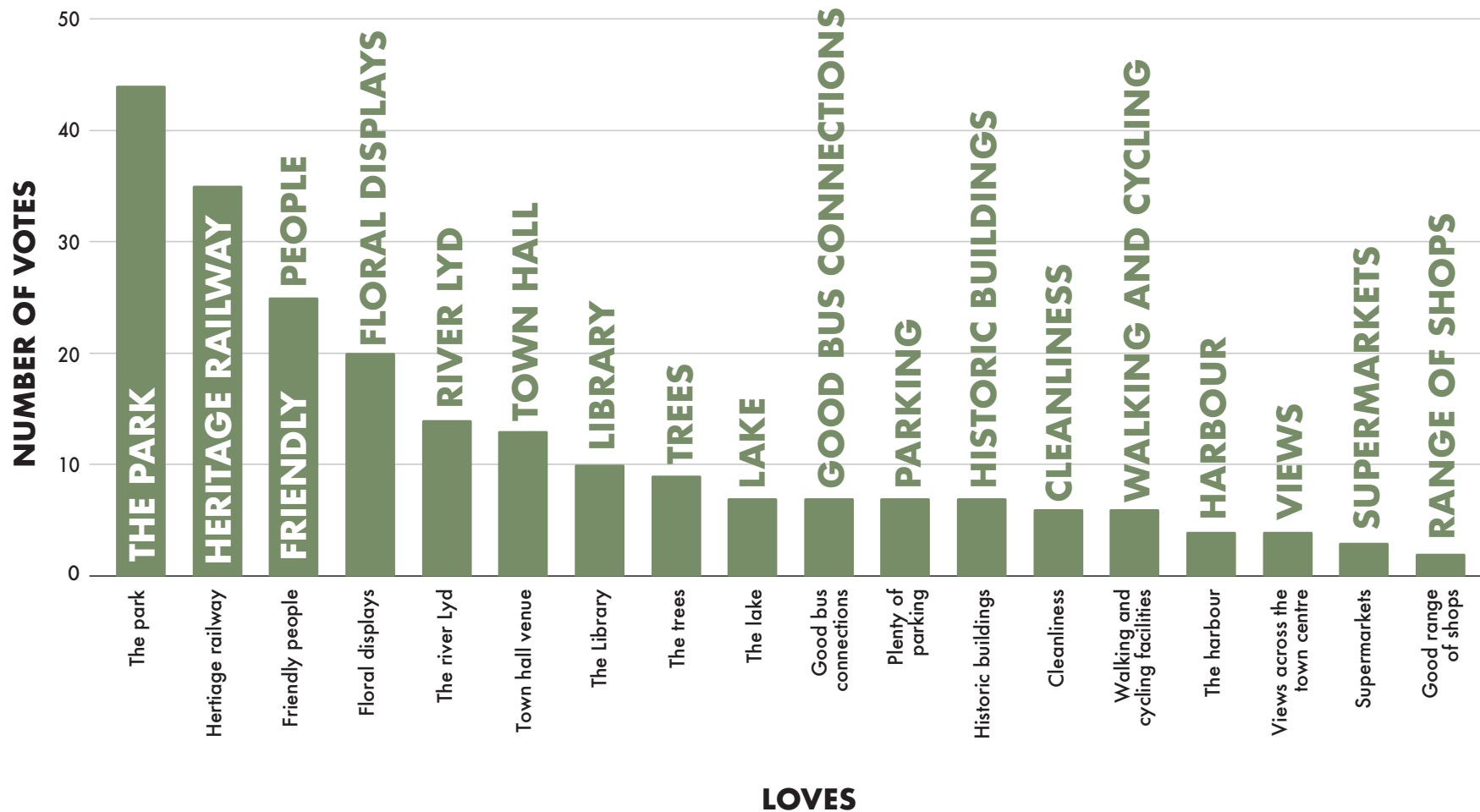


CHART 1 - WHAT DO YOU LOVE ABOUT LYDNEY - RESULTS

SHORT TERM PRIORITIES FOR CHANGE

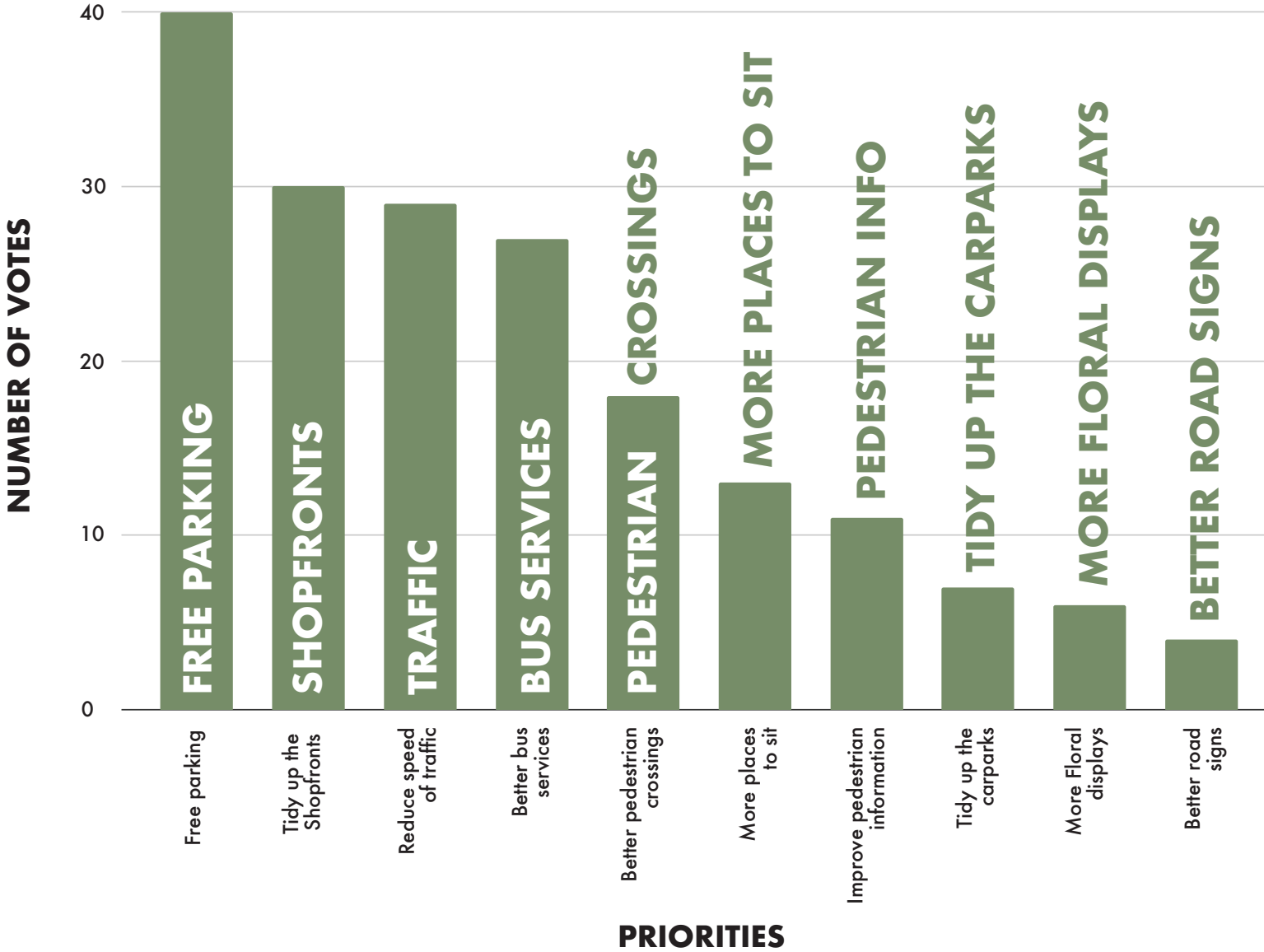


CHART 2 - SHORT TERM PRIORITIES FOR CHANGE - RESULTS

LONG TERM PRIORITIES FOR CHANGE

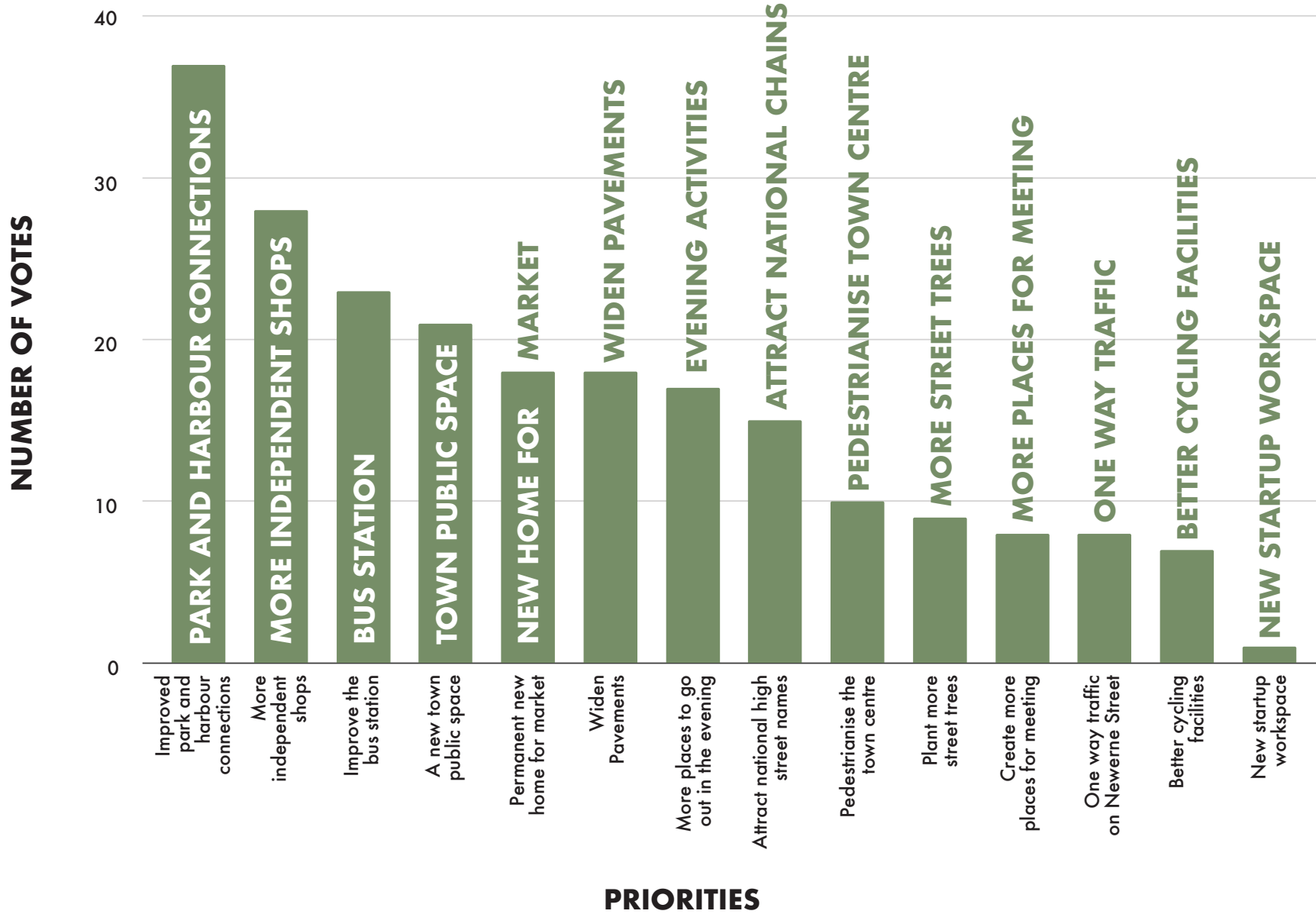


CHART 3 - LONG TERM PRIORITIES FOR CHANGE - RESULTS

Things we have missed

The full range of verbatim responses received in response to the request for “things we have missed” can be found in Appendix 6. There were a total of 24 suggestions of things we missed.

