

Brecon 20:20

Section I: Streetscene

Community Derived Action Plan



I. Section I: Streetscene

5.1 The Existing Situation

- I.1.1. Brecon is a market town, established in Norman times. It has narrow streets, Georgian façades and a restored canal basin. It also has a 12th Century Cathedral, South Wales Borderers Military Museum, Brecknock Museum, specialist independent retailers and national chains, cinema and outdoor shops. The Taff trail and Usk Valley walks start here with shorter walks along the River Usk Promenade and Canal Tow Path.
- I.1.2. Even with all this and the Brecon Beacons on its doorstep Brecon town centre like many town centres has declined. Empty shops, lack of repair to buildings and neglected streets are the result.
- I.1.3. We must find a way to reverse this for the benefit of those who live and visit Brecon. For those that live here it is a familiar, useful and fondly regarded place which plays an important role in bringing people together and providing a social and community focal point for all ages.

- 1.1.4. The survey response showed that 60% of respondents were proud to show visitors around their town. 55% felt that the town centre cleanliness was below average. Increased cleaning schedules have been agreed and implemented by Brecon Town Council since the survey was completed.
- 1.1.5. In order of priority new shops, clean streets, building repairs and flowers and art are seen as the best ways to improve the attractiveness of the town.
- 1.1.6. Likewise in order to promote the heritage of the town respondents identified the need to refurbish and renovate some of the buildings, improved interpretation and signage and increased advertising were seen as essential too.

5.1 What does that mean for the future?

- 5.1.1 To improve the town and make it an inviting place for residents and visitors it is clear that the cleanliness, already being addressed by Brecon Town Council needs to be improved further. Everyone in the town can help by keeping their own areas clean.
- 5.1.2 Responsibility for improving the buildings within the town rests with those who own them, but there is help towards those costs, primarily from the Town Centre Property Improvement Fund, coordinated by Powys County Council (PCC).

5.2 How are we going to address the issues?

- 5.2.1 Brecon Town Council will continue to work on the cleanliness of the town.
- 5.2.2 Powys County Council will encourage landlords to renovate and repair buildings using the financial resources on offer.
- 5.2.3 Improvements to signage, plaques, interpretation and advertising will all be pursued.

TERM	AREA/No	ACTION	WHO	WHEN
Short Term	1.1	Continue to improve the cleanliness of the Town Centre streets Install more litter bins in the town	Brecon Town Council (BTC) BTC	Within 12 months of acceptance of plan
	1.2	Reach out to shop owners to take ownership of their pavement and implement a "Clean the Shop Front Campaign"	Brecon Chamber of Trade/Shop Owners/BTC	Within 12 months of acceptance of plan
	1.3	Appeal to owners of buildings to repair them. Joint letter from Brecon Town Council/Chamber of Trade and Brecon 20:20 Encourage owners to spend more on their shops and paint them regularly	BTC/Brecon 20:20/Chamber of Trade/BBNPA	Within 12 months of acceptance of plan
	1.4	Identify priority buildings - 1. The empty properties in the town and 2. Identify buildings requiring repairs/painting Details of the Town Centre Property Improvement Fund and	BBNPA and Brecon 20:20 /BTC	Within 3 months Within 12 months of acceptance

		loan scheme to be provided by Powys County Council and circulated to empty property owners Encourage reduced rents from landlords	Powys County Council (PCC)/Brecon Chamber of Trade	
Medium term	1.5	Walking Tours/ Heritage Trail - circular walks and restoration schemes e.g. theatre trail and poetry trail Audit of current trails	Brecon Town Council (Visit Brecon)/ Brecon 20:20/Brecknock Society/ Brecon heritage and cultural network (digital marketing project)/Regimental Museum	2 years
	1.6	Signage/Plaques – clean and restore plaques and add to existing sites Need to find out where plaques were originally sited e.g. ask museum/facebook Signage – Powys have a small amount of money to signpost Y Gaer and other heritage attractions. Further audit and new signage required	Brecon 20:20/Plan Brecon PCC BTC/PCC Brecon Heritage and Cultural Network	1 year
	1.7	Research BID and regeneration schemes and Town Centre management schemes that have worked	BTC/BBNPA/	Within 1 Year

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Section 2: Parking and Traffic

Community Derived Action Plan



2. Section 2: Parking and Traffic

6.1 The Existing Situation

- 6.1.1 It is recognised that there are parking issues in Brecon. Town Centre parking is free but is limited in terms of the number of spaces available and the amount of time allowed in those spaces, which tend to be limited to 30 minutes or 1 hour at most. The town centre parking leads to cars circling the town looking for somewhere to park.
- 6.1.2 Some years ago changes to the flow of traffic were attempted but failed. Cars were discouraged from driving up through the town via Ship Street and down through the Bulwark to the Watton via a “choke” introduced at the zebra crossing at the bottom of the Bulwark. Under this scheme it was hoped that all through traffic would follow the route around the town and not through the centre.
- 6.1.3 The failure of the “choke” scheme has led to cars, vans and lorries continuing to use the town centre as a through route as well as an access for shops and businesses.

