

# FROM COMMUNITY PLAN



A  
**VISION**

FOR FROME

2008 | 2028

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**VISION**  
**FOR FROME**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the summer of 2008 Vision for Frome asked the people of the town to say what they liked about Frome, what they disliked, and what they would like to see changed over the coming years. The outcomes can best be summarised as follows:

*We care about Frome and value its character and charm, but we are not blind to its shortcomings. We want to both preserve its heritage and fulfil its potential.*

*We want to see a thriving town that is both economically vibrant and cares about its residents.*

*We want to see the young people of Frome given the best possible chances in life and the elderly made to feel safe and secure.*

*We want a town that is both physically and socially healthy and is fit for the environmental challenges the future holds.*

*We need to address the sources of frustration that cause issue with the efficient functioning of our town by moving into an effective phase of action*

*We want to see a town that works together and achieves together.*

Vision for Frome received upward of 3000 comments, amongst which there were a number of prevailing themes. These are addressed in this Plan as Aims under six chapter headings.

These Aims and associated projects will be taken forward by a number of different implementation groups working with a Vision for Frome management team. All this will be under the auspices of the community at large through a forum based arrangement. Many of the projects envisaged for implementation will depend on local government, business and commercial activity, and it is well understood that building and maintaining strong links and close involvement and cooperation between the community and these delivery agencies will be essential for success

Whilst the Aims will endure, the related list of projects will be subject to regular change as they are completed, further developed, perhaps superseded or abandoned, or new ones added. Listing of all the projects envisaged at time of issue is not therefore included in this Plan, but appears as a separate document to accompany it.



### **Economy**

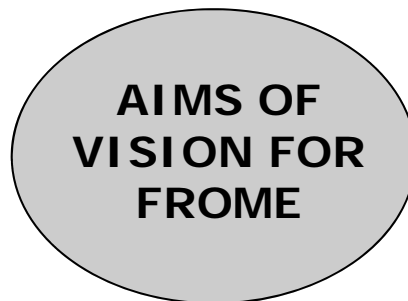
- To provide an environment which attracts businesses and entrepreneurs to Frome, keeps them here, and enables existing businesses to develop and grow
- To provide incentives for Frome residents and visitors to come into the town centre to shop
- To make Frome an attractive destination for tourists, visitors and those who are considering moving to Frome

### **Getting Around**

- To improve pedestrian access and safety
- To improve parking and traffic flow
- To reduce quantity and impact of through traffic
- To increase use of public transport and decrease use of fossil fuels

### **Young People**

- To provide opportunities for personal development through play
- To provide safe opportunities for socialising without alcohol
- To prepare for an interesting and satisfying adult life



### **Housing and Heritage**

- To provide for local housing needs
- To ensure good design quality and energy efficiency
- To protect existing local green areas, employment land and neighbourhood character
- To preserve and enhance the historic character of the town

### **Society and Well-Being**

- To safeguard and promote the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual welfare of all residents
- To ensure Frome is a safe and pleasant place in which to live, work and move around
- To promote a sense of community, so that all residents feel they belong, have a voice and share common values
- To promote health and well-being through stimulating and enjoyable activities for all ages

### **Land Use, Food, Energy and Waste**

- To secure the different parts of the local landscape for their most appropriate commercial, industrial, residential or leisure use on the basis of their natural and social capacities and endowments
- To create a resilient, self-reliant, economically and environmentally sustainable local food economy
- To promote economy, resilience and self-reliance in the provision and use of energy locally
- To minimise the local production of waste

# INTRODUCTION

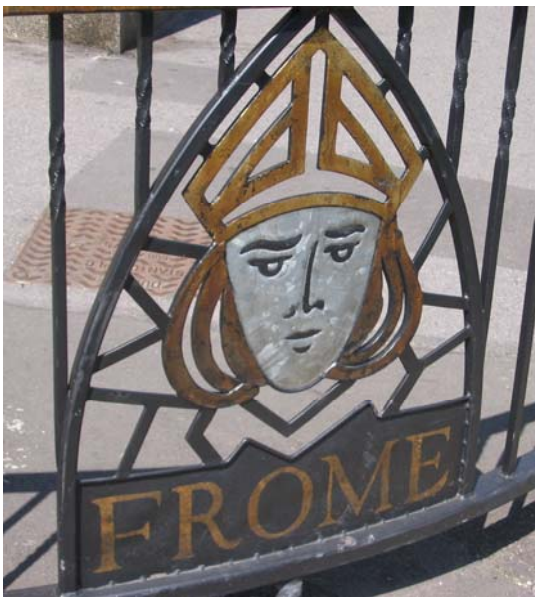
## THE TOWN

### Administration

Frome is the fourth largest town in Somerset and the largest in Mendip, but it is only three miles from the Wiltshire border and has close socio-economic ties to Warminster, Westbury and Trowbridge. Although in administrative terms Vision for Frome needs to work with Somerset and Mendip, in 'real life' terms it has to take West Wiltshire and Bath into account.

### Geography

Frome is set in a steep sided valley near the ancient ford crossing of the River Frome. Architecturally well-preserved, the buildings mould themselves to the shape of the landscape, and present a charming multi-layered roofscape.



### History

The town was founded in 685 AD as a small religious settlement by Saint Aldhelm, whose purpose was to convert the dissidents living in the surrounding ancient forest of Selwood. The church of St John was built near a spring. This fresh water source still feeds into the Holy Well and the leat in Cheap Street – Frome's most distinctive feature – before running underground to join the River Frome.

With a river crossing, market and wool industry, Frome prospered into the Middle Ages and was of more importance than Bath before the latter was 'discovered'. In decline from the 1740s, Frome recovered during the Napoleonic Wars when its woollen mills supplied the famous Blue Cloth for army uniforms. Other manufacturing developed, notably a brass foundry and a huge printing works.

For centuries the town remained a small, cramped settlement south of the river in what is now the Conservation Area. It was affected by the non-conformist movement in the 18th century and dozens of chapels sprang up. These were only rivalled in number by the independent breweries, of which just one remains today.

### **The last 50 years**

The population stayed much the same until the 1960s, when Frome was designated a commuter town for the Bath/Bristol overflow. It then grew rapidly and now has a population of around 27,000.

In the 1980s manufacturing in Frome declined dramatically and this was a significant and difficult time for the town. It recovered earlier than other Mendip towns, which has given it a competitive edge.

During the past few decades, investment in the historical fabric of the town has dramatically improved its appearance. The Frome Festival, launched in 2001, has helped promote the town as a creative and artistic community.

### **Character**

This arts image is at odds with Frome's previous identity as a manufacturing town. Reconciling the old and new elements of Frome is one of the challenges of the Vision.

Frome was often a hotbed of dissent and non-conformity and nowadays appears tolerant of diversity. However, its tolerance is not necessarily acceptance; and nor is it universal, as minority responses show.

There are a notable number of voluntary organisations in the town, which are actively engaged in supporting the local community. However, while the artistic groups tend to attract younger people and the early-retired, many of the less glamorous organisations rely on a decreasing supply of elderly volunteers and are struggling to survive.

## **STRATEGIC CONTEXT**

The Vision for Frome (V4F) Community Plan operates within a wider context of plans, policies and programmes coordinated by different public, private and voluntary sectors. We understand the roles of other agencies, including the statutory responsibilities they have. One of the challenges about the delivery of the aims of this Plan is to understand how our priorities and objectives can be built into and influence delivery and business plans of other organisations. With our objectives and their plans, we can work together to deliver the projects that the consultation has identified.

At the town level, our Plan is aiming to coordinate local groups and organisations to deliver these projects. Some groups already exist, and have already taken up some early work on projects envisaged

by this Plan; others, big or small, will need to be created. We know that we need to work in partnership with the town council; local business partners and other benefactors will be needed in order to make things happen on the ground.

There are some projects and initiatives that will require involvement and funding from other agencies/organisations. Some issues will be pursued with individual organisations. Where a number of agencies need to work together, the Sustainable Community Strategy will be the appropriate strategic vehicle.

The Local Government Act 2000 has placed a duty on all principal local authorities to prepare a Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS). This is to promote the economic, environmental and social well-being of their areas and contribute to the achievement of sustainable development in the UK.

Its aims are to allow local communities to articulate their aspirations, needs and priorities, and to co-ordinate the actions of local authorities, agencies and other organisations. County and District councils have both signed up to the Sustainable Communities Act, which is designed to empower residents. There is potential here for community-led action, especially by implementation groups.

Within our area the Mendip Strategic Partnership (MSP) coordinates the SCS activity, drawing together public agencies such as Mendip and Somerset councils, the Police, the NHS and job centres, as well as representatives from local business and voluntary groups. During the process of preparing this Plan, the MSP began reviewing its existing Community Strategy, to develop it into a Sustainable Community Strategy.

As a result, some of the consultation and background research effort has been shared. Joint working has ensured that some objectives and projects from this Plan will be reflected in the SCS at that strategic level, putting them on the agenda of the MSP's member organisations. This channel is one which the V4F Community Plan will need to continue to influence in order to bring about coordinated action on some of the objectives we have set out.

Associated with the Sustainable Community Strategy is the Local Development Framework (LDF), whose role is to articulate the distinctive development needs of the town and balance social, economic and environmental pressures. As the statutory Development Plan used to determine planning applications, it was important that the V4F Plan informed its preparation. It will help to



moderate objectives emerging from national and regional levels into proposals which are appropriate for Frome.

We have been fortunate to be able to coordinate the preparation of the V4F Plan with the preparation of the Sustainable Community Strategy. This gives it a greater strategic influence. As other policies and programmes come forward, we will continue to work in partnership with whichever organisations are necessary to achieve our goals.

## **MAKING THE PLAN**

At a public meeting in November 2006, about 70 active citizens articulated their aspirations for the next 20 years. The feedback from that was submitted as part of an application by Mendip's Regeneration Officer for a Market and Coastal Towns Initiative. The funding for this enabled 'Vision for Frome' to be set up in 2007.