The responses can be categorised into the following categories:

Local services

There is concern amongst Lydney residents that the expansion of Lydney’s residential offering has the potential to overwhelm existing services in particular healthcare and education.

Access and getting around

Dissatisfaction with the quality of roads and pavements in particular potholes was raised with five mentions. Second to this was mentions of the large eight wheeler lorries that use the High Street in Lydney echoing views expressed in

earlier consultation, that they are too big, too frequent and too loud for the High Street. Many also stated they would like to see a “re-think” of how the bypass functions.

Business

As is highlighted from the “long term priorities” section in this report it can be seen that there is desire for an improved range of shops. Some respondents went further to suggest the types of shops they would like to see, many mentioned clothes shops, other mentions included a greengrocer and a butcher.

Others had suggestions of how to support the existing businesses and attract new ones with suggestions of more favourable business rates and a rent freeze.

Utilisation of Lydney’s natural features

Lydney’s natural features were high on the priorities lists of respondents. The lake and harbour received seven and four votes respectively for being the things respondents loved most about Lydney despite not being featured on the list of prompts. Improvements to the lake and strengthening the connection between the river and the high street were two of the highest scoring “things we missed”.

Further to this the local walks around the surrounding area were highlighted as an asset to the town. People felt that a resource that catalogues and presents these would be beneficial to local residents but also would help to promote tourism in the area.

Summary of Responses

The following is a summary by the Place Studio of the feedback and responses received from the community consultation drop in session. The summary will discuss the emergent themes which members of the public identified most strongly with.

Things you love about Lydney

There was a strong expression of appreciation for Lydney's natural environment with The Park, the river Lyd and the Dean Forest Heritage Railway all scoring a high number of votes from participants. In addition to this the Lake and the Harbour were both the highest mentioned "things we missed" that people love about Lydney. The friendly people and community spirit of Lydney had the third highest number of votes.

It is worth noting that many participants expressed a fondness for the river while highlighting they would like to see more done to celebrate the river and connect it to the town.

Short Term Priorities for Change

When participants were asked what they would like to see improved in the short term there is a clear trend towards the logistics of access and getting around Lydney.

Four of the top five priorities for change are related to getting around the town. Availability of free parking gained the most votes with the speed of traffic on the High Street and difficulty crossing the high street also scoring high numbers of votes. There was also a strong desire to see the bus services improved.

The second highest voted short term priority for change was the need to improve the shop fronts in Lydney. Many participants voted they would like to see the shop fronts tidied up and also mentioned to facilitators verbally that they felt the shop fronts were out of date and looked tired and dirty.

Long Term Priorities for Change

The long term priorities for change saw a much smaller spread in the number of votes for each option.

Strengthening the connections between the Town Centre, the park and harbour received the most votes by a margin with comments on the questionnaires putting particular emphasis on connecting the harbour to the town and the perceived benefits this would bring for tourism in the town.

There was a strong desire to see support for more independent shops with questionnaire comments mentioning a desire for more variety in the types of shops, clothing shops being mentioned in particular a number of times.

Many participants were in support of a new public space for the town. Many stated to facilitators that they felt there was a lack of a meeting and gathering space in the town.

Conclusion

The opinions expressed in the community on street drop-in session largely echo those that were received during the earlier stages of engagement. This shows that there is a general consensus of what the issues facing Lydney are across a range of stakeholders and the general public.

Clear themes have arisen and can be categorised into the following stand out themes:

- i. Transport and Connections
- ii. Environment
- iii. Value and Image

PART 3:
**A NETWORKING FORUM FOR
LYDNEY BUSINESSES?**

3. A NETWORKING FORUM FOR LYDNEY BUSINESSES?

Introduction

At the outset of the Lydney Forward project in the early Spring of 2021, a separate stream of work was agreed with Lydney Town Council focusing on the potential and scope for a new business networking group. This has been handled by Gerald Milward-Oliver of Townswork, as part of the Place Studio team.

While the initial focus of Lydney Forward has been on Lydney residents and their relationship with the town centre, the focus for the business networking project has been businesses across the whole of Lydney, including the business estates off Station Road and Harbour Road, down to Lydney Harbour.

It was clear from the outset that a simple consultation process would not be achievable – primarily because businesses were entirely focused on surviving the economic consequences of the pandemic. Online or mailed questionnaires were likely to stay at the

bottom of the action pile (if they even reached the action pile!); group meetings and even one-to-one meetings were either illegal or impractical.

It was also self-evident that there is no central repository of knowledge and understanding of the depth, breadth and extent of businesses in the town. There was no foundation on which a business networking group or organisation might be built. The question then became one of understanding relevant immediate past history and how a foundation and framework might be constructed that could foster a business networking group.

Step One: Previous Initiatives

In order to understand the context within which any business group might be proposed and set up, it was essential to understand relevant work in the immediate past, based on desktop document and web research. However, after consulting with the Town Clerk (and he consulted with members of the Town Improvement Sub-Committee), it became clear that a number of initiatives proposed in these documents did not bear fruit and there is no collective memory of how or why they failed.

The core document in this respect was probably the **Lydney Town Centre Community Economic Development Plan**, dated March 2016. This comes across as a detailed and expansive programme covering social, economic and environmental criteria needed to develop Lydney “as a thriving, prosperous, safe, integrated and socially inclusive attractive market town”.

A couple of quotes:

- “Lydney has a strong, independent retail offering however it lacks focus within the town centre.”
- “Local businesses have identified a shortage of good quality/primary office space. This is reflected by Forest of Dean District Council’s studies which highlighted the need for modern office accommodation, and the demand for small, flexible units which also require consideration.”
- “The community would like the town centre to become a hub for new experiences and opportunities, employment and a destination where residents and visitors alike want to spend quality time.”

The Forest of Dean District Council Allocations Plan 2006-2026

(adopted June 2018 but some of it written in 2015) also has relevant pointers to how the business community might evolve:

- “... the change in focus that is being promoted for Lydney ... requires a new policy stance to encourage a wider range of high quality employment with an increased emphasis on tourism and recreation.”
- “The existing industrial areas are important and the Plan will support their further development. In addition large new areas are set aside for employment generating uses... They are suitable for a wide range of uses and are likely to be developed over a relatively long time period.”

The **Lydney Neighbourhood Development Plan** (October 2015) emphasised the importance of the town centre and of local industry and included a range of ambitions and objectives, but did not include any detail on how those would be achieved.

However...

There were a number of additional elements highlighted by the Lydney Economic Development Plan that have caused concern, particularly those involving specific actions but where there is no collective memory within the Town Council as to why no actions appear to have been taken.

For example:

- “Currently a report is being prepared by under-graduate students of the University of Gloucestershire on the economic health of the town and includes a commentary for the local businesses. The final report is expected in April 2016.” (p.7) There is no awareness of this report within the Town Council.
- “During January and February 2016 the Draft CED Plan was developed with further discussion and feedback from the working groups and with key community stakeholders including

Lydney Town Council full council meetings and NDP Steering Group meetings. Technical support available through the CED programme has been sought from the New Economics Foundation (NEF) and Locality to help formulate ways to develop a community CED group which is committed to engaging and delivering the proposed actions." (p.9) Again, there is no awareness of support received from the NEF.

- "Funding will be sought for a 'needs assessment' to ascertain whether Lydney requires an Enterprise Hub. If evidence of 'need' and sound potential economic outputs are established they will be used to inform the development of a three tier countywide business support structure to be established during the 2016-2017 fiscal year." (p.10) There is no awareness whether or not a needs assessment was conducted, nor whether any conclusion was reached about the creation of an

enterprise hub in the town.

- "More consultation is required with businesses located on Lydney's industrial and business sites." (p10) No awareness of whether or not this consultation took place.
- "Tourism plays an important role in supporting the local economy and this is recognised in the need to provide a clean, safe attractive environment, a warm welcome for visitors, and a clear description of what the town has to offer and information on how to find it... Further study into this topic will be required in order to prioritise options and provide greater focus." (p.13) No awareness of any further action taken.

A further concern is the inclusion in Appendix two of the Economic Development Plan of a 2015 draft brief for a **Chamber for Economic Development**, with the brief to: "to improve and increase the economic prosperity and opportunities for Lydney,

its businesses and its residents". (It was made clear that this was a community-wide programme and NOT a Chamber of Commerce.)

The headline elements were:

- Redevelopment of the town centre
- Environmental improvements in the town centre
- Actions to improve both the tourism provision and the value obtained from tourism
- Creation of a business cluster for high value businesses
- Supporting knowledge based industries
- Providing support for entrepreneurs
- Improving educational provision to provide:
 - i. Greater opportunities for the local population
 - ii. Improved local skill set for local industry.

Again, there is no collective memory of this initiative and no knowledge of who was involved or what happened.

Finally, Appendix one of the 2016 Community Economic Development Plan was a report from two working groups: Employment & Dynamism, and Shops & Marketing. It is worth noting the introductory remarks:

- “Neither the Employment & Dynamism Group nor Shops & Marketing Group have met. No response was received from those volunteering to join these working groups for an initial set-up meeting... After several reminders, which only produced one response turning down all of the dates, a draft overview was circulated that suggested theme objectives, outputs, outcomes and timescale as a basis for defining theme actions and lead roles from within the groups. No comments or observations were received from any of the potential

group members. An approach to key business influencers failed to attract participation.”

It is also worth noting a comment in this Appendix about past initiatives:

- “No formal survey or consultation has been undertaken by the Group in order to avoid duplication with that already undertaken by the NDP Steering Group but desktop research has identified a considerable number of strategies and plans for Lydney dating back to 1999 covering, it seems, every conceivable economic, environment and social aspect required to drive the town forward. Small scale improvements have been made as a result but some of the major issues raised in the past remain.

These points have not been raised as a criticism, but to underline the current position.

Step Two: An Understanding of the Current Business Community

The next step was to pull together a list of businesses in the town, so that we could identify business owners/leaders who the Town Council considered would be likely to have a viewpoint. This might be someone from one of the major employers or a self-employed individual, but above all the need was to find engagement from individuals known to be creative in their thinking, forward-looking, good networkers etc.

However, it became clear that there is no existing channel of communication between the Town Council and the business community as a community – particularly those many and important (from a local employment perspective) businesses away from the town centre.

We therefore spent time building an initial list from desktop research as well as on-the-spot research across the town.

Data sources included:

- Lydney Harbour Estate entrance listing panel
- Lighthouse Trade Park entrance listing panel
- Mead Lane Industrial Estate entrance listing panel
- Marina Park entrance listing panel
- Appendix one of the 2020 Town Centre Audit prepared by Forest of Dean District Council
- (use class list 2020) – principally town centre
- Miscellaneous business directory websites.

The list contains 284 businesses, but we know that the listing is not up-to-date and it will exclude a range of businesses that rarely make the directories – e.g. home-based businesses (not paying business rates), freelancers etc. The list will doubtless also change post-COVID as the shake-out of those who managed to

survive successive lockdowns is resolved.

The updating of the list and populating of the data details (e.g. company name, nature of business, address, website, telephone, contact, contact email etc) is not feasible within the current agreement and may be best handled by, for example, an intern employed by the Town Council.

We understand the important role played by the Forest of Dean District Council in the economic health and development of its towns. In Lydney, their focus is on the Destination Lydney Harbour Project – a major opportunity which will have a significant potential benefit for the town as a whole. In the past couple of years, the Lydney Coastal Community Team has made a number of successful bids – including £2.1m for infrastructure improvements as well as an information point, toilets and café, together with the Gfirst LEP-funded Links Lydney Cycle

Step Three : Is a Town-Centred Business Network Feasible?

Improvement Scheme, completed in early 2020.

A core element of the harbour development project is the multi-million pound tourism and food hub planned by Severn and Wye Smokery owner Richard Cook at the 11.8ha. derelict Pine End Works beside the harbour. Although we understand dates for construction have yet to be set, when completed the combination of the Smokery and the renovated Harbour area is bound to have a multiplier impact leading to further investment.