- 6.1.4 The data received from PCC shows that they manage eleven car parks in the town, with a variety of staying time and hourly/daily charges. In total the car parks generate significant amounts of money for PCC. In 2018/19 this is reported to be in excess of £500,000. The net income from this service is used on other services e.g. the bus service.
- 6.1.5 The impact of the current car-parking regime is that streets close to the centre are clogged up during the day with town centre workers and visitors choosing to park for free on these side streets. In addition it is difficult for the town centre to compete with the out of town provision both in Brecon and especially from Cyfartha Park, Merthyr Tydfil.

6.2 What you told us about Parking and Traffic

- 6.2.1 The response rate from residents on parking questions was high. People were asked how important it is to park on the High Street and Bulwark. The responses ranged from 1= not important to 10= very important. 59% scored in the range 1 to 5, with 31% scoring it a 1 and therefore not important at all. Nearly 41% scored in the range 6 to 10, with 22% scoring it a 10, meaning for just over 1/5th of respondents parking in the centre of town is very important. The conclusion from this question is that opinion in the town is divided on this issue.
- 6.2.2 Residents were then asked the optimum length of time for parking in the town centre, in the George Street (adjacent to the Co-op) car park and in the bus station car park. 79% of respondents said that 30 minutes or 1 hour was adequate in the town centre. 42% would like to park for more than 2 hours in the Co-op car park and 74% were happy with more than 2 hours in the bus station car park.
- 6.2.3 When some traffic free areas were considered 53% of respondents answered that some traffic free areas would benefit the town centre, while 39% did not think there would be a benefit. While safety and the ambience of the town were seen as potential benefits there were concerns that it would lead to a loss of business in the town centre.
- 6.2.4 73% of respondents to this question felt that they were able to get around Brecon by public transport, although a number of people highlighted areas of the town not currently serviced by buses.
- 6.2.5 A high response rate on what would “encourage you to cycle” concluded that cycle lanes, paths, traffic free areas as well as the provision of bike racks/shelters are the key issue.

6.3 How are we going to address the issues?

- 6.3.1 There is a perception that Brecon has a parking problem. Residents are unable to park close to where they live, business owners are concerned that the parking policy actively discourages potential customers and for visitors and customers the difficulty with parking make visiting and shopping in Brecon difficult.
- 6.3.2 By a slight majority (53%) there is an appetite for partial pedestrianisation of the town centre for some of the time. This needs further investigation and analysis to determine the best outcome for the town as a whole. A working group will be established to take this forward.

6.3.3 Evidence will be required for any future changes required to the PCC car parking strategy in Brecon. A range of innovative solutions to this problem will be explored in a collaboration between the businesses, the community and the public sector in the town.

6.3.4 Bus services in the town need to be maintained and active travel routes developed to encourage greater use of bicycles.

TERM	AREA/No	ACTION	WHO	WHEN
Medium	2.1	A slim majority of respondents to the survey indicated that they would like partial pedestrianisation of the town. Identify stakeholders to get together to discuss options for a trial pedestrianisation of the town centre and consult with the public. Contact officers who have made Abergavenny traffic free and ask them to come and talk to the group about the experience/issues in Abergavenny. Establish stakeholder group to take this forward	Brecon 20:20, Chamber of Trade, Brecon Business Club, PCC, BTC	Within 2 years of action plan adoption
	2.2	Need to gather evidence on parking practices and income generated at the various car parks in the town from PCC. Identify potential blocks to car parking. Consider restriction zones in residential areas to encourage parking in car parks. Introduce price incentives	Brecon 20:20/ BTC, Chamber of Trade/	Within 1 year
	2.3	Monitor success of forthcoming car payment scheme in car parks and continue to monitor income generation in each car park	PCC	Within 1 year
	2.4	Consider ways that the price incentives could be achieved to minimise or remove the cost of parking for shoppers. For example the money back scheme of the Co-op. Engage chamber of trade.	PCC, BTC, Chamber of Trade	Within 1 year
	2.5	Investigate the provision of a free bus service from car park (Brecon as capital of the Beacons) to Storey Arms (Park and Ride). Needs promotion and signage – would increase footfall.	Welsh Government transport/Visit Wales T4 Wales Brecon 20:20	Within 1 year

		Talk to Transport for Wales and BBNPA regarding experience with Beacons Bus and the feasibility of an electric bus. Designate Brecon a Transport Hub / Nodal Interchange on the Wales Way Cambrian Route linking with the Brecon and Monmouth Canal and the Taff Trail		
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