Although community interest was slow to re-animate, in due course we appointed a Community Agent and gave talks to several community groups to help generate support. We set up a website [www.vision4frome.org.uk](http://www.vision4frome.org.uk) and commissioned a logo design. We wanted to know about Frome in 2008, so employed a specialist to do a Baseline Study. The production of this in January 2008 created some new local interest, and as we neared the consultation phase more active members of the community became involved.

The District Council was planning a consultation event at the same time, so to avoid duplication, confusion and consultation fatigue, we agreed to work together where possible. It was decided that V4F would lead most of the process and that all data would be shared. We asked other official bodies if they also had any consultation that could be run concurrently.

When MCTA, one of our funding bodies, announced it was about to be abolished, we realised that we had to complete our Plan and submit it before the end of June. Our consultation timetable was already in place and we could not easily change venue bookings, so we stuck with our programme for March to May and simultaneously prepared for the writing stage. The community response was immediate and the tight deadline helped increase momentum.

We had already realised that many residents were 'turned off' by consultations and we could not expect them to come to events. Our aim was to be as pro-active as we reasonably could. For 'hard to reach' groups like the Polish community and disaffected youth,

we used experienced facilitators. The team went out and tried to involve the rest, knowing it would not be an easy task.

To make it more appealing, we introduced a fun element wherever we could - helium balloons, amusing stickers, a bright logo, and colourful posters - and our biggest consultation event was a family Fun Day. A description of our methodology can be seen at Appendix A and a list of events at Appendix B.



The team found satisfaction in learning from other residents what our community needs and wants, and also from the consultation's successful outcome and the likelihood of on-going community involvement.

After the first draft of the Community Plan was submitted in June 2008, we circulated it to local authorities and other interested parties. In the autumn, we provided workshops to look at each chapter and discuss how they needed to be expanded. Several groups began to implement the next stage of research, and their critical path analyses are included in this document.

Hard to reach groups had, predictably, been very hard to engage. Over the summer, the professional team we employed did manage to get some useful feedback from minority groups, which has been incorporated in the body of the revised Plan. It does in many ways look like a 'Minority Report', giving a very different, often alienated or unsympathetic view of Frome. This was at odds with the original picture, which had appeared too homogenous to be true; this report showed it was not the whole picture.

Our Community Plan sets out a Vision for Frome for the next twenty years.

"I've watched Frome flourish over the years from a shabby little town that one would just want to drive through, to a clean, vibrant, delightful town in which to shop and rendezvous with friends"

**"I think we should have a Mall as all the shops we actually need in Frome keep shutting ... not everyone can get to places like Bath or Bristol"**

"Westway could be improved - it's looking tired"

"More jobs - attract big companies to Frome with decent opportunities and career prospects for young people"

"As a young person I found it very difficult to find a good job in the town and I now work in Trowbridge"

"There should be more use of school facilities to provide extra-curricula (job related) skills courses for teenagers and young adults"

"First impressions of Frome were poor; however it improves a lot on further acquaintance"

"What's missing is the means to attract employers to the town. I would rather that effort be directed at bringing in one major employer than scatter the money and effort across a host of smaller but less bold initiatives"

**"Promote Frome in Bath Tourist Information Centre"**

"Prepare a package of tourist activities to lure tourists from, for example, Bath to visit Frome and enjoy its history, food and crafts"

**"My Vision for Frome is an improved first impression. The Westway Centre is the 'meeter and greeter' and looks seedy, has no seating, needs a coat of paint. The 'security' guards are ineffective and not an asset - the unwelcoming impression. My customers (Catherine Hill) walk quickly through the precinct - there is nothing that appeals. If there is a problem with troublemakers, why not call the Police?"**

"I like the variation of shops in Frome"

# ECONOMY

## BACKGROUND

Frome has a long history of being an independent and non-conformist entrepreneurial town with a heritage of artisan production. It was a centre of the cloth trade before the Industrial Revolution, when the clothiers built the Trinity area for their workers and substantial houses for themselves.

Frome is administratively part of Somerset and Mendip, but economically is perhaps more connected to West Wiltshire, Bath and Bristol. The town remains a recognised centre for the surrounding area, but the lack of public transport from the villages has reduced its importance.

Frome has retained branches of the main banks, and there is a wide range of services available in the town.

### Traditional industries

In the nineteenth century J. W. Singer produced the statues that recorded the icons of the British Empire, and Butler & Tanner developed from the back of a shop in the town centre to become an international printing business.

In the past 25 years both companies have downsized and moved from premises in the town centre to the periphery, and their old sites have been converted to housing. At the time of the consultation, Butler & Tanner was in Administration; by the end of writing this Plan, it had been saved, downsized and re-launched as Butler, Tanner and Dennis.

### New businesses

Frome has attracted some footloose businesses in the last decade, such as *Duo*, the innovative footwear retailer, and *Chicken House*, an international children's book publisher. Commerce Park, the new industrial estate on Frome's northern edge, is attracting some small expanding local firms, as well as a few national companies.



## **Internet**

Many newer businesses, and many of the independent shops, do at least some of their trade through the Internet. There are also a significant number of home workers who depend on it.

## **Public sector**

Somerset County Council has several staffed offices and facilities in Frome. For the most part they are Social Services offices, but there are also Registry Services, the library and Somerset Skills and Learning. Mendip District Council has a Council Information Point in the library and some locally based officers such as the Markets Officer. Frome Town Council has its office centrally in Palmer Street and currently employs 12 staff.

## **Training**

Frome has a lack of local post-16 education and training provision. Frome Education and Training Enterprise (FETE) opened its temporary facility in 2008 and can now provide an extended range of courses including E2E (entry to employment) and vocational options. There is also potential to develop closer links with local businesses and make better use of the pool of expertise and talent amongst the economically inactive including the recently retired.

## **Commuters**

More than 6,000 people, nearly half of all Frome residents in work, commute out of town, mostly to surrounding towns and industrial areas. 2,700 Frome jobs, just over one third, are held by incoming commuters. These are from the surrounding villages; or from Wiltshire, where house prices are lower.

## **Employment pattern**

The town shows a lower proportion of self-employment to employment than in Mendip generally, but the higher proportion in surrounding villages balances this.

## **Elderly care**

Recruitment in the Care sector and for factory-based work is now heavily dependent on workers from outside the UK. This is likely to be a long-term issue. We need to ensure that we include these people in our community and are able to house them.

## **Retail**

The town centre is characterized by small independent shops. The previously low number of multiples has increased in recent years, with W H Smith and M&S joining Boots, Lloyds and Argos.

Woolworths was an early victim of the recession but this gap in the main street has now been filled by Iceland.

There are three supermarkets in or near the town centre, and two out of town superstores, one on a retail park. Rents for retail premises are lower than neighbouring towns and yields are slightly weaker.

There is a limited range of goods available, which is in part down to the limited number of appropriate sized and quality premises for retail chains. Research has indicated that Frome shoppers choose other towns and out-of-town shopping superstores because of the wider shopping offered and the free parking.

### **Gateways**

There are no real 'gateways' marking the town centre, and pedestrian flow is impeded by the road running through the Market Place. It causes discontinuity between Catherine Hill and Cheap Street, the two historic shopping areas which could form the spine of the town centre.

### **Tourism**

Apart from the attraction of these shopping areas, Frome has no clear identity or central feature to bring visitors into the town centre. The lack of hotel rooms and conference facilities have led to a historic reluctance to promote Frome and still makes it difficult to market the town as a tourist destination.

### **Local centre**

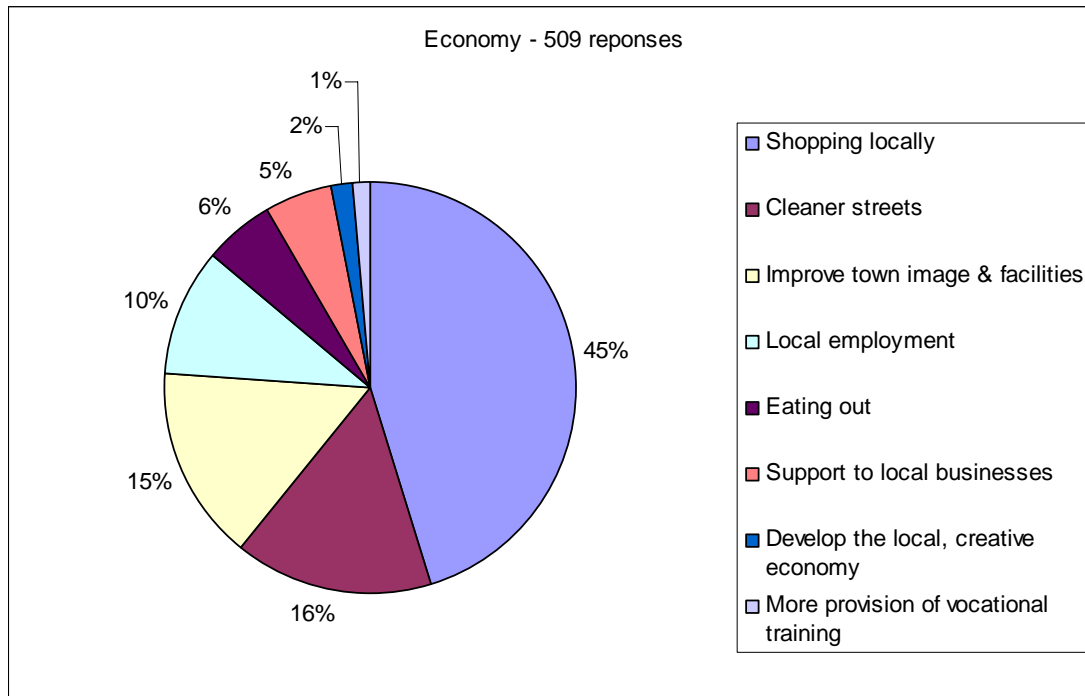
It is believed that rural shoppers have to drive and tend to go no further than the nearest out-of-town supermarket for the bulk of their needs. Cheaper parking in Wiltshire towns means those people living to the east of the town may choose them in preference to Frome for banking, hair cuts and library books etc.