Based on the research conducted in Steps One and Two, and our own experience, we have come to a workable conclusion that a town-centred business network is feasible, but based on a number of core criteria:

- Our sense is that the business community (particularly away from the town centre) does not know the Town Council or have much, if any, interaction with the Council. This is in part because the most significant and relevant economic/business activity comes from the District and County councils. Given this – as well as the history of plans in the recent past, as outlined above – we do not believe it is practical or desirable to propose a Town Council-led initiative.
- However, the Town Council should be a key player with others in helping get the project off the ground. Once a network is established, then the Town Council's role could be as patron as well as a member.
- It is to be hoped that the District Council will be able to play a core role from the outset, in particular given its role in providing business support and advice, and in developing and promoting economic development initiatives.
- Links should also be established with the Forest Economic Partnership (FEP) – the voluntary community partnership whose mission is to deliver a thriving economy in the Forest of Dean District by connecting business, Councils, people, ideas and resources.
- Also from the outset, a strong involvement and links should be established with Business West, whose 200+ staff offer a complete range of support services for businesses of all sizes across the West and South West. Business West runs the Gloucestershire Chamber of Commerce, which provides a local access point to government funding, business services and support, as well as other business opportunities available via fellow

members. Business West works closely with GFirst, the Local Enterprise Partnership, which operates the Gloucestershire Growth Hub whose remit is to offer “free help and advice for every local firm”.

We believe that a business networking forum will only succeed if it is created by the business community itself – and the framework should be as an informal network rather than in the style of an outdated Chamber of Commerce governed by protocols, rules, membership costs etc.

Making maximum use of web-based and social media technology, such a network might be:

- Free of charge to join (all that would be needed is a business email) – but there would be a charge for events, simply to cover costs. It means that members only pay for what they consume.
- Focused on creating opportunities for business leaders and staff to meet, share experiences, make friendships, collaborate and explore mutually beneficial opportunities for the betterment of the business community across the town.
- Characterised initially by informal breakfast meetings (e.g. monthly), occasional larger meetings called to discuss key issues of concern to the business community, meetings as fora for invited guests (e.g. Business West, business celebrities), informal one-drink-after-work events etc.
- As the network develops, it may be that retailers and others in the Town Centre come together to launch a public “Business of the Year Award”, or a seasonal promotion (e.g. Santa trail at Christmas, or Easter or summer holiday). And as it grows more confident, it may become a constructive lobby for improvements in the town – such as enhancing tourism.

The networking group would remain informal but would require a small set of volunteers to organise and run events (with tools such as Eventbrite, a networking breakfast, for example, can be set up and administered for no more than a couple of hours a month), act as treasurer and chair the network. The emphasis would be on ensuring nothing was onerous – which should then encourage others to help organise events.

Step Four : Testing the Idea

We have tested the ideas and steps above with a small number of one-on-one in-depth discussions, designed to provide something of a cross-section of the town's business community. They included:

- **JOHN THURSTON**, Chairman of Watts Group.
- **ANGHARAD WRIGLEY**, Founder Director of Hot Tubs Rock Ltd (highly successful supplier of hot tubs, based at Marina Park, Lydney); also Founder Director of Local Business Rocks Ltd (a business membership community providing local awareness and visibility as well as support, training, networking and collaborative opportunities across the Forest of Dean. Based in Lydney).
- **EMILY TIMMINS**, co-Founder of Bespoke Bride, a highly successful online website and blog, launched in 2011 to inspire couples to design a wedding that was creative, crafty & full of character. Winner of industry awards. Based in Lydney, the business

won 'Upstart Women', a competition run by the Festival of Female Entrepreneurship and Webstart Bristol to find the best female-led tech start up, with a prize of £10,000 investment and a place on Webstart Bristol's incubator programme. Emily is also Founder and Chair of Lydney Hub – a residents' group/charity formed in 2017 to address the lack of online infrastructure in the local community, specifically to increase support for young people aged between 11-17. The Hub now runs a community café.

- **IAN MEAN**, Director of Business West Gloucestershire, Board Member GFirst LEP.

Options and issues have also been discussed by phone with Wendy Jackson, Regeneration Manager at Forest of Dean District Council and with Richard Morgan, the District Council lead on the Lydney Harbour project.

One consistent viewpoint has been the difficulty of starting a network, of creating something that is relevant to business people across the community and that is sufficiently attractive to bring together a group willing to start and run the group. As noted above, it is clear that this neither cannot nor should be done by the Town Council. But finding people with the time and the inclination is uncertain.

A Coworking, Hybrid and Innovation Business Community?

One strand that came out of discussions with the four business leaders noted above was shared agreement that a workhub/coworking space would fit well with Lydney's evolving business community –including the influx of new residents, many of them young families with working parents.

The definition of this kind of space varies widely. Our definition is a flexible space that offers the following:

- A business address and professional setting in which to meet with clients and/or investors. Usually in town centres (which provides additional retail footfall).
- A large common area, filled with desks and seating, in which different people and businesses will all work on their own projects under the same roof – sharing ideas, passing on opportunities, and enjoying working in a shared environment.

- Coworking spaces also typically provide shared amenities, such as meeting rooms and kitchen facilities. Some also offer private, enclosed office spaces that businesses can hire out solely for their own use.
- Particularly popular for freelancers and small start-ups, attracted by typically easy-in/easy-out terms (licences rather than leases).
- Typically, a simple monthly charge that includes workspace, furniture, high-speed connectivity (preferably 1Gbps both ways), free coffee/tea etc.
- Post-Covid, coworking spaces are becoming popular for a hybrid model that combines remote work with office work. This allows employees to continue enjoying the flexibility and solo productivity, and freedom that the home office provides, as well as enjoying a physical workspace that allows collaboration, networking, meeting clients in a professional

setting, and a better work life balance simultaneously.

- Coworking spaces also act as a focal point for an innovation hub, for business events and communal meetings – as well as for business support from organisations such as Business West.

The logic is to test the feasibility of setting up a coworking space in Lydney town centre. As part of the offer, the proposal is that the operators of the coworking centre would launch a Lydney business network, based at the Centre – along the lines set out above.

We have set out the steps we propose in order to take this forward in the next section of this document.

PART 4:
RECOMMENDATIONS

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The specification for the work undertaken by Place Studio, with Streets Reimagined and Townswork has set a baseline of analysis and collated community feedback that can inform future investments and improvements to the town centre.

Harnessing the collated feedback from events and surveys, this report highlights the key issues that have been raised by analysis and consultation respondents and suggests potential actions and projects that may be progressed as part of a phase two of the Lydney Forward initiative.

These all relate to the key themes that have been drawn from analysis and community feedback.

1. Transport and Connections
2. Environment and Image
3. Offer and Value

All three themes should be addressed within a single comprehensive town centre master plan or strategy document. This will focus on progressing the delivery of medium and longer term projects and improvements.

It should be noted that the priority projects identified through consultation represent a solid basis upon which to develop the next phase. However, further work may identify additional issues that should also be considered.

The suggested actions and projects are broken into two groups:

Medium and Longer Term Projects

These projects may be deliverable in the coming five to ten years with the need for more extensive and complex planning, larger budgets and more complex delivery requirements. The foundation for realising these projects will be a robustly produced town centre master plan or

strategy. This can be part of phase 2 work.

Quick Win Projects

In advance of delivery of medium and longer term projects, quick win investments will be achievable within the coming 1-5 years, within more modest financial requirements and implementation processes.

Quick win projects can be progressed in parallel with town centre master planning as part of phase 2 work. Whilst they must be able to be progressed in advance of adoption of the master plan, it will be important that they make early contributions to the delivery of key theme objectives and do not prejudice the delivery of longer term projects. Quick win projects will therefore also be suggested that have a clear and direct relationship with the community's highest priorities for the town centre.



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Master Planning Process

Phase 1 work has created a body of community and stakeholder feedback through various streams of consultation that can be a sound baseline of stakeholder and community input to underpin the master plan's key objectives and themes. There will still be a need for solid and tailored evidence to be gathered to inform and shape the overarching strategy and each project area.

This must include proportionate stakeholder and community engagement woven into the master planning process to enable it to be a mandate for project implementations and potential successful adoption as a town planning management tool.

This report will not seek to impose a master planning methodology at this stage. However it is suggested the master plan could draw upon proven structured approaches that may include:

Section 1: Introduction; historic, contextual and policy background. Key opportunities and challenges (informed by phase 1 work)

Section 2: Vision, objectives and strategy overview for the town centre

Section 3: Main themes for action points and interventions based on core town centre functions and community priorities feedback (Transport and Connections, Environment and Image and Offer and Value)

Section 4: Masterplan delivery including phasing, funding and priorities.

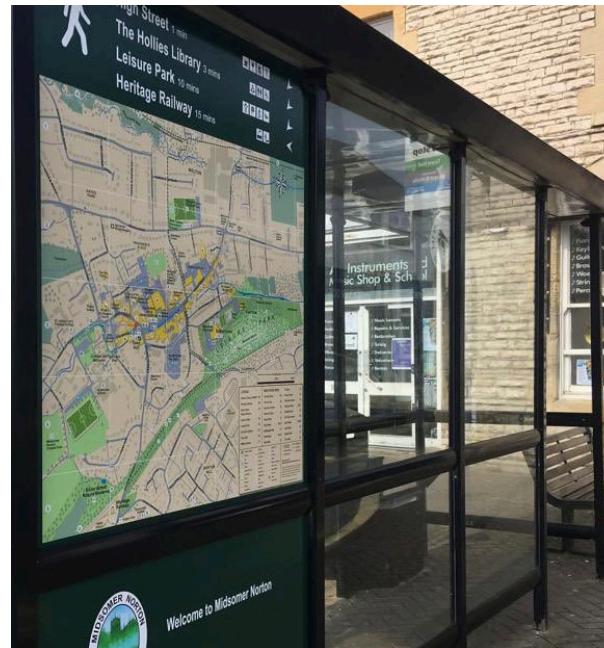
Lydney Town Centre Key Themes And Potential Master Planning and Project Elements

Transport and Connections

Transport and Connection was highlighted as a major area of priority for improvement by respondents. These raised strategic issues relating to the volumes of traffic moving through the town centre, creating good quality public transport connections with the wider area, town centre connections with residents, Bathurst Park and the harbour and the poor quality of accessibility and facilities for all transport types within the town centre itself.

Connecting Lydney Town Centre

Phase 2 work should include a comprehensive transport and connectivity study. This should focus on a review and recommended actions for multi-modal transportation in three linked layers:



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- i. Connecting Lydney to Gloucestershire and the Wider Region.

Lydney is in a potentially enviable position, with a relationship with both the River Severn and The Forest of Dean with A road connections, including a high capacity by-pass and railway station providing links to the national rail network.

- ii. Town centre connections to Bathurst Park and the Harbour

Feedback highlighted the community's value and appreciation of Bathurst Park and Lydney Harbour as a visitor attraction. But it also highlighted the disconnection of these from the town centre. There is a need to identify measures that will help to create improved awareness of and connections between all three through information,

enhanced sustainable transport links and joined up promotion and local way finding and information.

- iii. Whilst not directly highlighted as a priority in community feedback, reducing traffic and improving air quality was. Reducing car trips to the town can make a meaningful contribution to this as well as improve community health and wellbeing.

As a relatively small settlement, many of Lydney's existing and planned new neighbourhoods and its attractions are within reasonable walking or cycling distances. The strategy should therefore consider how such sustainable transport and active travel links may be enhanced to the town centre.

Making Lydney Town Centre Safe and Accessible for Everyone

A comprehensive strategy with detailed measures to enhance the accessibility, safety and quality of Lydney Town centre's public realm. This should address key issues of managing traffic volumes, HGVs and speed as well as considering options for restrictions of traffic.

