

Endorsement of Bruton Town Plan 2017 (Executive Decision)

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Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to present a summary of the findings and actions from the Bruton Town Plan and to ask members to formally endorse the plan.

Representatives of the steering group will be at the meeting to present the plan for endorsement.

Public Interest

Communities establish their own priorities and achieve their goals by mobilising residents and businesses. The priorities and issues for Bruton, identified through consultation, are set out along with specific solutions, actions and policies in a published document.

Recommendation

That Area East Committee formally endorses the Bruton Town Plan 2017.

Background

Parish & Town Plans are effectively commissioned by the town/parish council and produced by local steering group with parish/town council representation. They are local documents, drawn up and adopted by Town/Parish councils. The endorsement of community plans by Area Committees has no legal status, but ensures that the community planning process is used to influence policy and action plans via the Area Development Plan (ADP).

Endorsement by Area East Committee (AEC) confers recognition that a sound process has been followed to deliver the plan. It does not imply support for any land use allocation that would pre-empt a planning application. The full document has been circulated to members and can be viewed on the Parish Council website: <https://brutontowncouncil.gov.uk/the-bruton-town-plan-2017-is-here/>. The background evidence base that informs the plan is also available on the website.

The Process

A steering group, established with representation from the Town Council and led by the Council, wrote a Town Plan Survey, which was delivered to all 1082 households in the Parish in October 2016. (The survey was also available for online completion.) The survey questions had been developed following comprehensive analysis of previous Town Plans, census and other information about Bruton and preliminary consultation with over 200 residents at the Packhorse Fair 2016. By the closing date, 33% of households had completed the survey. The results were collated and analysed in January and December 2017.

Further important feedback and intelligence was gathered from the Chamber of Commerce survey of local businesses in October 2016, and from a series of 'Town Plan Live' events held

in March 2017, and attended by 67 residents. The Town Council also commissioned an independent company to benchmark Bruton against similar small towns.

With this full evidence base available, the working group developed draft actions for each of the key themes of the Plan:

- How the Town looks
- Getting around
- Leisure and places to go
- Living and working in Bruton

These 15 draft actions were discussed with the Town Council, the Chamber of Commerce and Bruton Community Partnership and amended by the steering group in the light of the feedback received. 15 actions were then adopted by the Town Council meeting on the evening of 30 May 2017.

The result is a high-quality Town plan document with associated actions, underpinned by an evidence base, which should be useful for guiding local decision making on a range of issues including a strong basis on which to reach a view on the value to the community of future planning applications.

Actions based on key findings/major Issues

The final report survey findings and actions have been arranged under the themes: How the Town looks, Getting around, Leisure and places to go and Living and working in Bruton.

How the Town looks

The Plan reflects the strong view of residents that the Town Council should take an active role in relation to future development in the Town, pro-actively working with landowners and developers, and considering taking over land itself where necessary. Residents expressed a clear view about which parts of the Town they would wish to see protected, and where on the other hand significant development might be entertained.

Getting around

Road safety, and particularly the speed and volume of vehicles moving through the town was the single biggest issue raised through consultation. The Town Council has already worked with SCC Highways to take a number of steps to improve the situation. The Plan aims to build on this work by making Bruton 'a place where it feels easy and safe to walk around, but wrong to drive fast'.

Other themes including green travel routes (walking and cycling) and public transportation came out high on the action list.

Leisure and places to go

The consultation process identified aspiration and potential need for additional facilities including facilities for children & young people, additional sports facilities and the development of a new community hall. The Town Council intends to facilitate further investigations to ascertain the actual level of need for the above and to encourage volunteers to lead on the various elements of the plan including setting up two new community groups 'friends of the River Brue' and a group to oversee Bruton's footpaths. (The first of these groups has already been established).

Living and working in Bruton

The evidence of the Town's Benchmarking Report is that the town is thriving with few vacant shops and high levels of employment. With the arrival of Hauser & Wirth and its 130,000 visitors per year, Bruton has seen increased prosperity and employment. Visitor numbers are predicted to grow even further with the opening of the Emily Estate in Hadspen. Tourism has become and will continue to be Bruton's growth industry. Actions within the Town Plan very much support improving the image of the Town, its information sharing and visual welcoming environment.

Implementation of the Town plan

The plan has been adopted by Bruton Town Council and the responsibility of reviewing and monitoring the success of the actions rests with the Council. The plan is very clear that the delivery on many of the actions and projects will only be possible with support of volunteers and partnership working with outside agencies and funders.

The Area Neighbourhood Development Officer has worked with the Town Council and has provided advice and guidance at various stages of the process. Initially Officer support was high in the planning stages but since then the Town Council have worked hard liaising with the local community to come up with the final document you see in front of you today. The group has demonstrated that they have followed a sound process and that the conclusions and actions are underpinned by local evidence.

Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report however, if members agree the recommendation to endorse the plan, actions and projects identified will become eligible for support from the Community Planning Implementation budget, subject to application.

Corporate Priority Implications

This work contributes towards increasing economic vitality and prosperity and ensuring safe, sustainable and cohesive communities.

Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications

Improved local provision of facilities and activities within each village or town and increasing local participation reduce the need to travel.

Equality and Diversity Implications

The community planning process supported by SSSC aims to give every local resident the opportunity to have an input into the way in which their town or Parish develops.

Background Papers: *Bruton Town Plan 2017*