The town's links with the agricultural community have been weakened in the last 20 years by the relocation of the cattle market to Standerwick and the Cheese Show to West Woodlands. However, the Frome Farmers' Market remains among the most successful in Somerset.

## **CONSULTATION FINDINGS**

Responses relating to the economy were high, perhaps reflecting current economic situation and the credit crunch, but also reflecting a genuine local concern that Frome continues to grow and prosper.

A diagram showing the key issues raised is below, with a more detailed breakdown in Appendix C.



It is clear that the main issue for the people of Frome is that of local shopping. Within this is included the need to improve the local markets, improve the range of shopping available and the value local people feel for independent retailers. There was a strong demand for a national chain retailer for women's and men's clothing, and for 'family' restaurants.

The lack of a full range of provision has resulted in a lower proportion of Frome residents using the town for non-food shopping.

The consultation responses identified the need for good transport links, business support, networking opportunities and skilled workers. It also highlighted a lack of knowledge about what Frome does already have.

Most responses to the survey of businesses considered Frome a good place to be but thought that the profile of the town was too low. Two thirds of local businesses questioned wanted to grow their business, but identified that there is a lack of suitable accommodation in town for those working at home, or of converted houses to use as live-work units.

## THE FUTURE

We have already seen an improvement in our town in terms of local businesses and fewer empty shops. In this economic climate, we have an even bigger challenge ahead; not only to keep our impressive range of independent retailers, but also to build on this and ensure we have all of our shopping needs provided locally.

The Saxonvale site is seen as key to the expansion of the town centre, and has the potential to accommodate the national retailers required in Frome, such as a general clothing store etc. In redressing the deficit in retail, a balance needs to be kept as Frome's unique character owes much to its independent retailers.

We have to accept that Frome is unlikely to attract major manufacturing employers creating large numbers of jobs because of globalization and the lack of national or long distance transport links. We need to attract entrepreneurs and businesses to come to Frome, so the town should concentrate on provision for small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and enable those who are here to develop and grow their business.

In looking ahead we can see the need to make that sure our employees are appropriately skilled and that we do not lose our young, skilled people. Vocational training is seen as an important element needed for our businesses to grow; and by supporting the FETE project we should see a new centre in Frome, specifically developed to train and upskill people of all ages.

It was shown to us that Frome needs a stronger identity (or identities) for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This needs to be 'owned' and acceptable to everyone. We also need a town profile and unifying image with which we can promote it to potential visitors, residents and new businesses.

### **Our Vision:**

*A town widely known as an attractive place to live, work and visit, which has a sustainable entrepreneurial culture, where training and retail needs are met, and where residents are enabled to use their skills close to home, benefiting their town, their families and their environment.*



In order to achieve this vision, we commit to the following:

## **AIMS & OBJECTIVES**

**Aim 1: To provide an environment which attracts businesses and entrepreneurs to Frome, keeps them here, and enables existing businesses to develop and grow**

### Objectives

- i) To work towards ensuring adequate provision is made for accommodating new businesses, including IT and home workers
- ii) To address the lack of business support, skilled workers, networking opportunities and knowledge about what already exists in Frome
- iii) To retain young people in the town by seeking to improve training facilities and career prospects and provide support for young people setting up in business
- iv) To explore the potential for using the experience and talents of the recently retired
- v) To assimilate into our community workers from outside the UK

**Aim 2: To provide incentives for Frome residents and visitors to come into the town centre to shop**

### Objectives

- i) To satisfy the demand for clothing retailers and restaurants in the town centre, without endangering its existing individual character
- ii) To consider the most appropriate way of charging for use of Frome car parks
- iii) To examine how improvements can be made to the Frome Market, and the shopping areas in Market Place, King Street, Kingsway etc.
- iv) To resolve the discontinuity of shopping areas caused by through traffic (links with Getting Around aims)
- v) To improve access and pedestrian safety for local shoppers (links with Getting Around aims)

**Aim 3: To make Frome an attractive destination for tourists, visitors and those who are considering moving to Frome**

Objectives

- i) To facilitate the creation of a clear, marketable identity for Frome
- ii) To address the lack of hotel rooms, conference rooms, public toilets and other facilities
- iii) To encourage the enhancement of tourist areas
- iv) To develop a suite of marketing initiatives and campaigns for the town which link to and make best use of sub-regional, regional and national tourism programmes.



"Suggest a bus terminal system based on Cork street car park to provide better shelter for passengers and relieve congestion in Market Place"

**"I like Frome's character but the streets are too narrow for so many vehicles. There should be more pedestrianisation ie. the whole of King Street. Otherwise I think Frome has much potential"**

"Stop taking our benches away just because they attract undesirables - we need them"

"Campaign to exclude buses from town centre and 'free up' the flow of cars was totally misguided and backward looking"

"Bus service takes time due to all the other villages it stops at on the way"

"Improve the rail station and links out of town"

"Pedestrianise the town centre. Make all shops accessible for wheelchairs and prams"

"Make the town centre more pedestrian friendly - encourage more people to access Catherine Hill by putting a pedestrian crossing close to the bend"

"Roundabout system at top of Bath St is dangerous. Needs extensive re-vamp incorporating car parking to assist business there."

"Could do with another pedestrian crossing at Cork St level across the main road"

"It would be an enormous boost to local cycling if we could have a designated path from the market yard to Great Elm and there are already some footpaths in place over much of this route"

"Cycle routes are required in town"

## GETTING AROUND

### BACKGROUND

Frome has grown randomly over centuries from a network of medieval roads descending steep hills to meet in the town centre. During the past century, there has been an increase in residential areas as the population has expanded.

Settlement was originally south of the river and the streets in this Conservation Area, which includes much of the retail district, are narrow, sometimes cobbled and often with tight right-angled junctions unsuitable for long vehicles.

To the north, commuter estates have been sited away from the main entry roads. To the south, the medieval routes provide several alternative ways to access the town centre. All of these cut through residential areas and school routes and the speed, volume and type of traffic using them raise safety concerns.

Frome is a large town but currently has little local employment. Regardless of how self-sufficient it tries to become in the next 20 years, goods will come in and workers will commute out. By improving transport links it could become more attractive to businesses and employers. Further investment in information 'highways' facilities might also influence some to choose more sustainable home working over commuting.

### **Separations and barriers**

The town is divided both by the busy A362, and by through-traffic in the Market Place.

Railway lines and low bridges introduce further barriers. The River Frome flows through the town east to west, with only three road bridges and one public footbridge as current crossing points, and for most of its length the river is another physical division.

For a rural town with half its working population commuting out, transport is essential. Public transport is frustratingly slow and disjointed, so the majority use cars, driving distances averaging 14 miles daily. The rising cost of fuel is starting to have an impact, which could also become an opportunity for more sustainable working practices.

### **Rail transport**

Frome is the only town in Mendip to have a railway station (and a fine Brunel building), but it is not on a main line. Frome and the

surrounding area suffered from the Beeching cuts in the 1960's, which affected passenger links to the west of the town, including Radstock. At present there are limited direct trains, but it is usually necessary to make connections at Westbury and Castle Cary for access to Bath, Bristol, London and Taunton, as well as local towns in West Wiltshire.

For a population set to reach 30,000 in the near future, an efficient train service will be vital. Rail users and businesses feel that a mainline station is needed. Frome and the surrounding area suffered from the Beeching cuts in the 1960's, which affected passenger links to the west of the town, including Radstock.

Some trains do have provision to carry cycles already, but it would be helpful to have more. It would also be beneficial to have more cycle storage and improved car parking at Frome station.

### **Bus services**

Bus services run to Bath and the local towns including those in West Wiltshire, but the services are indirect and slow, too infrequent, do not reach all residential areas and do not run at times suitable for shift workers. At present there is no commuter bus service to Shepton Mallet, the nearest Mendip town.

Hopper buses on various routes were suggested by many people. It could also be helpful to have cycle storage on hopper buses, and have drop off points in Cork Street and Saxonvale.

One cause of congestion in the town centre is the bus bay design. Two buses are often waiting in a wedge-shaped bay intended for one. When the pedestrian crossing near Boots is in frequent use and there are buses parked on both sides of the road, the road through the town centre comes to a standstill. This is a common cause of complaint and solutions have been proposed.

For poorly understood reasons, two bus providers compete for the same time slot for the Bath service rather than providing a more frequent service between them. The Asda bus provides a better service but has difficulty getting through the Conservation Area, where parked cars line the narrow streets.

### **School routes**

Going to school involves many children crossing at least one main road. The large campus in Oakfield necessitates mass movement of 1200 children aged 5 to 13 years. The three schools here are positioned on the edge of town between two entry roads and a main connecting road, none of them with a pedestrian crossing or

crossing patrol. The congestion from parents' cars slows down traffic to such an extent that at the school entrances a fairly safe environment results in the afternoon; but in the mornings and for the children crossing Broadway there is no such protection.

Vallis First and St Louis schools are central, with children from the south side needing to cross the A362. A new pedestrian crossing for the Lea Vale estate lacks pavement on one side, and the next available crossing is at Badcox. St John's First School is positioned next to this busy main through route. It does have one nearby crossing but none on the roundabout in the other direction. There is no official dropping-off point.

Christchurch and Hayesdown First schools are both in the middle of residential areas away from busy roads. The main traffic problems here are caused by parents' cars. Selwood Middle School is on a main road but is set back from it and has a crossing nearby. The College is on its own campus within the Stonebridge estate. It is set back from the main road, which has traffic light controlled crossings.



### **Improving access for all**

Getting around by wheelchair is made more difficult by lack of dropped kerbs and ramps for older buildings. Carers and parents of children in pushchairs would also benefit from improved access arrangements. For those with impaired sight, uneven pavements and A-boards create additional hazards. Catherine Hill's uneven cobbles make descent in poor weather fraught with difficulty.

### **Pedestrian footpaths and crossings**

Many residents would appreciate reinstatement and upgrading of footpaths and crossings into and

around Frome from the villages. A circular route around Frome has also received support, for which another river bridge would be needed south of Wallbridge. A further bridge linking Rodden Meadow with the Saxonvale area is also wanted.