It should harness the completed 2021 accessibility audit by Accessible Gloucestershire to identify specific measures to improve the whole town centre public realm and its pedestrian links for all pedestrians.

This study and recommendations must be coordinated with consideration and recommendations for enhancement of the town centre's public realm landscape, enabling vitality and street life and facilities for other modes of transport.



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Public Transport Connections and Facilities

Lydney Bus Station is widely considered to be a priority for enhancement and the local bus services are not considered to provide a good service.

Phase 2 work should include specific analysis of public transport provision (buses and taxis) for the town centre and include specific analysis of the future for the bus station to meet future needs. This may include consideration of a new use for the site and alternative bus stopping facilities within the town centre.

Car Parking

Whilst there is a significant amount of car parking within the town centre, community feedback highlighted the importance of car parking provision and the cost and quality of town centre car parks.

Phase 2 work should address how car parks may be best managed to optimise their contribution to the town centre's attractiveness, vitality and quality of environment. This should consider all parking provisions and consider how spaces might be prioritised for shoppers, green vehicles, micro electric vehicles and people with impaired mobility or children. It should also consider if and where car parks might be venues for alternative temporary uses including markets or pop-up events.



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Wayfinding and Information

Clear and informative signs for drivers, cyclists and pedestrians contributes to promotion of its offer and attractions as well as maximising awareness of connections and facilities. It may also provide local place information and heritage interpretation.

Phase 2 work may commission the design of such a multi modal and purpose system. This may draw upon experience and exemplar from similar places as well as link in with the wayfinding, Interpretation and public art programme implemented at Lydney Harbour.



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Environment Quality and Image

The quality of Lydney town centre's environment attracted both positive opinion and a high proportion of prioritisation for improvement. The perception that Lydney town centre had a poor image and needed improvement was one of the top five priorities for change. However, the planting and floral displays were highlighted as a quality that local people liked. In addition, town centre historic buildings were valued, although overall it was considered buildings and shop frontages required a facelift.

Master planning may therefore consider:

Town Centre Design Code or Guide

Phase 1 desktop analysis reviewed previous town centre character analysis and improvement proposals produced by a local resident. Whilst many of its suggestions are not yet achieved, it can

form a well informed starting point for the production of an updated and potentially a wider scope of analysis and guidance for the town centre.

This may be produced as comprehensive code to secure a consistent and distinct approach to small scale, incremental and also larger scale alterations and developments within the town centre.

It may address:

- Principles for incremental alterations and improvements to town centre buildings
- Principles for incremental alterations to shop fronts and ground floor frontages
- Development principles to inform redevelopments and alterations to existing buildings
- Design and specification of public realm elements including creating accessible environments, creating improved connections, street furniture



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- location and design, wayfinding and signage and paving specifications
- Town Centre Green Infrastructure, including tree planting
 - Riverscape enhancements

Conservation Area Action Plan and Local List Update

Whilst 16 years old, Lydney Conservation Area Character Appraisal 2005 provides a robust baseline assessment of the parts of the town centre within its boundaries and record of listed and locally listed buildings at that time. However, it cannot now provide an up to date action plan for treasuring and enhancing Lydney town centre’s valued heritage assets.

As a distinct, but complimentary workstream, working with Forest of Dean Council, the Town Council may wish to update the conservation area appraisal and set new priorities for its enhancement. This may act as a platform to secure new streams of heritage related

grant funding. This may also assist in protection of some ground floor town centre retail frontage uses within the conservation area (see below).

Town Centre Offer and Value

Lydney has managed to retain and focus nearly all of its town centre and retail offer within the town centre and has resisted edge of centre and out of town proposals. This optimises the footfall and range it has to offer. However, FoDC annual analysis recognises an annual drop in footfall, like many other traditional high streets. COVID 19 has impacted all retail environments. It is too early to comment on how it has affected Lydney. However, analysis has indicated that market towns and high streets have weathered the pandemic better than other city centres and shopping centres. Despite this Lydney continues to lose shoppers to neighbouring centres including Gloucester and Chepstow.

The quality of Lydney town centre's offer and range of shops and services was considered a community priority. The number and range of smaller and independent shops (which is higher than most market towns) was appreciated along with the friendliness of shopkeepers. However, some considered there was a lack of national high street retailers represented. The lack of places to go in the evening, choice of places to eat and venues for entertainment was considered a shortcoming.

Creating and Maintaining an Attractive Town Centre

The Town Council is able to continue to shape and create conditions within planning policies and town centre strategy and through investment in supporting assets including the public realm, town centre events such as the market and through enhanced management, including maintaining

high standards of cleanliness and floral displays.

In addition, supporting the creation of a business hub (as suggested in this report) will pump prime and help sustain a locally focussed support network and resource that can include supporting town centre businesses. It is recommended that as a parallel component of phase 2 work, further feasibility work is progressed towards delivering such a resource.

Information, Publicity and Promotion

Every business is responsible for its own promotion. However, opportunities for this can be provided through information and promotional media run by the town council and a local business support organisation, eg "Local Business Rocks".



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In addition, the suggested Information and Wayfinding strategy study should also consider opportunities to publicise the town centre's attractions and offer. This may be through identifying character quarters, heritage attractions or key venues in long term street equipment and mapping and potentially identifying individual businesses in more flexible and widely accessible online information.

As a complimentary stream of activity, a strategy for optimising opportunities for supporting the promotion of Lydney, its town centre and its particular offer could be commissioned. This can include how a local business support network or organisation other than the town council may also play a part.

Business Innovation Support

Digital technology continues to make significant changes to how people shop and obtain services and how business is managed. It is often difficult



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for independent business people to keep up with and take advantage of the opportunities they bring, including maintaining an online offer.

With reference to "Creating and Maintaining an Attractive Town Centre" above, it is recommended that feasibility work is progressed towards creation of a self sustaining Lydney Business Hub which may provide access to resources to support and promote Lydney town centre and help its valued independent businesses benefit from innovations.

Protecting Primary Frontages & Enabling Diversification

There have been recent changes to the national Use Classes Order that controls how land uses can change without requiring planning consent.. New class E consolidates a range of shop, service provision and office uses within a single class, enabling retail premises to be altered to non retail within class E without planning consent. In addition, new class MA now enables class E premises that have been empty for three months to be changed to residential use, including ground floor premises with only high level "prior approval" assessment by the local authority. Within conservation areas, harm to retail character and sustainability may be justified to refuse prior approval. In exceptional circumstances, the most valuable primary retail frontages may be protected by an "Article 4 Direction", which would need to be made with the LPA.

The phase 2 process should consider the production of a planning strategy to maximise protection of Lydney valued town centre retail frontages and upper floor business units that now fall within use class E, but to also stimulate diversification and residential conversions through new regulations where this could build greater levels of vitality and investment.

Priority Location Consolidated Renewal and Development Briefs

The master plan should consolidate consideration and proposals for initiatives across themes into place focused strategies and guidance for the potential regeneration of key areas within the town centre that hold major potential to enhance its accessibility, environmental and value to the community. These areas should be fully identified by the master plan. This process has highlighted the following locations at this stage.

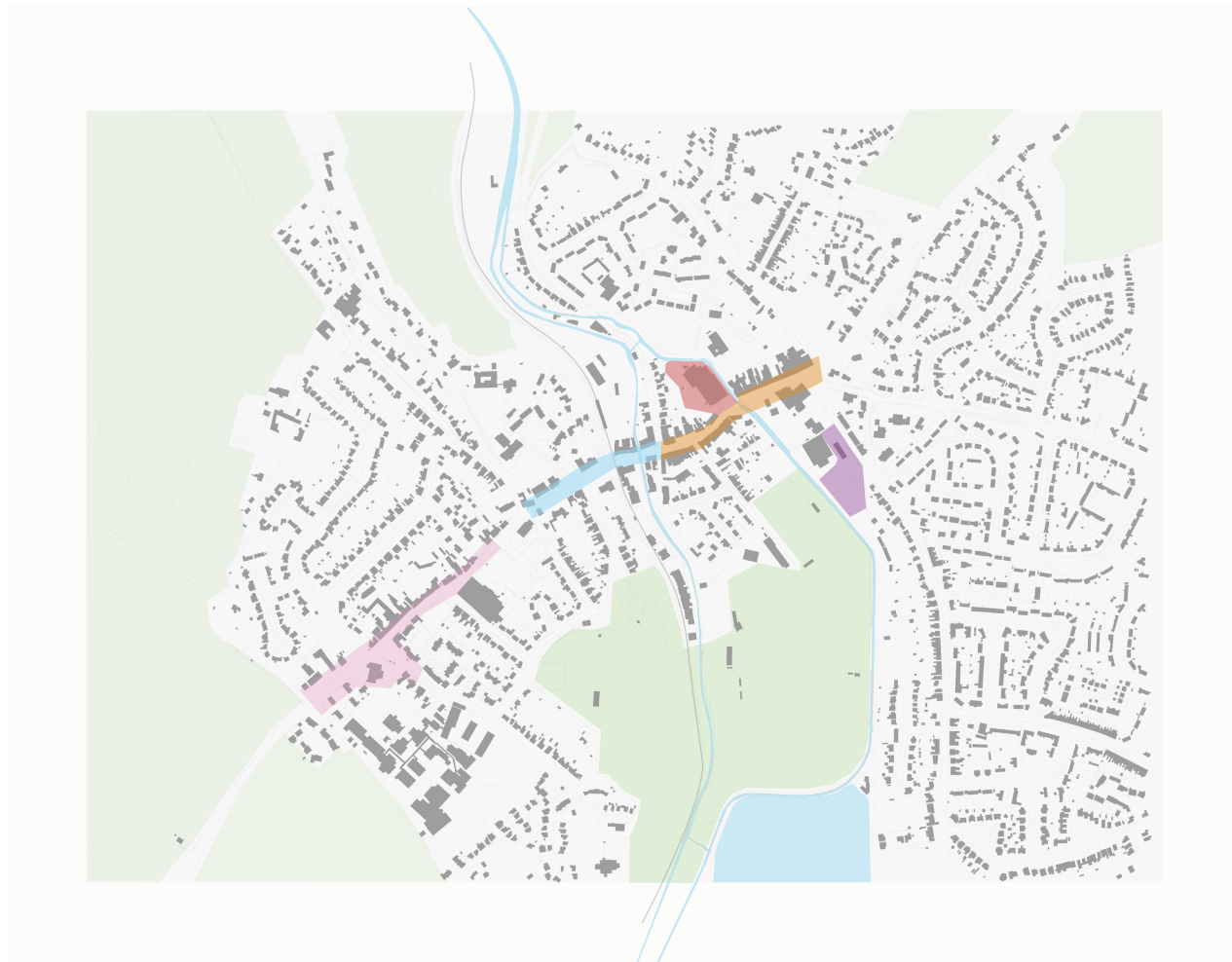


Fig. 7

Key Quarters and Spaces

High Street, Town Hall and Cross

The Eastern gateway to Lydney town centre and focus of the town's heritage quarter, the master plan should embrace the existing initiative to bring new uses to the Town Hall, but also integrate these within a wider brief for the public realm and surrounding active uses to reinforce the role and distinctiveness of the space.

Options may include:

- New Town Hall venue facilities including potential café/bar.
- Re-fashioning of the public space and car parking to enhance the setting of the heritage and enable public events.
- Grant aiding surrounding shopfront improvements and provision of business support.
- Managing traffic speed and improving accessibility across the whole space



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Fig. 7 Key:

- Bus Station Site
- Newerne Street
- Hill Street
- High Street, Town Hall and Cross
- Co-op and Public Car Park

Hill Street

A more linear and sloping section of the town centre containing smaller scale uses and attractions and gateways to the park and heritage railway. This location may capitalise on existing trees and small green spaces to create a green connection between the western and eastern focuses.

Options may include:

- Further investment in the small green roadside spaces including the library frontage
- Tree planting, including at Tesco Car Park
- Investment in the heritage railway level crossing to really harness the distinctiveness of this heritage feature.