The junctions of Bath Street, Christchurch Street, Wesley Slope and Gorehedge are currently very difficult for pedestrians to cross, so either pedestrian controlled lights or islands would be beneficial.

The junction at Bridge Street, North Parade and Welshmill Road may also need improvement. An additional crossing at Badcox near Catherine Street would be useful.

## **Shopping**

Shopping involves different experiences at each site. There are two superstores in out of town locations, both off main entry roads and with their own free parking and a bus service. On some housing estates there are convenience stores within walking distance.

The town centre shops are patronised by pedestrians, bus passengers and car users. The shopping area around Market Place is cut in two by traffic and there is only one official crossing, near Scott Road. Pedestrians regularly cross at several other points, mostly from near Stony Street or from The George over to the Market Cross. On Bath Street they cross from Palmer Street to St John's Church, ignoring the official crossing about 30m further up.

## **Car parks**

Most car parks are maintained by Mendip District Council, which charges fees many shoppers think unjustified by the limited range of shops available. Providing one hour's free parking to encourage more people into the town centre was a suggestion frequently made, equally by those who did and those who did not already shop there. The free parking at M&S is used by some who otherwise might go to Trowbridge, where parking is much cheaper or free. At present access through Vicarage Street sometimes causes congestion, so an alternative route could be investigated.

A small amount of free parking is available, mostly in Market Place or King Street; but cars obstruct the flow of traffic accessing these. The surrounding residential roads provide some on-street parking, which is usually taken all day by those who work in the centre. One suggestion is to look at the feasibility of operating a Park and Ride service.

On the town's busiest retail day, Saturday, a large section of the main car park is closed to vehicles for use by the market, and cars often queue for the remaining places. Some people would like the Market Place to be closed to traffic on Saturdays in order to move the market next to the Market Cross, which would improve the pedestrian flow and liberate some parking space.

## **Residential parking**

Residential roads around the town centre are used for on-street parking by shoppers and workers who do not want to pay the charges. There are also many infringements of regulations, with

parking on the pavement or on double yellow lines being the most frequent. The situation does not improve in the evening, since there are not enough on-street parking spaces near people's homes to cope with demand. Inappropriate parking of work vans and trucks adds to the problem and is a cause of neighbourhood friction. Introducing residential parking permits might help to control these problems, but was only occasionally suggested.

### **The river**

At present the river is unused except by canoeists. With so few crossing points, it is a barrier to getting around for pedestrians and road users. Many comments were made about the usage of the river and its surrounding areas, and a feasibility study would be useful to find out how to improve its usage, for either recreation, energy provision or as a water highway.

### **Road bridges**

The Bath road crosses the main 'Town Bridge' by the Blue House. It is an ancient structure with houses built across its western side and it bears the weight of all traffic coming through the town centre. The whole town has a 7.5 ton weight restriction, but once heavy vehicles have legitimately entered the zone, they can go anywhere within it. This results in the Town Bridge enduring an immense amount of weight and vibration on a daily basis. Ultimately decisions will need to be made as to whether it needs to be widened and strengthened, or bypassed and protected.

The other main road bridge at Wallbridge is also an old structure and suffers similar pounding from east-west traffic. This includes HGVs unable to be diverted at the Murtry Crossroads because they are too high to go under the railway bridge. Therefore it would also be helpful to have a formal study concerning the future of this route, and the viability of road lowering, so that all heavy traffic can use the lanes to the north as a link between the A362 and A361.

The Murtry crossroads is also a dangerous junction with poor visibility. Increasingly, drivers are avoiding the town centre by using Whatcombe Road, in a residential area, as a major through-road to access the third bridge at Welshmill. Drivers often continue through Park Hill Drive, another residential area, to reach the Bath road.

The road bridge with direct access to the main town car park has been closed for safety reasons and is due to be demolished. It is an old Bailey Bridge, which crosses from the Market Yard to the Singers estate. A footbridge has been suggested as a replacement.



## **Footbridges**

Pedestrians are also poorly served with crossing places. The 'Millennium Bridge' links the Westway Centre with the Market Yard car park, and other than that and the road bridges there are no other crossings until the Ellworthy estate at Wallbridge is reached. The proposed development in Saxonvale may provide an opportunity to build a bridge for pedestrian access from Clink.

## **Town centre access**

The compactness of the town does make access to most services on foot possible for the able-bodied. Both walking and cycling are becoming more popular, despite the hills. Although some car users are altering their driving habits, not least because over-60s have free bus passes, many workers and those with mobility problems are left with few practical alternatives to the car.

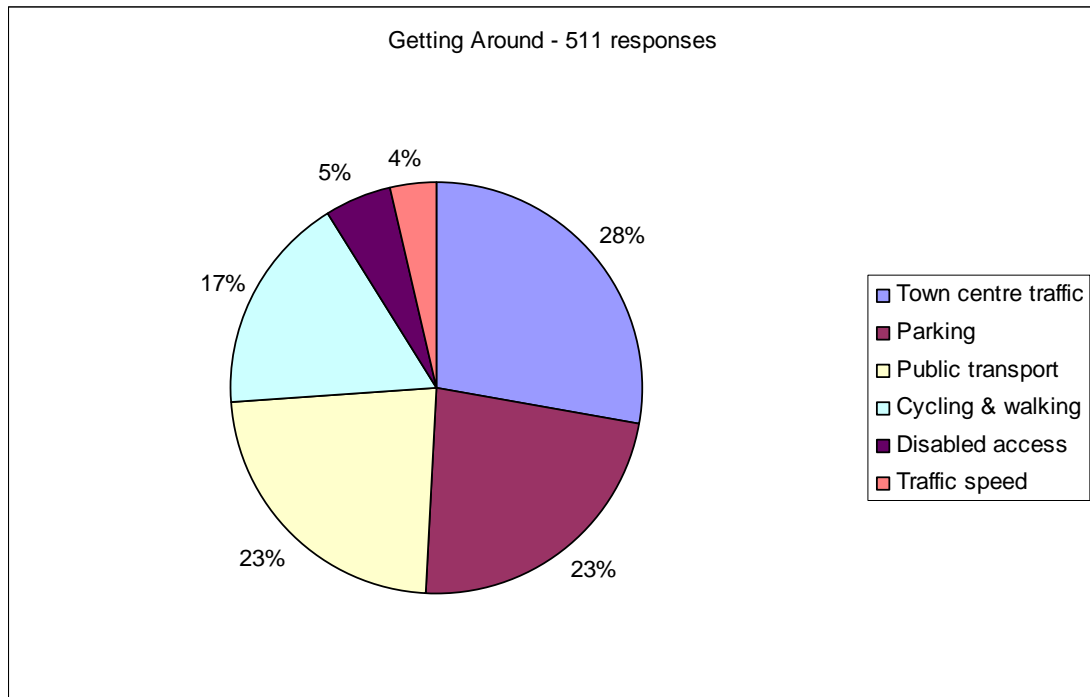
## **Improved signage and technology**

One relatively cheap solution to town centre congestion would be to improve signage at some junctions, and offer alternative routes. Equally, the usage of GPS and satellite technologies could be used to enable drivers to use the Frome road system more thoughtfully. It could also help to avoid confusion between Frome Market and the out of town Cattle Market.

## **CONSULTATION FINDINGS**

'Getting Around' was the topic with the highest level of responses.

A diagram showing the key issues raised is below, with a more detailed breakdown in Appendix C



The highest priority from the consultation is that of town centre traffic. There is a split in opinion as to whether the centre should be pedestrianised or not, and a suggestion of 'shared space' has been put forward. This would still allow for all traffic, but would essentially prioritise pedestrian movement.

The problem caused by bus parking in the Market Place was raised, as the bus bays are wedge shaped, causing road blockages and delays when buses are parked.

Car parking is also a high priority for the town, with calls for free parking on market days to help boost trade. A review of residential parking is needed, as increasingly housing is built without proper provision.

Public transport needs to be better co-ordinated. Appropriate connections and routes for cycling around the town are also seen as a way of helping to reduce reliance on the car.

Accessibility is a key concern because of the shape of Frome and its hills. Simple measures such as more dropped kerbs and ramps into buildings need to be promoted, along with resting places for less mobile people, such as the return of town centre benches.

## THE FUTURE

Being able to move easily around the town centre is important to the people of Frome. How this is achieved remains to be seen, but it is very clear that pedestrian movement is hampered by heavy traffic and lack of safe crossing places in the town. If traffic can be reduced in the town through improved public transport, safe cycle and pedestrian routes and redirection of unnecessary HGVs, it would not only make it a more pleasant area in which to shop and spend time, it would also improve the air quality. This is poor at the bottom of Bath Street and not helped by the topography and buildings which create a canyon effect.