PHO.20



PHO.21

Newerne Street

At the heart of Lydney's town centre shopping, with further retail investment from Lidl underway.

This area may be the most effective area for investment in driving local footfall and economic vitality. It contains assets including the majority of retail and service floorspace, the main River Lyd crossing and main car parks.

Options may include:

- A new gateway space at the eastern junction with Hams Road
- Traffic management including potential access restrictions
- Public realm investment to improve accessibility and quality of environment
- Enhancing of River Lyd crossing and links to Bathurst Park
- Grant aiding shopfront improvements and supporting business development



PHO.22



PHO.23



PHO.24



PHO.25

Co-op and Public Car Park

The potential closure of the Co-op creates together with a review of car parking provision and location may enable medium and longer term opportunities to realise a number of key objectives expressed by the community and being progressed by the Town Council associated with the heart of Lydney's town centre economy.

Analysis of this area may realise an opportunity to deliver:

- Re-use of the building to potentially house the market and/or Lydney Business hub.
- Pop up temporary business uses within Co-op car park
- Permanent reuse of existing building and car park with uses to bolster town centre offer, including business hub and create new riverside and high street public space.

- Redevelopment of site to provide mixed uses, including business hub, new town square and affordable housing.

Bus Station Site

Lydney Bus Station and surrounding land is highlighted as a priority for improvement. Analysis of actual public transport facility needs should inform its longer term future and a site brief to guide potential for regeneration.

Options may include:

- Potential re-development of site to provide new mixed uses including proportionate new public transport facilities (where not possible in Newerne Street), improved access to Bathurst Park

Next Steps

Phase Two Priority Projects

This report has identified three priority projects:

1. Town Centre Strategy/Master Plan
2. Business Hub and Network Feasibility and Implementation Study
3. Town Centre Quick Win Projects Selection, Design and Implementation

Town Centre Master Planning and Strategy

Phase one SWOT analysis through stakeholder and community consultation has refreshed priorities for the future renewal and sustainable vitality of Lydney Town Centre, particularly in recovery from the impacts of COVID 19. This has set out the community and stakeholder brief for priority objectives for the strategy. However, it is stressed that further analysis and evidence will need to be gathered as part of the phase two

master planning process to inform and underpin the strategy.

Suggested Delivery Route

Lydney Neighbourhood Plan (2014-2024) would benefit from review and refreshment of its policies if it is to remain an effective part of the development plan alongside the reviewed Forest of Dean Local Plan. It is capable of setting a raft of policies for the whole town council area. In particular a review creates an opportunity to review and bolster Town Centre Improvement Policy LYD CEN1. This policy is currently expressed as a policy to manage development proposals. There is an opportunity for this to be extended to more directly relate to the delivery of a Town Centre Master Plan through both development requirements and priority projects to which contributions should be directed.

Lydney Town Centre “Design Code”

Budget & Funding

A Neighbourhood Plan review alone can cost between about £10K and £25k, depending on its complexity and level of change. The production of a master plan for the town centre could require a budget of c£25K-£30K, plus an allowance for additional studies like conservation area review and car parking review.

Lydney Town Council is a “Qualifying Body” (QB) for a neighbourhood plan review. Locality (The Government’s neighbourhood planning support organisation), provide a basic grant of £10,000 towards the costs of undertaking a review. They may also grant a further £8,000 to QBs that also wish to either allocate development sites through their Neighbourhood Plan or produce design coding or guidance. The latter grant may be applicable to the production of the town centre masterplan, or the

environmental and design elements of it. Locality also offer neighbourhood planning groups technical support services provided free of charge by its consultant AECOM. This support is in addition to grant aid. Technical support services include assistance with master planning and design coding, which may be suitable to assist phase 2 work.

It may therefore be that progressing town centre policy and master plan strategy through the neighbourhood plan review pathway offers an opportunity to secure significant grant aid and technical support which Lydney TC is eligible to apply for.

We recommend this approach is considered to maximise the ability to manage appropriate development towards meeting community wishes, optimise the likelihood of harnessing resources through the planning process and because of the strong likelihood of securing resources.

Other Grant Support

High Streets and Town Centre renewal is the focus of Government and Local Authority attention due to the impacts of retailing change and the pandemic. Funding award packages are often related to the delivery of a distinct initiative that meets criteria and are considered on a competitive basis. Phase 2 work can undertake a refined review of such opportunities as part of the master planning implementation strategy, when initiatives are more fully crystallised.

However, quick win priority projects may still be eligible for external funding support. This can be explored more swiftly as part of this distinct stream of work.

Business Hub Feasibility Study and Implementation Planning

The “Networking forum for Lydney business?” report concludes that the preferred approach would be to: “test the feasibility of setting up a coworking space in Lydney town centre. As part of the offer, the proposal is that the operators of the coworking centre would launch a Lydney business network, based at the Centre”.

A distinct work stream for phase two should be the progression of feasibility and implementation analysis to progress this proposal.

Quick Win Projects

Appendix seven lists potential quick win projects to make early progress in enhancing the quality of accessibility, environment and the promotion of the town centre. We recommend Phase 2

work prioritise quick win projects from an agreed long list. It can then progress towards implementation and securing funding adding to Town Council capital.

Programming

This report recommends simultaneous progression of master planning, Business Hub feasibility and planning and the progression of quick win projects as each can be distinct and parallel streams of work. It will be necessary to ensure that there is dialogue between each stream to ensure that spatial requirements and options for the business hub are woven into the master planning and quick win projects do not conflict with longer term projects. We have also recommended master planning work is progressed as part of an a neighbourhood plan review.

Illustrative Phase Two Sequencing

October 2021 – November 2021

- Phase 2 Project Brief, Delivery Methodology and Resolution to Proceed
- Confirmation of Neighbourhood Plan Review Pathway

November 2021 – January 2022

- Support Appointment(s)
- Locality Grant Funding /Technical Support Secured

February 2022 – March 2022

- Initial Neighbourhood Plan Review Analysis
- Initial Master Planning Evidence Collection/Surveys
- Business Hub Feasibility
- Quick Win Projects Selection and Design/Implementation Strategy

April 2022 – March 2023

- Neighbourhood Plan review (to submission)
- Master Planning and Design Guidance
- Business Hub Delivery Progression
- Quick Win Project Delivery

April 2023 – March 2024

- Neighbourhood Plan Formal Processes to Adoption (circa October 2023)
- Master Plan Consultation and Adoption
- Business Hub Project Delivery Progression
- Quick Win Project Delivery

2024 - 2030

- Longer Term Master Plan Projects Delivery
- Business Hub Delivery

APPENDIX 1 - STATIC WORKSHOP VERBATIM RESPONSES

Group	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats	Quick Wins
One	Park	Transport not connected	The cut		
	Lake	Traffic congestion	Lack of empty shops		
	Leisure / Sport	No support services for new housing Doctors Urgent care Schools	Accommodation		
	Schools	Scruffy	Market - local crafts - local produce		
	Environment (Forest and River)	Air Pollution	River link		
	Harbour	No electric vehicle charging (except Tesco)			
	Train station	No secure cycle racks			
	Bus Station	No cinema			
	Good Road Links	Flooding			
	Bypass				
	Training rooms				
	Tourism				
	Taurus Crafts				

Group	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats	Quick Wins
Two	Community spirit	No town centre	Bookshop needed	Cinema	More signage for parks and recreation
	Bypass is an asset but not used	Separation between town and harbour	More greenery		Facelift for shop fronts
		People Becoming isolated	Greengrocer		Gardening club/seed exchange
		Clusters separated	Nice pub with real ale		
		Topography (hill)			

APPENDIX 2 - VERBATIM RESPONSES OUTREACH BUSINESS INTERVIEWS

Business	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats	Quick wins
SWM Builders Merchants	Lidl. Pleased to see larger businesses coming to the town	Too many hairdressers	A restaurant by the lake.		More "trendy" restaurants. We would like somewhere we could go on a date.
		Too many charity shops	It was mentioned that a previous restaurant "pulp" (a coffee wine and cocktail bar) had been good but this has since closed.		
		Where going out of town to socialise due to the lack of local offer.			
		Traffic			
		Tesco Junction			
Willowdean Gifts		Lack of variety of shops, too many hairdressers and charity shops			Pedestrianisation
		Shabby looking buildings			Seating to bring people into the town
		Lack of variety of shops, too many hairdressers and charity shops			

Business	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats	Quick wins
Hips Social	Different ages and people	Looking tired			Spruce up e.g.. bus stops
	Park outside Lido	Shop fronts			Link to harbour
	Cycle Path				
Coventry Building Society	Independent shops e.g.. coffee shops	Empty units			Make more of the natural landmarks e.g. The Lyd
	Good parking facilities	Bypass is not being used enough			Help tourism
	New businesses are opening	No primary school provision			Focal point with fountain
	New businesses are opening	No town centre			
		Traffic bad for elderly people			

Business	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats	Quick wins
Bargain Booze	Lydney Hub - lots for kids to do	Too many empty shops			Get chains on to the high street eg. poundland
	Furniture recycling project	Too many charity shops			Getting people into the town eg. costa coffee
	Traditional shopping centre	Paying for parking			Pedestrianise
	Lots of passing traffic	Lack of information			Local farmers market
	Draws people in from a wide area	Poor road surface			Dial-a-ride to take children to facilities
		Traffic too many large vehicles			Business listings
					Put a crossing outside co-op
					More litter bins
					More dog litter bins

Business	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats	Quick wins
Ardens Estates	Linear road	Lack of parking			Spruce up shop frontages
	Diverse businesses	State of roads (potholes)			Appeal to people from outside the area
		Too much money on cycle path			
		Empty shops			
Aroha Properties	Lots of people (Busy!)	Appearance			Hanging baskets
	Community (People say hi)	General cleanliness			Business meet ups
		Frontages don't look good			Sharing business ideas
Halo Hairdresser	Park	More green needed			More seating
		Youths hanging around			More planters Raising profile
					More public meeting places

Business	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats	Quick wins
Lydney Laundrette	Park	Traffic	Better transport options for youths and children		Improve traffic
	Lake	Lack of variety of businesses	Increase variety of shops		
			Would like to see Iceland		
			Would like to see and Asda		
Ferino Estate Agents	Love the flowers / street planting	Traffic is too fast	Attract bigger names to high street		Costa Coffee
	Greggs	Cycle path is pointless because its too dangerous to use	More aspirational businesses		
	N G Thai Food (formerly Pulp) value a higher end restaurant.	Car wash is ugly and not necessary in such a central location	Population is here, can we prove business demand is here		
		Turnover of businesses is high			

Business	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats	Quick wins
Poppies florist	Diversity of shops	Lack of sit in restaurants	Would like to see more big shops eg a superdrug	Concern that new development could overwhelm schools	Highfield hill bottom zebra crossing
	Park	Need to travel to gloucester for shopping and socialising			
	Lake				
	B&M				
Han Barbers		No opportunities for socialising (have to travel to Gloucester)			Speed cameras
		Footpaths are narrow			
		Large lorries			
		Traffic is too fast			

Business	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats	Quick wins
Plumber	River	Lack of businesses (wishes there was a screwfix)	Establish a town centre (suggests near car wash or river)		
	Community (friendly people)	No big businesses			
		Car wash in town centre			
		Road is narrow			
Cavendish Dry Cleaners	Lidl is coming	Traffic - specifically the speed and parking (no space for customers to park)			Traffic wardens
		Tesco junction too busy			
		Empty buildings			
		Lack of restaurants			
		Car wash			

Business	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats	Quick wins
McCullagh A K & Sons	Park	Traffic			Free short stay parking
	Lake	Lack of affordable housing for locals			Affordable housing
		Variety of shops			Ensure infrastructure to support incoming housing is provided
Imagitec Ltd	Good local walks	Roads are dangerous			Improve harbour (restaurant)
	Yacht Club	Regular road accidents			Better way finding and signage for park, harbour and local walks.