### **Our Vision:**

*Frome has a safe infrastructure giving easy movement to, from and around the town. This network recognises the need for various forms of transport but gives preference to people over vehicles. It includes a good supporting public transport system, resulting in reduced fossil fuel use.*

In order to achieve this vision, we commit to the following:

### **AIMS & OBJECTIVES**

#### **Aim 1: To improve pedestrian access and safety**

##### Objectives

- i) To campaign for the provision of new official crossings where pedestrians routinely cross roads
- ii) To encourage pedestrian priority schemes
- iii) To examine best use of the Market Place, in order to unite the shopping areas and provide a safe location for the Saturday market
- iv) To aim for the provision of clean, even and continuous pavements
- v) To aim for the provision of town-wide linkages with dropped kerbs
- vi) To aim for the provision of new river crossings for pedestrians and cyclists

vi) To encourage walking by providing seats at intervals along pedestrian routes

## **Aim 2: To improve parking and traffic flow**

### Objectives

i) In consultation with the Heritage team, to look at ways of improving the design of the Market Place and moving bus stops

ii) To work towards the implementation of vehicle size and weight restrictions in the Conservation Areas

iii) To consider new parking and traffic-flow systems within congested areas, in consultation with affected residents and the relevant local authorities, and to prepare alternative routes for future road and bridge repairs.

iv) To investigate possibilities for new road links and parking provision within large development schemes

v) To look at the provision of cycle networks and encourage the completion of the Sustrans cycle route through the Frome area

## **Aim 3: To reduce quantity and impact of through traffic**

### Objectives

i) To work with the Highways Authority to ensure regular monitoring of heavy traffic passing through the town centre and encourage the placing of signs indicating alternative routes to divert HGVs before the town limits are reached

ii) To seek to ensure traffic light controlled crossings are provided on the A362 through town at regular intervals

iii) To consider the strategic management of traffic in Frome and surrounding areas and to make relevant representations to the Department of Transport and the Highways Authority

## **Aim 4: To increase use of public transport and decrease use of fossil fuels**

### Objectives

## GETTING AROUND

- i) To negotiate with bus service providers and Somerset County Council for a more appropriate service for Frome and surrounding villages
- ii) To make a business case for improving rail provision to Frome, including a main line service
- iii) To seek alternative ways of getting around that do not use fossil fuels



"IDEA: Build multi-story car park in Cork Street and turn Market Yard car park into a riverside park between library and C&G"

**"On the whole I enjoy living in Frome. I like the fact it's got history and old buildings which I feel should be saved and cherished"**

"Improve the walk along the river bank. Make more of the river"

"I also like the idea of better exploitation of Frome's river frontages"

"All towns nowadays need a park, always volunteers to help with the gardening - a botanical garden as a park."

"Frome – an architectural gem with a superb asset, the river, running through it"

"Why does it take so long for developments to be completed - classic example is the former Post Office"

"Too many of Frome's fields & wild areas have been built on recently and already a big stretch of the river has been tamed horribly along by the old Coloroll site. Please just leave the river alone."

"Appearance of market place area could be enhanced"

"Not enough council housing for working people. My grandson has put his name down, cannot afford current £600 rent wanted"

"I would love to see some innovative architecture, using all the best contemporary technology for low energy and water use, in these new housing developments. There are plenty of examples of attractive, affordable housing in other parts of the country which we could be investigating"

"Trees, trees, trees!"

## HOUSING & HERITAGE

### BACKGROUND

Frome's Conservation Area, with its narrow streets and uneven roofline, gives the town much of its character. There are more historic buildings in Frome than in any other town in Somerset, many of them small and quirky and usually built with the local Forest Marble stone.

The town centre's appearance is now immeasurably better than 30 years ago, which is reflected in its improved economy and well-being. English Heritage research shows that the historic environment plays an important role in contributing to economic prosperity and Frome is a good example of this.

In the past Frome lost a number of fine buildings and many others were in a dire state. In the 1970s, a slum clearance programme demolished half the Trinity area before its historic value was appreciated. Since then the historic buildings of Frome have benefited from a number of schemes offering grant aid for repair and restoration.



### New housing

Frome is the largest town in Mendip, almost the size of Trowbridge, the county town of Wiltshire. It has grown steadily for the past 40 years with major expansions to the north and south, and is a favoured location for volume house builders. The Saxonvale and Garsdale developments, currently at the planning stage, will provide another 600 homes on former industrial land close to the town centre. They are part of the forecast need for 2,500 new homes between 2006 and 2026.

Recent development has provided for new residents rather than for existing local needs, although without catering for the top end of the market. Children of existing residents cannot now afford a mortgage for an average house. Provision of significantly more affordable homes is vital if young people and key workers are to be

retained in Frome. Each aspect of the housing market needs to be in balance.

## **Energy efficiency**

Energy-efficient homes are important whether newly built or existing. Most notably in Frome, older buildings such as those in the Trinity area require energy saving improvements. There is as yet little awareness of this, or incentive to provide energy from on-site renewable sources.

## **Central focal point**

At present the town centre is in need of a focal point, and a more welcoming ambience for shoppers and pedestrians is required. In many ways, this is the starting point for growth in economic, cultural and social vibrancy in Frome. Better quality of life starts here.

## **Protecting local heritage**

The local Civic Society has been active in protecting Frome's heritage and demanding good design and more eco-features in new-build. Planning applications now attract more notice from neighbours. A recent planning application to demolish a valued Victorian house provoked over 1,000 responses, indicative of a growing public awareness that the town's character is put at risk by inappropriate development.

## **CONSULTATION FINDINGS**

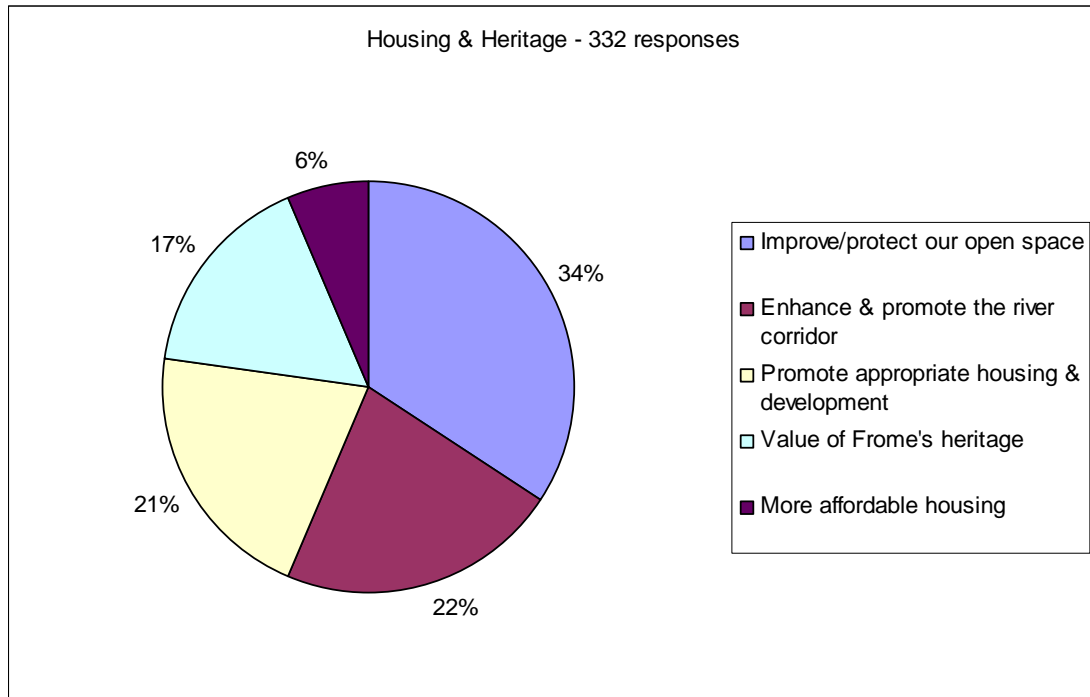
The majority of people who responded appreciated the historical character of the town centre and were concerned that its innate charm could easily be destroyed by insensitive development and heavy or inappropriate traffic.

Not all views about Frome are positive. A person with mobility difficulties thinks the best thing for Frome would be to bulldoze it and start again. Young and older people wish to see public toilets, benches and bins reinstated in the town centre. Gypsy groups point out that sites are already full; there is an urgent need for more pitches.

A diagram showing the key issues raised is below, with a more detailed breakdown in Appendix C.



# HOUSING & HERITAGE



It was interesting to find that the top two areas of response for this topic relate to the 'green' spaces of Frome and that they seem to be particularly valued. The river is seen as an asset with a lot of potential for creating a more pleasant area to sit and enjoy, as well as providing an important wildlife corridor. In particular, the work of the Friends of the River Frome was recognised and appreciated.

It is clear that the people of Frome generally value the town's heritage and open spaces and wish to see these protected, promoted and enjoyed. They also see the need for more affordable housing and ensuring that any development that does take place is sensitive to the appearance and setting of the surrounding area.

There were many suggestions for further enhancement of the town, and ideas for improvements to the Market Place. There was also a perceived need for better social space, including green areas for informal recreation and play.

## THE FUTURE

The main priorities for Frome as raised by the community are:

- To provide for local housing needs - ensuring a range of dwellings, including larger homes and bungalows, to meet the needs of all households
- To ensure good design quality and energy efficiency, through a local Design Review Panel

- To protect existing local green areas, employment land and neighbourhood character by raising awareness and encouraging a sense of ownership of green space by the residents of Frome
- To preserve and enhance the historic character of the town, by re-modelling the town centre environment to make it more welcoming for shoppers and visitors and more beneficial to traders
- To reinstate the River Frome valley as the focal point of the town by improving and re-landscaping the banks of the River Frome and make them an inviting and accessible recreational open space in the heart of the town.

## **Our Vision:**

*A town where the historical fabric and character of its built and green environment has been protected and preserved for future generations to enjoy, and which is provided with sustainable and well-designed homes which meet the housing needs of all its residents.*

In order to achieve this vision, we commit to the following:

## **AIMS & OBJECTIVES**

### **Aim 1: To provide for local housing needs**

#### Objectives

- i) To ensure that all new housing provides (or in the case of small schemes, contributes towards) at least 40% of affordable homes, whether for rent, shared ownership, sale or mixed tenure
- ii) To ensure a range of dwellings, including larger homes and bungalows, to meet the needs of all households
- iii) To ensure that there is provision of housing for key workers, including carers

## **Aim 2: To ensure good design quality and energy efficiency**

### Objectives

- i) To ensure that new homes comply with the Housing Corporation's 'Building for Life' standard and have a positive effect on the existing character and environment
- ii) To ensure that 'Parker Morris' space standards are used as a minimum for normal housing schemes
- iii) To institute a Design Review Panel
- iv) To ensure that housing development provides a range of dwelling size and tenure, family homes have a reasonable size of garden, with informal and formal play space, a community venue and allotments nearby where appropriate
- v) To aim to ensure that all new homes should meet Level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes
- vi) To aim to ensure that all existing homes should be eligible for energy saving improvements
- vii) To aim to ensure that all new buildings, including home extensions, should provide 25% of their energy needs from on-site renewable sources (e.g. wind, sun, geo-thermal, etc) in compliance with 'the Merton Rule'

## **Aim 3: To protect existing local green areas, employment land and neighbourhood character**

### Objectives

- i) Protect natural habitats, prevent loss of local green spaces or trees which make a significant contribution to the local character and help mitigate the effects of climate change.
- ii) To raise awareness, encourage and develop a sense of ownership of green space by the residents of Frome
- iii) When suitable brownfield sites for housing have been exhausted, new housing should be directed to greenfield sites south of ASDA, within the current town area
- iv) To aim to ensure that land currently used for employment is retained in its entirety for future employment, so providing a

geographical spread of job opportunities and reducing the need to travel

- v) To aim to ensure that target density is not the driving force behind developing a site for housing; and that the layout of a site gives a good quality of urban design and preserves the neighbourhood character.
- vi) To aim to ensure that local people are involved, at an early stage, in 'Section 106' discussions between developers and the District Council on prioritising the needs for community infrastructure.