APPENDIX 3 - REVISED LYDNEY TOWN COUNCIL BRIEF

The objective is to work with Lydney Town Council and other public, private and voluntary sector bodies as well as local residents to develop an effective working regeneration partnership or “town team”. The objective has been expanded to include ‘Covid Recovery’ measures.

This is expected to include a number of tasks:

- Organising and attending meetings with partners and local residents involving the community so they take an active part in the programme
- Assisting with the creation of a new Chamber of Commerce for Lydney
- Agreeing a Town SWOT analysis
- Confirming programme objectives, partner roles and immediate timetable
- Working with partners to establish a process for regular publicity
- Gathering ideas for quick wins and longer-term developments
- Advising on project assessment and sources of funding
- Setting up a membership-based legal entity that can apply for grants and deliver projects
- Collating data to support a future brief for town master planning and the development of a detailed regeneration strategy

The appointed supplier will not be expected to deliver any projects at this stage, as each project would naturally have to acquire its own project lead, nor should any bids include a budget for such delivery.

The successful supplier is expected to have experience of urban regeneration work as well as suitable insurance cover.

Responses to the brief should include an order of costs, including travel and other expenses, and a draft timeline for completing all tasks by September 2020. 31st March 2021.

In order for the Council to make suitable allowance in its Budget for 2021/22, interested parties are required to provide an estimate of costs (for all aspects of the proposal) for the next three Financial Years, i.e. 2021/22, 2022/23 and 2023/24 at least, with an indication of any requirement for ongoing funding thereafter.

APPENDIX 4 - VERBATIM RESPONSES FROM LYDNEY WALKING WORKSHOPS PILOT

Combined Area Surveys

High Street Section: A

1 *What good qualities should be treasured and improved?*

- Town Hall & Cross – Town Hall is well used
- Heritage buildings are an asset
- Niche shops – computer, music shop
- Nice plants part of stone wall around Town Hall
- Parking
- Near to leisure centre and school
- The gateway into the town is good – could be enhanced further

2 *What don't you like and needs attention?*

- Car parks
- Poor pub
- Too much traffic - noise
- Town Cross is a bit dilapidated. Area around the Cross could be a shared use space
- Town Hall needs revitalising
- Bus stops
- Bank is closed
- Public transport doesn't come this way
- Dingy shop fronts

- High Street is too narrow for cycle lane
- Tesco junction
- Area needs revitalising
- Clutter and outdated signage
- Pinch points on / narrow pavements
- Empty site opposite Tesco car park

3 *What ideas do you have to make Lydney Town Centre better for everyone?*

- More interesting shops
- Branding / image
- Old Chapel
- 20mph speed limit from entrance to Town in the west

High Street Section: B

1 *What good qualities should be treasured and improved?*

- The Steam Railway
- Library, which has well used downstairs IT facility
- Pick up and drop off parking space near to shops
- View out eastwards
- Trees
- Route to the park

2 *What don't you like and needs attention?*

- Fire station needs to go elsewhere
- Traffic – noisy and pollution

3 *What ideas do you have to make Lydney Town Centre better for everyone?*

- Use spaces

High Street Section: C

1 *What good qualities should be treasured and improved?*

- Green spaces
- Good amount of independent shops
- The 2 rivers
- Planting
- Town Council notice boards and map (could be improved)
- Co-op space and facilities

2 *What don't you like and needs attention?*

- Traffic
- Clutter
- Signage
- Area outside co-op needs improvement
- Narrow

3 *What ideas do you have to make Lydney Town Centre better for everyone?*

- Masterplan for co-op area
- One way traffic for this part of the high street

High Street Section: D

1 *What good qualities should be treasured and improved?*

- Franchises in the co-op (travel agent etc) are valuable
- All of the facilities that you need are in this area
- The waterway is an asset

2 *What don't you like and needs attention?*

- Co-op is moving
- Need for more space for flexible uses e.g. meeting, temporary meeting space
- Lydney has a big population which growing all the time and there is a mismatch of infrastructure provision

3 *What ideas do you have to make Lydney Town Centre better for everyone?*

- (Indoor) market for local producers
- Space for start-ups
- Riverside seating

Notes from Summary Session at the end

Strengths

- There are lots of local independent businesses
- A number of asset landmark buildings
- Mature trees

Weaknesses

- Signage
- Lack of helpful signage
- Clutter
- High street seems fragmented
- Amount of traffic and poor junction layouts (e.g. Tesco junction and roundabout near the Greyhound), causing noise and pollution
- Narrow pavements and pinch points

Opportunities

- Need to attract more people to the independent shops and businesses that are here
- There are multiple spaces that could become improved public open spaces with potential:
- Provide benches and spaces for people to rest and stay – especially near the Town Hall
- Add more greenery e.g. planters, vegetable planting area (need to make sure this doesn't hinder accessibility)
- Potential to tie this into the GI strategy for the harbour
- Opportunity to link way finding with scheme for the harbour

APPENDIX 5 - BUSINESS OUTREACH INTERVIEW METHODOLOGY

Getting Ready

- Resolve section of street to be covered (avoid duplication)
- Record business name/address visited (before starting)
- Have note pad ready and prepared to divide into sections
- Have Flyer and poster

The Interview

- Introduction of who you are and what you are doing. (1 min)
- Your names
- From Lydney Town Council – Lydney Forward Team
- You may recall receiving a letter a couple of weeks ago.
- Wish to ask some questions to help shape future investments in the town
- Town Council has earmarked more than 40K to spend in the Town centre to help recovery after COVID
- Ask if they or the manager can spare five minutes to provide their views

Facilitator/Member Questions (4 mins – but don't guillotine before 10 mins if going well)

Strengths

From your viewpoint:

- What qualities of Lydney Town Centre should the Town Council Protect and Improve Upon?
- Any ideas for Improvements?

Weaknesses

- What problems need to be tackled as a priority?
- Any suggestions about how?

Quick Wins

- If you were going to spend some of the 40K on an immediate improvement, what might they be?

Follow Up (2 min)

Would you like to be kept in the loop about Lydney Forward? If so, please could we have your email address.

Web link;

To keep in touch and add more comments, please do visit the Lydney Forward website; a link is on this flyer. - Hand over flyer.

Poster

Would you be kind enough to put a poster up?

APPENDIX 6 - COMMUNITY OUTREACH DROP IN - SURVEY RESULTS

What do you love about Lydney?

Features	Votes
Views Across the Town Centre	4
Historic Buildings and Structures (eg. The Cross)	7
The Heritage Railway	35
Plenty of Parking	7
Good Bus Connections	7
Walking and Cycling Facilities	6
The Trees	9
Floral Displays	20
The Park	44
The River Lyd	14
Cleanliness	6
Town Hall Venue	13
The Library	10
Good Range of Shops	2
Supermarkets	3
Friendly People	25

What are your short term priorities for change?

Short Term Priorities	Votes
Reduce Speed of Traffic	29
Better Pedestrian Crossings	18
More Floral Displays	6
Tidy up the Shop fronts	30
Tidy up the car parks	7
More places to sit	13
Free Parking	40
Better Bus Services	27
Better Road Signs	4
Improve Pedestrian Information	11

What have we missed? Things you love about Lydney

Features	Votes
The Lake	7
The Harbour	4

What are your long term priorities for change?

Long Term Priorities	Votes
Pedestrianise the Town Centre	10
One-way traffic in Newerne Street	8
Widen Pavements	18
Better Cycling Facilities	7
Improve the Bus Station	23
Strengthen Park and Harbour Connections	37
A new Town Public Space	21
Plant more street trees	9
More places to go out in the evening	17
More Places for meeting	8
More independent shops	28
Attract National High Street Names	15
New Startup workspace	1
Permanent New Home for Market	18

What have we missed? Priorities for change

Priorities	Number of mentions
More Doctors	1
Re-purpose the Co-Op as a super-surgery, post office and council office	1
Speed Cameras	3
More Schools	1
Improve policing	1
Improvements to the Lake	1
More ways for elderly people to get out and about	2
Cycle path to Parkend	1
Do not close local hospital	5
Rethink Bypass	3
Butchers	1
Improve roads and Pavement Surfaces (potholes etc)	5
Traffic Signs on Highfield Hill	1
Reduce lorries going through town	4
Create more green spaces in town centre	1
Better street furniture	1

Priorities	Number of mentions
Rent Freeze	1
Incentives for new businesses	1
More public toilets	1
Improve connections to the Lyd	5
Greengrocers	1
Map of local walks	2
Electric Vehicle Charging	1
Youth Centre	2

APPENDIX 7 - QUICK WIN PROJECTS: SUGGESTIONS AND OPTIONS

Introduction

Lydney Town Council's consultant specification sought Place Studio to identify both longer term master planning priorities as well as opportunities for quick win projects in enhancing the quality, accessibility and offer of Lydney Town Centre.

This appendix identifies a bracket of potential opportunities for quick win projects. These are sub-divided to relate to the key themes of Transport and Accessibility, Environmental and Image and Offer and Value around which the longer term priorities are also grouped.

These options are to enable a refined choice of early investments to be made and then progressed as part of phase 2 work.

NB Suggestions are focused on project actions and capital investments. All projects must be built upon a sound and robust evidence base to ensure early investment is effective and making a contribution towards delivery of key objectives.

Project Options

1. TRANSPORT AND ACCESSIBILITY

This section has also been informed by recommendations contained within. The separate Accessibility Study carried out for the Town Council by Accessible Gloucestershire (AG) in 2021.

TOWN CENTRE TRAFFIC

Reduce Through Traffic Volume and Harm

Traffic through Lydney has been identified as one of the key issues highlighted by residents and business owners. There is potential to alleviate some of this friction through a rethink of the way traffic moves through and around Lydney. By utilising alternative signage, Traffic Restriction Orders (TROs) alongside traffic calming and pedestrian safety infrastructure it is possible to improve not only pedestrian safety but also the pedestrian experience. The following section contains suggestions of ways to utilise these tools into quick win solutions for Lydney town centre.

Signage

Bypass signs:

- Signed Through route
- Single Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) access point (west)

Outbound (through town) signs:

- Review Signs and driver information (road lines etc) to direct traffic to minimise high street traffic.

In town signs:

- Car Park direction signs on approach (linked to incentive pricing)

Access Restriction

Traffic Regulation Orders: Consider implementation of proportionate and necessary permanent access restrictions. These may be undertaken on an experimental basis for c18 months. Example access restriction could include:

- HGV weight limit at all times
- HGV restricted access times
- Timed vehicle access restrictions
- Daytime Newerne Street closures
- Weekend Newerne Street closure*

*Make Sunday Special day link with market and park

Reduce Driving Speed

Speed limits:

- Extend 20mph zone using Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) to the gateway points of town
- Introduce speed advisory signs

Traffic Calming

Implement traffic calming measures at gateways and key intervals along street to maximise driver awareness and reduce speed. This can be achieved by utilising:

- Pinch points at crossings
- Pinch point give way shuttles
- Road surface treatments

-
- On street car parking (obstructions)
 - On street bus stops
 - Alter pelican crossing phase timing in favour of pedestrians

HGV Proximity to Pedestrians

- One-way sections (shuttles)
- Pavement protection bollards

MODAL SHIFT TO SUSTAINABLE / ACTIVE / SAFE MODES OF TRANSPORT

By working to enhance the experience of those utilising sustainable, active and safe modes of transport it is possible to reduce over reliance on the motor vehicle and in turn reduce the negative impacts of motor vehicles. From the various streams of engagement that are presented earlier in this report it is clear that residents wish to see improvements to the sustainable transport infrastructure and a reduction of the harm inflicted by large amounts of vehicle traffic. This section contains suggestions for effective interventions that have potential to be achieved in the short term.

Enhancing Walking Quality/Accessibility

Clutter / Obstruction

- Further Auditing
- De-clutter obstacles
- De-clutter obsolete signs
- A board/shop clutter campaign (enforcement)*

*Potential for communal boards/directories

Pavement Quality

- Audit (done by AG)
- Clean (tactile paving)
- Small scale surface repairs

Crossings

- Side Roads
 - i. Re-fresh existing pedestrian crossing lines
 - ii. Add courtesy lines and/or pedestrian crossing road markings
 - iii. Implement double stop lines
- Formal Crossings (Zebra and Toucan)
 - i. Repaint/refresh lines/clean existing provisions
 - ii. Implement additional Pelican/Toucan crossings
 - iii. Alter timings in favour of pedestrians (delays traffic)

Enhanced Routes

- Quick win connections eg. high street to park along the river Lyd
- Emphasize routeways with wayfinding

Cycling Infrastructure

Access and Parking

- Additional cycle lanes both formal and informal. Potential to utilise TRO.
- Additional cycle parking (Sheffield stands)
 - i. Stands located at gateways, venues and throughout main streets
 - ii. Safe and covered stands
- Public cycle repair and pump station

E-Bikes

- Charging points
- Hire Scheme

Buses

Timetabling

- Accessible versions / Large prints available in shops
- Online access (travel line)
- Real Time Information (RTI)

Stops

- Accessible
- Improve shelter provisions
- Improve available information

- More bus stops in convenient locations

Taxis

- Improved information
- New taxi rank (TRO)
- Car types - Accessible taxis

Driving

Parking

- Undertake parking review/audit
- Achieve Lydney Town Council management of Forest of Dean Council Parking
- Incentive shopper parking regime (reserve short stay for shoppers)
- E-vehicle charging points (in car parks/council facilities potential for income)
- Improve disabled and family parking bays

Multi Modal Travel Information (wayfinding)

Implement phase 1 wayfinding and information/interpretation system

On street/in-line/on paper (flyer) to include:

- Accessible route planner
- Mapping
- Services Directory
- Shop Directory
- Interpretation

2. ENVIRONMENT AND IMAGE

This section has been informed by the "Lydney Town Centre Urban Design Guidelines" (Jo Johnson 2016)

ENVIRONMENT COMFORT

Seating/Resting

- Clean /repair existing seats
- Replace as needed
- Additional seating in "gap" locations (c£1000 each)
- Tranquillity seating / resting / events
 - i. Small "parket" spaces
 - ii. Enhance / access existing green / paved spaces (potential for temporary landscape)

Lighting

- Improve quality of street lighting
- Improve illumination levels
 - i. Clean existing lighting infrastructure
 - ii. New luminaire
 - iii. Add additional infrastructure where necessary

Toilets

- Public
 - i. Clean
 - ii. Repair
 - iii. Arrange agreement for shared use with public buildings

- Private
 - i. Agreement with private premises use
 - ii. Add information to wayfinding/directory

ENVIRONMENT CHARACTER

Buildings

Shops

- Audit and action recommendations (Potential to utilise “Town Centre Urban Design Guidelines by J Johnson”)
- Develop showcase façades and shopfronts (potential public building or partner owner)

Shop Windows

- Create a best display initiative
- Vacant unit artwork programme (utilising local artists)
- Enable pop up shops
- Night time displays (illuminated)

“Town Centre Urban Design Guidelines” J Johnson contains a shopfront and building envelope design guide which we would recommend is referenced in regard to shopfront and signage guidelines to create and enhance local character.

Façades

- Facelift - cleaning and painting (potential to collaborate with local artists)

Landscape

Street Planting

- Bolster seasonal floral displays
- Introduce container shrubs/trees (whips)

Existing small spaces

- Enhance and open existing pocket spaces (potential for local volunteer input or private sponsorship)
- Create parklets on roadsides (can form part of traffic calming measures)

Private spaces

- Encourage tidy and well looked after spaces and landscape enhancement (potential for award or recognition of great spaces)

Rivers

- De-clutter and clean blue infrastructure
- Highlight crossing points (roads/parapets)
- Enable access to riversides - enhance surrounding landscape

Railway

- Tidy/facelift level crossing
- Explore pedestrian park link alongside rail line

2. OFFER & VALUE

This section should be read in conjunction with analysis and recommendations for supporting local businesses (Townswork, 2021) which forms part of phase 1 report and recommendations.

Sustainability

- Solar road signs
- Planting with an emphasis on vegetation that improves air quality
- Shading (shop canopies) (Johnson, 2016)

Evidence

Premises and Land Use Analysis

- Businesses and Services
- Public Private Charity
- 24 hour
- Primary / Secondary
- Vacancy
- Ground floor/first floor
- Open land

Info and Promotion

Directory/wayfinding system phase 1

PR kick start by LTC – to be continued by business hub (potential for advertising income.

NB FoDC has good experience in promotion of high streets

Events and Festivals

- Ongoing support for and promotion of Sunday Market
- Potential “Special Sunday” linked to road closures and market.
- Link town centre with Bathurst Park and harbour festivals

-
- Town centre seasonal events eg Christmas Market. (Potential use of car park)

Business Support and Innovation

- Early pump priming support capital
- Initial administrative support
- Early Premises to establish Lydney Business Hub (eg Library/Empty shop unit/Car park pop up)
- Training events and Initial networking opportunities sponsored by LTC

APPENDIX 8 - COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE



The Town Council needs you to help shape the right priorities for investment. You can help us understand what is important to you by filling in this short questionnaire.

WHAT DO YOU LOVE ABOUT LYDNEY?

Please **tick your Top Three** ✓

- Views Across the Town Centre
- Historic Buildings and Structures (eg. The Cross)
- The Heritage Railway
- Plenty of Parking
- Good Bus Connections
- Walking and Cycling Facilities
- The Trees
- Floral Displays
- The Park
- The River Lyd
- Cleanliness
- Town Hall Venue
- The Library
- Good Range of Shops
- Supermarkets
- Friendly People

WHAT ARE YOUR PRIORITIES FOR CHANGE?

The town centre is at the heart of our community. It deserves our support. Use this section to let us know what improvements you want to see.

SHORT TERM PRIORITIES

Please **tick your Top Three** ✓

- Reduce Speed of Traffic
- Better Pedestrian Crossings
- More Floral Displays
- Tidy up the Shopfronts
- Tidy up the car parks
- More places to sit
- Free Parking
- Better Bus Services
- Better Road Signs
- Improve Pedestrian Information

LONG TERM PRIORITIES

Please **tick your Top Three** ✓

- Pedestrianise the Town Centre
- One-way traffic in Newerne Street
- Widen Pavements
- Better Cycling Facilities
- Improve the Bus Station
- Strengthen Park and Harbour Connections
- A new Town Public Space
- Plant more street trees
- More places to go out in the evening
- More Places for meeting
- More independent shops
- Attract National High Street Names
- New Startup workspace
- Permanent New Home for Market

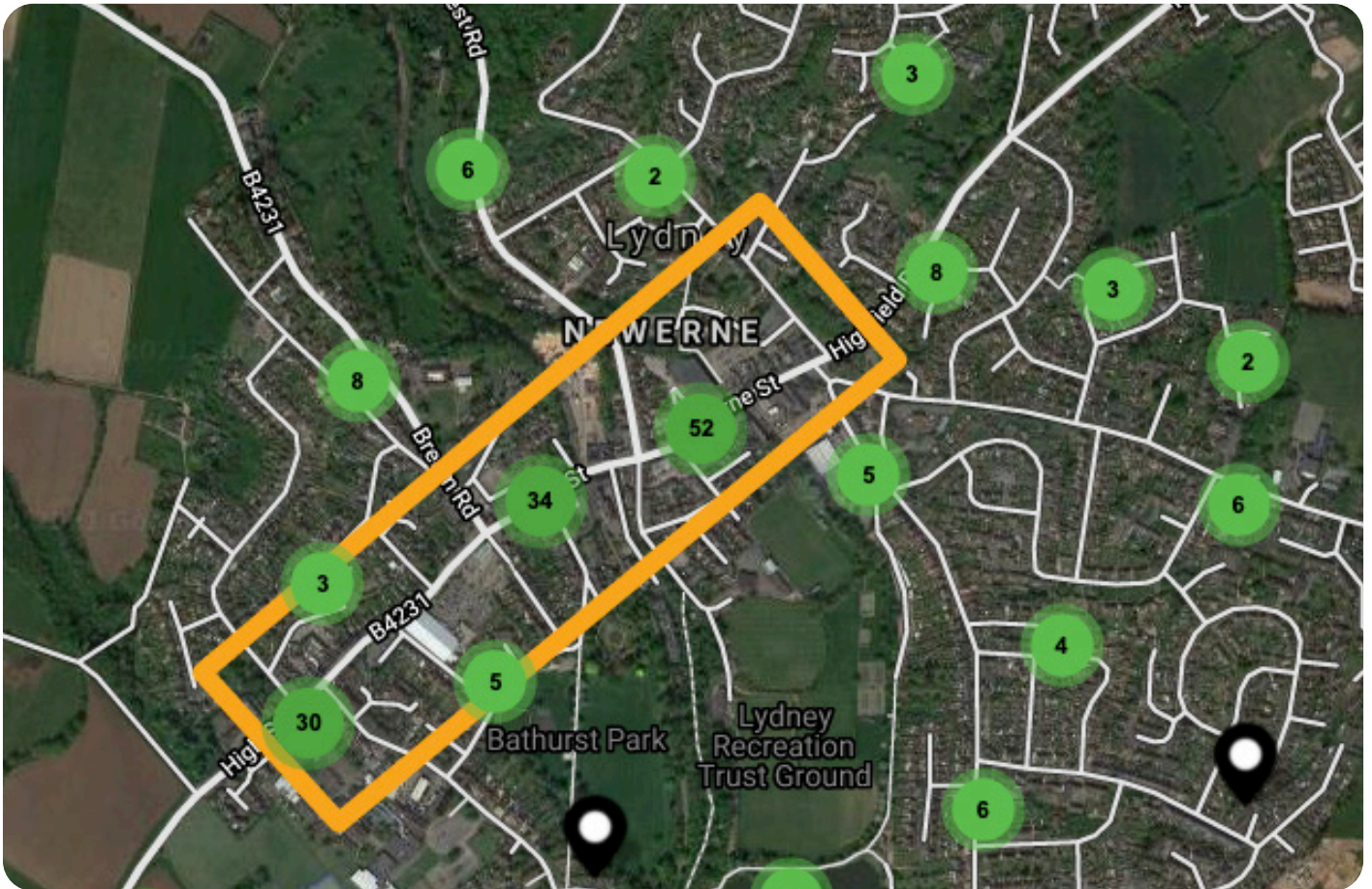
Is there something we have missed? Something you love? An Idea for improvements? Let us know here:

Please continue overleaf if you require.

Sign up to receive more info (optional):

email:

When you are finished please return this questionnaire to the event base.



Lydney Forward: Findings from Engagement Website

Final Report

August 2021

1.0 Introduction

Lydney forward is an initiative which is engaging the community of Lydney about how the town-centre could be improved for social and economic good.

This report details the findings from an interactive engagement website platform set up for the Lydney Forward project. The website was advertised via posters (with a QR code) and through local networks and social media channels.

The website invited participants to highlight issues and ideas by posting virtual pins on an interactive map.

The findings complement the emerging findings from a wider programme of analysis and engagement which has included door-to-door surveying and a stakeholder walking focus group activity.