### **Aim 4: To preserve and enhance the historic character of the town**

#### Objectives

- i) To reinstate the corridor of the River Frome as the focal point of the town. Improve and re-landscape the banks of the River Frome and make them an inviting and accessible recreational open space in the heart of the town
- ii) To improve the town centre environment to make it more welcoming for shoppers and visitors and more beneficial to traders, and to widen these benefits to town centre fringes. This is intended to include King Street, Kingsway, Church Street, etc and also to make these streets available to market trading when the time is right; and to include the Gorehedge junction improvements
- iii) To protect the locally valued buildings from demolition by establishing a list of local historic buildings and ensuring that policies have been adopted by the District Council to protect them'

"Free Garden refuse collections for single pensioners over 70. Enough council tax is being paid to cover this"

**"We support the Food for Frome vision. In particular that there should remain an abattoir in the vicinity of Frome - it is an essential part of an agricultural area's infrastructure"**

"Nature reserve at ASDA is brilliant"

"Fruit and nut trees growing throughout the town"

"Above all do not let building encroach on the green field areas around the edge of the town - we value the countryside around Frome"

"Endeavour to create a plastic bag free town"

"Encourage people to put solar panels on roofs & have sensitive double glazing even in Conservation Areas (to reduce carbon emissions of course!)"

"Given oil prices how sustainable will it be to build an extra 2500 homes without providing a similar number of jobs?"

"More allotments!"

"I recycle all my food waste, paper, cans, glass etc. I also try to recycle plastic and cardboard which tends to build up in big piles around our house. I know a lot of people would be very happy if this was collected too!"

**"With the huge increase in housing and the fact that even green/brown space is being filled with houses, including former allotments, there is a need to create additional space for allotments"**

"Restrict street lighting after 2 am to save power"

## LAND USE, FOOD, ENERGY & WASTE

### BACKGROUND

#### **A market town**

Frome is a large market town in a rural setting. The weekly cattle market was moved out from the centre of town to Standerwick in the 1980s, to make way for the Westway retail development. A traditional market supplying vegetables, fish and meat, which has run continuously for over 1000 years, still operates on Wednesdays and Saturdays. The Farmers' Market runs twice a month in the Cheese and Grain, which was originally built for this purpose and connected by rail to outside markets for the area's dairy products.

Although the market has decreased in importance, there is still a thriving agri-business support base in and near Frome. TH Whites, Mole Valley Farmers, Moores and Son and an abattoir are supplemented by an incinerator at Bunns Lane, which was of national importance during the Foot and Mouth epidemics.

#### **Land**

The surrounding land is mostly Grade 3, not the best agricultural soil - poorly-drained clay requiring heavy cultivation. Originally part of Selwood Forest, in the Middle Ages it was sheep country and in the C20th mainly dairy. Recently this industry has declined, with beef and cereal production taking over.

Frome has many enthusiastic home vegetable growers and allotment users, but recent development has put pressure on land within the town, losing many green areas and large gardens to infill housing. Potential new allotment land is hard to find and often prohibitively expensive.

#### **Topography**

The town is hilly, with windy edges to the west providing a potential energy resource. The River Frome runs through the centre of town, with a floodplain either side, an old mill at Wallbridge and a weir at Welshmill. Flood alleviation measures have been taken in previous decades and recently before the building of a new supermarket on the floodplain. Some roads in the town still regularly flood during heavy rainfall; and water from the hilly residential areas cascades down into the Conservation Area, filling cellars and overflowing from ancient drains before entering the river.

#### **'Green' issues**

Eco-awareness and eco-action in the town has increased since the formation of 'Sustainable Frome' in 2006, which includes some very

# LAND USE, FOOD, ENERGY & WASTE

active and knowledgeable residents who appreciate the need for sustainability and self-sufficiency in Frome, which has become a 'Transition Town'.

Together with the rural setting of the town, this provides a good foundation for seeking the means to maximise the local production and marketing of two key resources, food and energy. Both these featured strongly in our community consultations, notably the need for more allotments, solar generation in new developments, and the possible use of the river to produce power. There are several local examples of the practical implementation of power generation.



## Recycling

Use of resources has an associated problem area - waste. The town dump is small, with poor access, under-utilized equipment, insufficient capacity, and takes only domestic waste. The quantity generated brings disposal pressure, a recurring concern within the community. An existing local aim is the

replacement or significant reduction of the endemic use of plastic and polythene, with a focus on natural alternatives wherever possible.

About 45% of Frome's waste is now reused, recycled or composted. The local authorities have recently delegated waste management to a county-wide organisation, the Somerset Waste Partnership. The present two-weekly rubbish collections are poorly tolerated in some areas, but there are no plans to increase these. Fly-tipping has increased.

## Global factors

Frome is a town with a distinctive and well-liked character, but faces the same local and global pressures as other towns as regards quality of life, sustainability, population growth and development. This is not a new phenomenon, but the effect on our community now and in the future is of immediate and continuing concern.

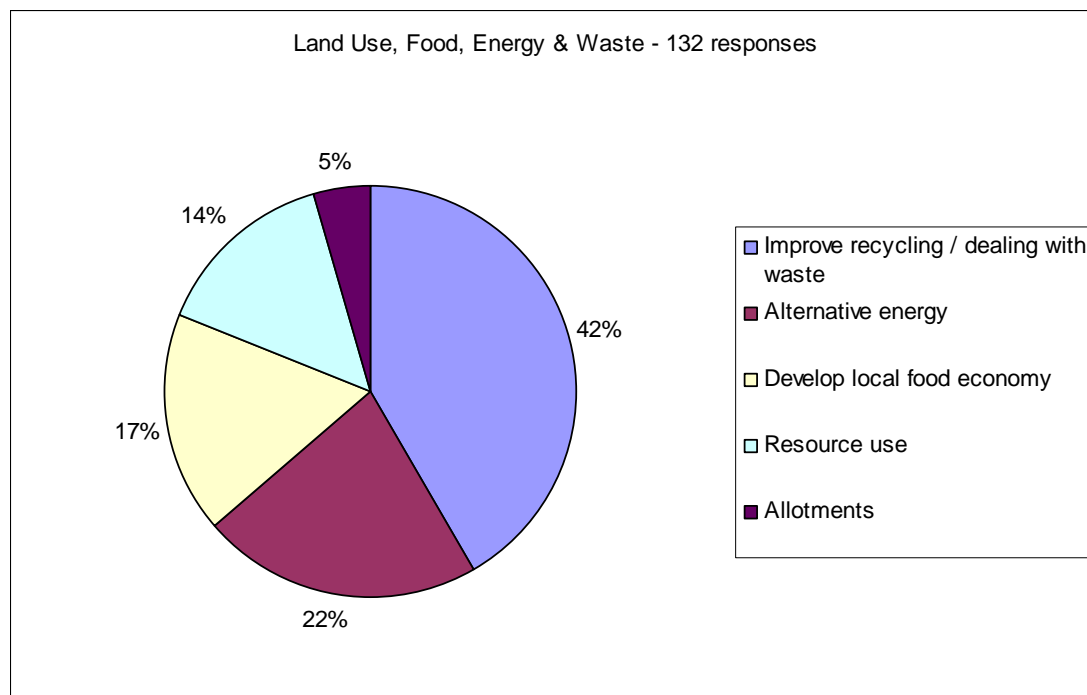
The 'Triple Crunch' of recession, climate change and reduced energy supply already having a range of impacts. In the longer term, as resources globally become increasingly insufficient, prices will rise

# LAND USE, FOOD, ENERGY & WASTE

still further. Climate change, if most current predictions are correct, will exacerbate this impact. The results of all these adverse factors are difficult to predict, and the main means to deal with them are heavily dependent on government rather than local actions. However, community level action can radically reduce our vulnerability.

## CONSULTATION FINDINGS

A diagram showing the key issues raised is below, with a more detailed breakdown in Appendix C.



The majority of responses related to the need to improve recycling in the town and to deal appropriately with waste. Frome wants to see a greater range of materials recycled from the kerbside and composting bins made available to all. While the local arrangements for waste disposal are already good, people felt that they could be better tuned to individual or small business needs. There was also a view that local re-use possibilities exist and need to be assessed.

There was also a high response relating to examining alternative energy and lobbying to ensure new developments in the town make best use of sustainable energy sources.

A common thread throughout this Plan is the competing pressures for land within the town boundaries. There is strong local feeling that in-fill of housing should stop and the open spaces and allotments we have should be preserved, and more provided. The



alternative, of using 'greenfield' land adjacent to the town, brings other competing factors: the visual environment, the need for larger scale local food production, and possible future forestry and renewable energy generation.

Individual land needs are identified within the specific objectives and projects in this Plan, but competing demands must be reconciled. This needs a good vision of the land we have available, what it is best suited for and the factors that apply in development, including the aspirations of owners and local government planners.

## **THE FUTURE**

To meet the needs of Frome in the future, the following are identified as our main priorities for the next 20 years:

*Developing and refining an overall strategy.*

It is clear that potential projects in this area can be greatly enhanced if the following areas of further analysis and research are carried out:

- An audit of existing land usage, informed by both technical appraisal and public consultation, on which to base a local land use development plan.
- A local Energy Descent Action Plan (EDAP) that addresses the usage of energy locally, the consequences of future fossil energy scarcity on energy supply, agriculture, transport and economic development, and where the biggest return on investment can be realised in saving energy costs locally.
- A town-wide carbon footprint calculation.

*'Waste' reuse and recycling.*

Initially, identify key local waste producers and resources e.g. quarry waste for local construction use, dairy and farming waste for local methane and commercial waste. Then undertake a local survey of relevant resource production and waste to identify power generation opportunities and candidate implementation projects e.g. a methane digester, and heat recovery from the local incinerator.

Improve the facilities and layout of the town dump, and provide more re-use possibilities. Encourage establishment of a mending/repair business for recovered goods and materials. Support and develop a more widespread local culture of reuse by increasing the visibility of reuse possibilities.

# LAND USE, FOOD, ENERGY & WASTE

Work with existing waste collectors to increase take up through both public education and increased frequency and type of collection (e.g. roadside cardboard and plastic collection).

## *Energy.*

Initially, undertake a local survey of topography and land to identify power generation opportunities.

Provide a point of contact and information for individuals considering the private use of home energy generators. Provide advice and pressure to promote energy saving regimes, such as lighting reduction, insulation, acceptable changes in life style (lower central heating level, smart meters etc).

Review and provide input to local planning policies and decisions in relation to energy use and generation

Support and develop local energy-from-waste schemes including Combined Heat and Power (CHP) and involve local businesses.

Ensure new building developments include the maximum possible levels of renewable energy and insulation. (See 'The Merton Rule' under Housing)

## *The local food economy.*

Create additional allotment space in the town, linking this to educational initiatives and public information sharing to assist the development of food-growing skills among local householders.

Support small-scale land and labour intensive production of food crops for local consumption through appropriate use of planning controls, and ancillary agricultural services. Build further on local marketing capacity and organisations to maximise the efficiency and value of the local supplier to consumer process

## *Reducing energy and resource use*

Provide strong support for the development of more effective public transport availability, with electronic bus information at all bus shelters, and cycle routes to all local villages.

Support and develop local initiatives which minimise energy usage – e.g. campaigns and education which reduce use of plastic bags, and oil based transport

# LAND USE, FOOD, ENERGY & WASTE

Review with waste management authorities the most efficient means of waste collection, including doorstep versus travel to a central facility, and investigate provision for non-mobile community members.

## **Our Vision:**

*A productive and protected landscape in and around Frome, which provides for and reconciles in a balanced way as many of the town's needs as possible, without compromising its ability to continue doing so in the future.*

In order to achieve this vision, we commit to the following:

## **AIMS & OBJECTIVES**

**Aim 1: To secure the different parts of the local landscape for their most appropriate commercial, industrial, residential or leisure use on the basis of their natural and social capacities and endowments**

### Objectives

- i) To identify the availability of land, and its optimal forms of use, across the town and its surroundings on the basis of its natural endowments
- ii) To provide a strong community input through the development review and planning systems, so that land use is encouraged for appropriate development, and is protected against use which runs counter to community aspirations or priorities unless essential to meet specific community or infrastructure needs
- iii) To encourage the building of imaginative linkages between different forms of land use, including housing, industry, agriculture, and recreation

**Aim 2: To create a resilient, self-reliant, economically and environmentally sustainable local food economy**

### Objectives

- i) To reserve public space within the town for food-growing projects (e.g. allotments, community gardens, fruit & nut tree-planting)

ii) To support and foster private domestic fruit and vegetable growing

iii) To foster the development of the local food supply by assisting agricultural and horticultural producers to meet the needs of the local population

### **Aim 3: To promote economy, resilience and self-reliance in the provision and use of energy locally**

#### Objectives

i) To make the minimisation of initial and recurrent energy consumption a key goal in local development

ii) To foster the generation of renewable energy locally in both the public and private sectors

iii) To work with local authorities to build resilience to future energy scarcity into local development and infrastructure

iv) To support energy conservation schemes and businesses which provide services such as domestic insulation, solar water heating and renewable energies training

v) To recognise the predominance of older buildings and their specialist requirements to reduce their energy consumption

### **Aim 4: To minimise the local production of waste**

#### Objectives

i) To encourage the development of a local 'waste economy' which can efficiently identify where waste, with conversion if necessary, from one area of activity can provide a useful resource for another

ii) To create retailer and consumer initiatives that build waste minimisation and awareness into the culture and practice of local supply and demand.

iii) To work to achieve the most effective local waste collection, disposal and reuse/recycling processes

iv) To request that the initial and recurrent economic/environmental costs of waste collection and disposal are included in the appraisal of local projects and acquisitions.

"I would like to see a new sports facility for the modern era - improved climbing wall, fun pool, more modern activities such as zig zag mats"

"Night club shut - no nightlife for 18 - 39 yr olds"

"The theatres are very good but they should put on more challenging plays, concerts etc."

"We want a Town Hall in Frome - a 'civic space' where people can meet in comfort"

"Affordable workshops/studios for local artists within a group setting to include exhibition/performance space"

"I come in from village once a month to enjoy Frome and the market - I love it"

"The community/open spaces could be 'house kept' and used more widely - the flower beds in the town are great"

"New bigger sports centre with better parking, pool open for more public sessions, café and more facilities - better family changing etc.. Crèche too"

**"If Frome looks at what we have compared to Trowbridge or Bath even, then we would notice that we aren't that popular because of things we lack. Even a bowling alley would be good enough - there's lots of space in Frome which no one is using and it could bring so much fun to the place and making it popular on the way"**

"I'm really taken with the idea of developing Frome into an ideopolis - a town or city built on ideas"

"Better sports provision at the leisure centre and at a new site, possibly on the new business estate on the bypass near the Frome Flyer pub. There are lots of active and sporty children and adults in Frome and the current Leisure Centre is not enough to provide for all their needs"

"Need CCTV at end of Cheap Street"

## SOCIETY & WELL-BEING

### BACKGROUND

How people feel about a town depends on their state of health, their perception of safety, how well they are integrated into the community and whether they can access leisure pursuits which are stimulating and enjoyable.

During the consultation, there was a wealth of comment identifying certain aspects of the town that could be improved, or which were needed to ensure the town's character and good points would not be lost. What we do not know is how many of those who did not engage are content, were busy or oblivious to it; or whether they felt apathetic or alienated from the community or the process itself. Engaging 'hard to reach' groups was difficult and incomplete.

Frome has a slightly younger population than the rest of Somerset, but we also have many early-retired and elderly residents. Whilst needing to look after all our people, in 20 years time there are likely to be many in a dependent 'fourth age'. The move towards care in the community and the present shortage of carers makes this a serious issue for which Frome needs to plan.

### Health care provision

Health was barely mentioned in the first consultation feedback. In previous questionnaires, about 70% of the population described themselves 'in good health' with about 8% not, which is better than the national average. Those with long-term illnesses, about 18%, often feature in the multiple deprivation indexes.

The Primary Care Trust surveys have received positive feedback about care, but negative about opening hours. There is currently a move to extend hours into evenings and weekends. There is general approval of the new Frome Hospital, which opened in 2008, at a time other



community hospitals were being closed. It has a flexible 'future-proof' structure and anticipates being able to deal with all anticipated requirements for the next 20 years; however the old

hospital is being 'moth-balled' for a while in case extra capacity is needed.

Although we have no Accident & Emergency service closer than Shepton Mallet or Bath, Frome has a Minor Injuries Unit and it is planned to become 24 hour once the staff are in post. There is also an out of hours service for those able to get to a treatment centre. Facilities for young people's health needs are currently poorly adapted to their lifestyle.

## **Sport & leisure**

For all Frome's residents, staying active and independent will be of benefit. Healthy lifestyles and sports activities are an essential part of this and will help address potential problems associated with the current trends of obesity and an ageing population.

There is a wide range of sports provision and many clubs in and around Frome, most of which also cater for youngsters. Football and rugby are both very popular, but the number of pitches has decreased over the years. Frome Collegians (with 250-300 members between 5 and 16 years of age) is in the process of constructing a new one. The all-weather pitch at the Leisure Centre is likely to need upgrading soon.

The Leisure Centre is owned by Somerset County Council, leased to Mendip District Council, and run by a private company as a dual-use facility for the schools and the community. Changing lifestyles have created competition for day-time use, likely to worsen if free swimming for the over-60s is made available.

The 40 year old building has recently been experiencing roof and other structural problems, alongside disturbing cases of water leaking on to electric sockets and similar, which indicates a need for the existing building to be substantially upgraded and refurbished if it is to provide contemporary and flexible space. Some factors affecting whether it has a long term future, or whether a new facility is needed, are population increase, escalating oil prices, future SCC and MDC leisure strategies, the investment cost and the proposed building developments at Frome College.

## **Crime and policing**

There is a concern that the number of police in Frome has decreased over the years, and while the new Police Community Support Officers are appreciated, there is dissatisfaction about the low level of police visibility, that the police station is not open 24 hours, and a general perception that arrests are not made because it would involve a trip to the custody cells in Yeovil. In fact, the

majority of those held in custody are accommodated in Frome and only in a few instances do trips need to be made to Yeovil. Frome residents said they wanted laws enforced, especially in relation to anti-social behaviour and pavement parking.

The majority of the pubs are in the town centre, and Frome has a long tradition of weekend rowdiness. This is usually relatively minor but the noise causes friction with local residents, especially when alcohol licences are extended. The only nightclub has recently closed, leaving Frome with little night life which isn't pub-based.

### **Arts and entertainment**

Frome has a cinema, which many would like to see upgraded, but there is not much else for families.

In recent years, Frome's growth in recreational provision has focussed on arts, crafts and music, bolstering its reputation as an arts town.

The cultural scene is thriving, with many musical and artistic events throughout the year, peaking during the Frome Festival in early July. This has put the town on the musical map, attracting nationally renowned performers, and the Festival is considered second only to Glastonbury in the south-west. From a high cultural beginning in 2001, the range of events has been extended year on year. The most popular evening is undoubtedly the Food Feast, attracting thousands from all social groups in the town, and there are now many other events which also increase its inclusivity.