2564 Site Visits

135 posts from 82 participants

Good Mix of Ages - 33% of respondents under 45

2.0 Emerging Themes

Celebrate The Civic

Amongst the most common themes from the interactive mapping was an appreciation of the quality of the built heritage. In particular, a number of landmarks buildings and features that speak to the rich history of the town;

"Heritage Buildings are an asset"

"The Town Hall is an asset and well used by lots of different groups"

"Steam Railway is a valued local asset"

Whilst, at the same time, there was a recognition that some of these buildings and spaces would benefit from investment. In particular the space around 'the Cross' and Town Hall was highlighted;

"The gateway to the town is good, but it could be enhanced further"

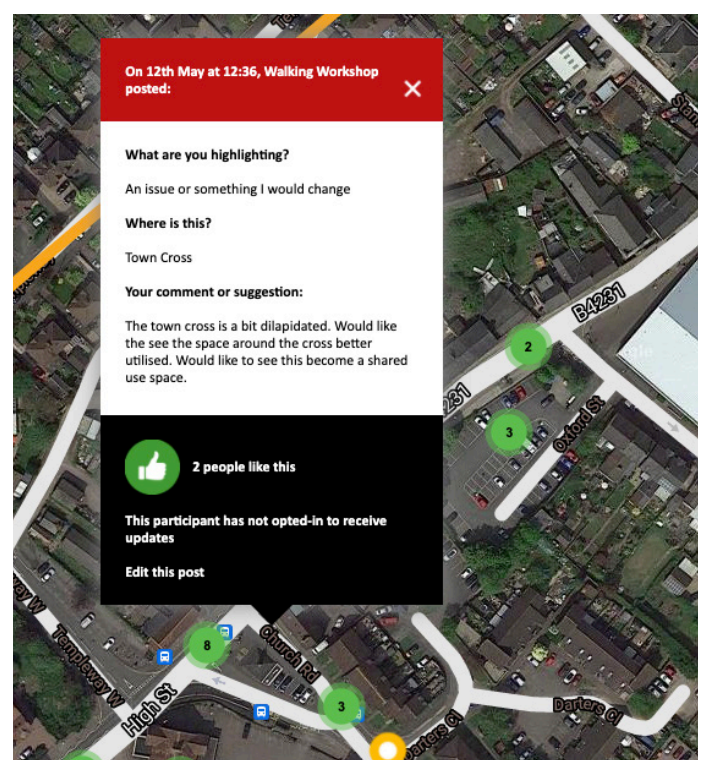
"There are a number of buildings on the high street that would benefit from being painted which would smarten up and brighten the high street"

"It has long be suggested that Lydney needs a focal point, or a town square"

"Need to provide people with places they can rest and stay. For example benches. This is relevant to the general area but has particular relevance to the town hall area."

"Need for more space for flexible uses e.g. meeting, temporary meeting space."

"Lydney needs a town square, open up the Lyd and create an attractive meeting and focus"



2.0 Emerging Themes

Reconnect with Nature

Another theme of the feedback was an appreciation that Lydney is set within and integrates with a natural landscape. The River Lyd runs through the heart of the town-centre and there are glimpsed views from the high street towards the forested hillsides that surround the town.

"Rivers are valued by local community"

"There are many trees that line the roads on the high street and surroundings that are valued"

"View to the east over the town is enjoyed greatly."

Also the generous amount of accessible parks (e.g. Bathurst Park) and open spaces were seen as a real asset for the town;

"Lydney's parks and green spaces are a huge asset to the town"

"Connections to park and green space are valued"

However, many participants felt there was more that could be done to celebrate and re-connect the natural landscape with the town;

"Riverside seating to provide a more robust connection between waterway and the town."

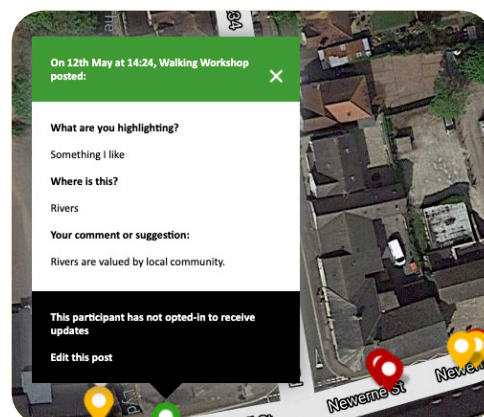
"Wifi, with interactive activities for all ages, history of the park, create a walk around Lydney"

'Add more planting and possibly vegetable planting also' "Plant some trees and put in flower beds"

"Re-instate the trees that have been removed from the various streets, they always provided beautiful colour in spring, and were always a talking point, we have lost so many in recent years, High Street, Templeway West, Templeway and others."

"A cycle path link from Lydney into the forest and connecting to the already existing cycle paths around the forest as in Coleford and Cinderford"

"Create a Riverside walk opened up to the town"



2.0 Emerging Themes

Traffic

One of the most frequently mentioned negative aspects of the town-centre was the impact from the volume of traffic that passed along the high street (High Street, Newerne St, Highfield Road and Hill St);

"There is too much traffic which is too noisy"

"Lots of traffic causing pollution and air quality issues"

"Heavy traffic combined with narrow streets makes for an undesirable amount of noise and air pollution."

Respondents wanted to address this in a number of ways;

"Newerne Street should be completely pedestrianised"

"20mph speed limit from the edge west of town to the centre"

"One way traffic for this area of High street"

"Too much traffic through high street... turn the high street into a shopping centre?"

"Add a pedestrian crossing at this location to make it easier for children, families and the elderly to safely cross the extremely busy road. Crossing with children is very unsafe there, due to the high volume of traffic"

"One of the things holding Lydney back is the volume of fast traffic on Newerne and High streets. It's not a nice place to shop. could there be another way to reduce the traffic? Stonehouse and Gloucester have shared streets, with Street furniture and no kerbs, and this makes the traffic much slower and quieter. We could plant more trees, and use planters and benches to make the streets look better"

The emphasis should be on improving experience of pedestrians and reducing vehicle dominance"



2.0 Emerging Themes

Wayfinding

The impact of traffic also seemed to contribute to a broader sense that different parts of the town-centre felt disconnected;

"High Street feels fragmented."

And, there was a desire to improve signage and wayfinding;

"Signage is seen as outdated"

"Street clutter and signage in combination with narrow footpaths creates pinch points. Can be difficult to traverse."

"Outdated signage. Street clutter."

"Town council notice board and town map are well liked however it is noted that there is some room for improvement with these."

This led many to conclude there was a need for a better wayfinding system;

"Welcome to Lydney Map, highlight what Lydney has to offer. Map of the Town."

"Link way finding to harbour"

"Wifi, with interactive activities for all ages, history of the park, create a walk around Lydney"



2.0 Emerging Themes

Car Parks

Lydney has a relatively large number of car parks, many of which are located to the rear of the high street. However, a number of respondents felt like this was a missed opportunity;

"Unsightly car parks"

"What is this carpark for? It seems largely unused for most of the time."

"B and M car park needs a clean up, all the shrubs in the car park are full of bottles,cans and general rubbish"

"Buy the car park from the District Council, take over the toilets, make it the permanent home of the market and encourage new traders"

"Market stalls. This area is pointless and make the use of this space for something else" [The overflow car park]



2.0 Emerging Themes

Bus Station

One location that was identified as being an opportunity for redevelopment was the Bus Station;

"The bus station area needs regeneration. It looks very old and uninviting."

"The bus station is a very important part of town, and needs some TLC, This area is drab and very uninviting"

Retail and Service Offer

Many respondents highlighted the much valued services in the town-centre and expressed concern about losing some of them;

"The Co-Op area and its facilities. Pharmacy, post office etc are good valuable amenities."

"Co-Op is moving. The co-op and surrounding franchises are seen as essential to the community. Key services are provided here"



2.0 Emerging Themes

"Library is a valued community asset. It is well used in particular the IT provisions."

"Bank has closed. This is a community facility that is missed. Would possibly like to a bank for this end of town."

There was a lot of debate about the retail offer, in particular in relation to the supporting independent shops;

"We should encourage more independent shops and food outlets to Lydney to create a more diverse high street"

Provide a grant to smarten up the shop frontages.

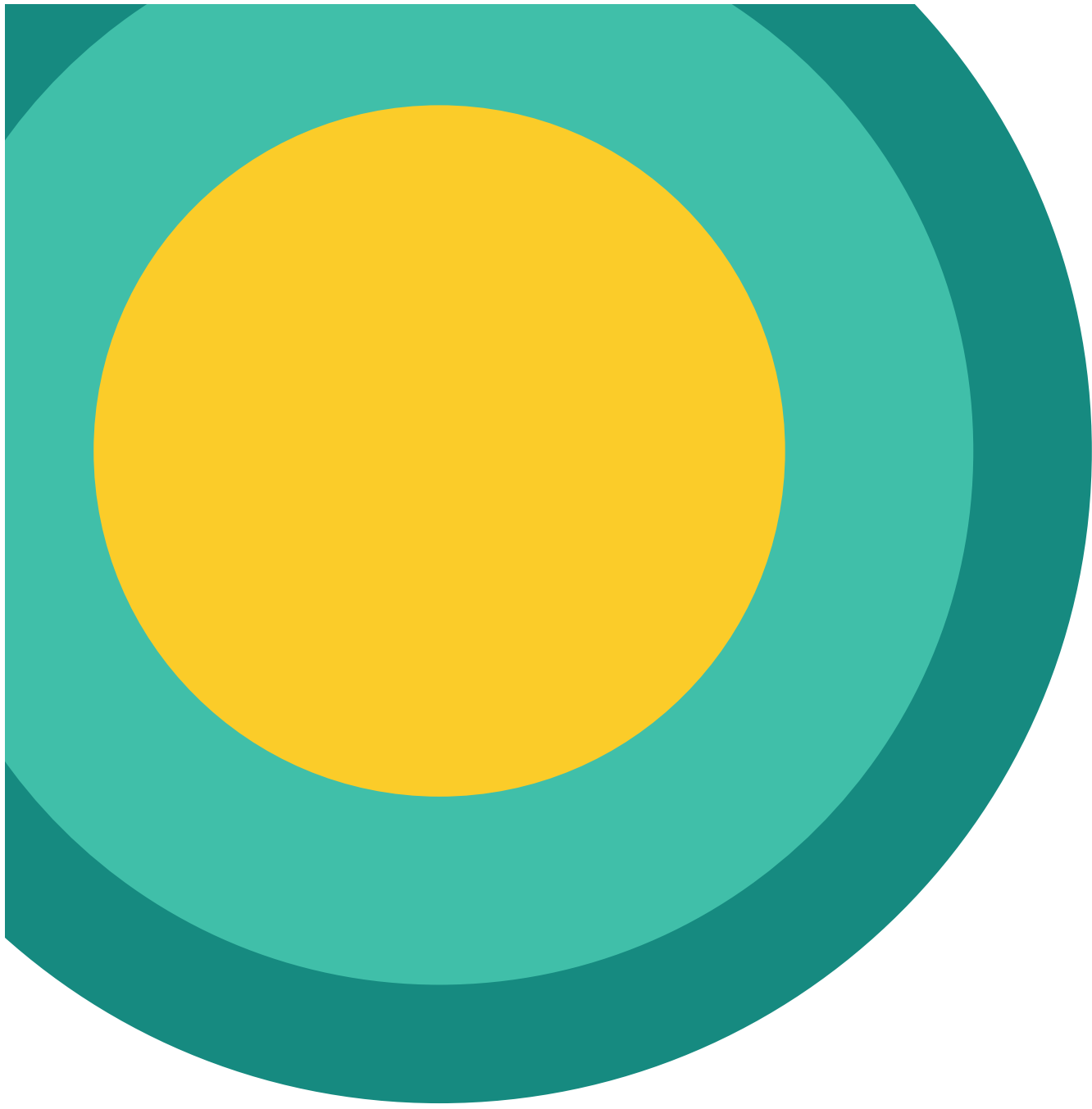
Paint the side walls on the shops along William Hill stretch of shops.

"A previous comment mentioned the Watts building and the vacant shops. I would like to see small independent shops here, hopefully of local businesses/people. There are examples of other towns that have subsidised small businesses in town centres to increase opportunities and support SME's"

Whilst others felt that more opportunities for larger retail was required;

"We have many little shops in the town, with small floor space, and I know Watts are always pushing for more of these. But surely to attract some high street names we need some shops with larger floor space"





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