### **Volunteering**

The Festival is run by volunteers, as are many other organisations, and the high proportion of voluntary work is partly due to its large retired population. Some smaller groups are struggling to cope with paperwork and legal requirements. This especially applies to less glamorous ones, where the volunteers themselves are often quite elderly, diminishing in numbers, and with no-one to replace them. Although Frome's population is ageing, the help provided by these groups will get progressively less.

### **Multi-cultural Frome**

The churches are also involved in supporting those in need within the community, working as Frome Area Christians Together. Although church attendance is modest, the Catholic community has increased in recent years with the arrival of Eastern Europeans to Frome. Around 300 Polish people have been resident in the town and surrounding villages, and a Polish priest comes in to hold monthly services, which some attend.



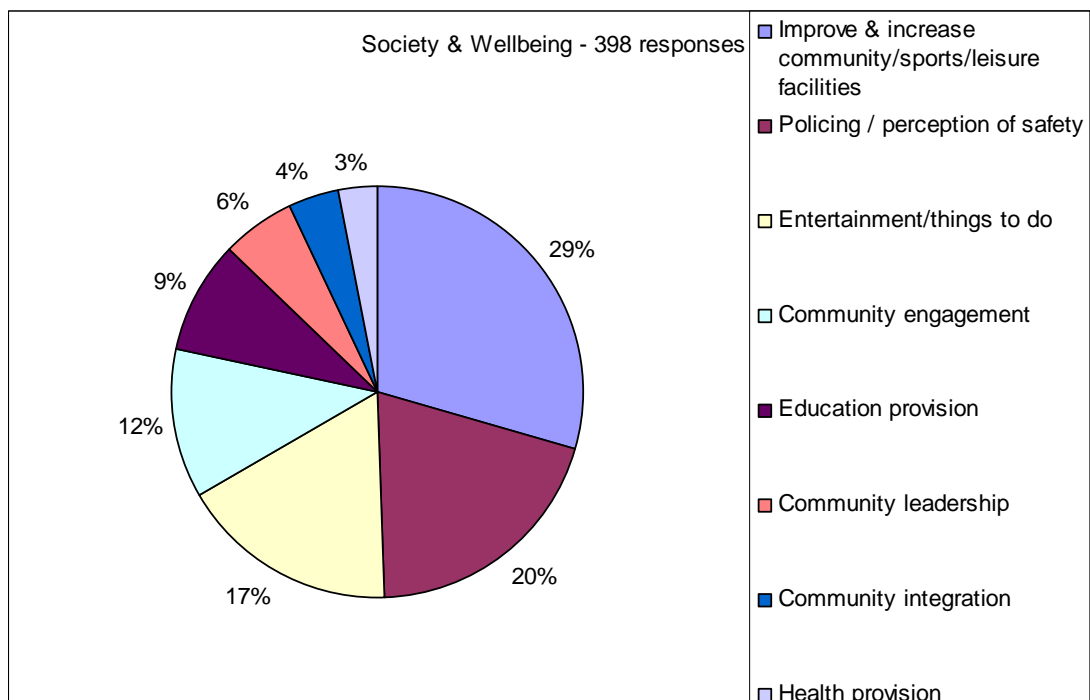
Other nationalities are also well represented in the town, with a sprinkling of people from many different parts of the world providing a cosmopolitan mix. While serious racial incidents are rare, some minor ones occur on a regular basis. Frome has a reputation for its tolerance of diversity, but this may be nothing more than indifference, as the new groups often appear to be poorly integrated.

Somerset is notorious for not accepting 'foreigners' from outside its county borders until they've lived in a place for at least 25 years. Frome is no different, with subtle divisions between 'Old Fromies' and 'Incomers', and even within the incomer groups. It was designated a commuter town in the 1960s, so there have been numerous new arrivals over the years. The result may be not so much one cohesive town, as many separate communities co-existing, but with some resentment about the changes.

Frome is a very mixed place and has experienced several decades in transition, moving from being a market town with a manufacturing base towards a mainly commuter or retirement town with service industries and an artistic reputation.

## CONSULTATION FINDINGS

A diagram showing the key issues raised is below, with a more detailed breakdown in Appendix C.



The most commented on aspect of society and wellbeing was the importance of protecting and increasing community space and facilities. More and better sports facilities are needed, with some people wanting a new Sports Centre to provide modern facilities to meet the needs of an increasing town population. There were a substantial number of people expressing the view that more facilities for young people were overdue e.g. bowling or ice skating.

Social and health benefits were quoted as good reasons for giving high priority to sport, dance and other physical activities. These provide enjoyment, and keep people occupied and fit. They are also seen as ways of keeping teenagers off the streets and out of trouble.

20% of the responses related to crime, policing and anti social behaviour in the town, with people of all ages feeling unsafe at night and wanting a greater police presence. Groups of teenagers hanging around public spaces – shops, parks, car parks, outside pubs – or riding noisy mopeds at night - was a commonly expressed reason for wanting more police. Both adults and other young people felt intimidated, and both thought not having enough to do was a root cause.

Despite this, many of those who engaged with the consultation expressed a general contentment and liking for Frome as it is. The atmosphere of the town, its friendliness and pleasant historic appearance were frequently commented on.

## **THE FUTURE**

Facilities for leisure, fitness, entertainment and community events are important to the people of Frome. Currently it is felt that there is not enough provision and this is a key area of improvement for the next 20 years. We want Frome to continue to be an active place with plenty for all ages to do and enjoy.

In terms of tackling crime and reducing the fear of crime we need to work in partnership with our police authority to address the biggest issues. Since changes in January 2009, there has already been a 10% increase in the number of PCSO's and an extra Beat Manager. The Mendip-wide policy is to increase police visibility in Frome and they aim to have three PCSO's in the town centre, spending at least 90% of their time out and around, dedicated to the town centre. In addition, whilst the Frome police station is not central to the town, there are plans to have a small base or 'pod' centrally, from which town centre officers can work.

Frome is a town in transition and it faces the need to establish an identity to which the entire community can relate. All residents should feel part of their home town, valued members of its present and involved with its future. One great challenge for Frome over the next 20 years, regardless of any future expansion, will be to achieve genuine social cohesion and for all residents to feel at home in the town.

## **Our Vision:**

*Frome will be an attractive town with a cohesive and thriving society, offering a wide choice of learning, cultural and sporting opportunities, promoting health, creativity and personal potential in an overall context of enjoyment. Frome will continue to be an independent, dissenting place where people care for social justice and the well-being of others.*

In order to achieve this vision, we commit to the following:

## **AIMS & OBJECTIVES**

**Aim 1: To safeguard and promote the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual welfare of all residents**

### Objectives

- i) To ensure all residents and visitors can access the town's health care facilities 24 hours a day
- ii) To work with the PCT, local authorities, businesses and schools to promote healthy lifestyle choices
- iii) To support voluntary and faith groups working in the community

**Aim 2: To ensure Frome is a safe and pleasant place in which to live, work and move around**

### Objectives

- i) To seek to improve the state of repair, cleanliness and lighting of streets, footpaths and public areas
- ii) To find ways of improving residents' feeling of security
- iii) To work with Avon and Somerset Constabulary to ensure policing is responsive to residents' needs

iv) To find ways to reduce alcohol-related anti-social behaviour

**Aim 3: To promote a sense of community, so that all residents feel they belong, have a voice and share common values**

### Objectives

i) To work towards ensuring that there are adequate and accessible community venues and outdoor spaces within Frome

ii) To enable the creation of a citizens' forum in which all residents can participate

iii) To protect the interests of vulnerable members of the community

**Aim 4: To promote health and well-being through stimulating and enjoyable activities for all ages**

### Objectives

i) To work with relevant local authorities and providers to ensure that sports and leisure facilities are adequate and accessible to all

ii) To work with relevant local authorities and providers to ensure there are opportunities for lifelong learning

iii) To encourage participation in the creative and cultural life of the town

"No stuff for kids to do - teenagers hang around on streets because they have nothing to do, no good shops, no good cinema and no bowling alley. Where bowling alley was supposed to be there is Bar 11, cloud 9 and an Indian restaurant"

**"Supervised project for teenagers 'Design and Decorate your own teen clothes outlet' - if shops won't come to Frome, let's create them ourselves in true Frome style"**

"Paddling pool & café in the park would be a big bonus for young families"

"Remember the youth of today will be caring for us in our dotage"

"Help promote/provide assistance to the many existing youth organisations"

"'Do it Yourself' supervised projects for teenagers eg. 'Design & Build your own Skatepark'"

"The cinema is of immense value especially for young people. It needs to be assisted to expand in line with expansion of town"

"As a parent in a town where more houses are being built, I have noticed that there are few places to take young children. Even at Victoria Park I often see broken glass which means children aren't able to play as freely as I'd like"

**"Basketball Court for free"**

**"Two more middle schools!"**

"Ice Rink & Bowling alley on one of the trading estates - footpath access for young people"

**"For the overall good of the whole community one of the top priorities has to be to enable a wide range of activities for teenagers and young adults"**

## YOUNG PEOPLE

### BACKGROUND

Although Frome has appeal as a retirement destination, it still has the youngest population of all the Somerset towns. It also has several pockets of multiple deprivations which are among the worst in Mendip. Life chances of the young are being improved through the recent introduction of two 'Sure Start' centres, in Hayesdown School and the Key Centre, to provide comprehensive family care.

### Schools

Nursery and play school facilities appear adequate and well distributed geographically. The town has a three-tier pyramid system for formal education, with the 17 local schools working in partnership to provide specialist teaching and facilities appropriate to each age range. Students from one Special School and 13 First Schools (4-9 years) move on to two Middle Schools (9-13 years) and complete their education at Frome Community College (13-18 years). Some children go out of Frome to RC schools in Trowbridge and Bath; others are home taught.

The College has an average intake and results comparable with national ones, only marginally less than in Somerset as a whole. It is a specialist Media College and there are no plans to apply for Trust status. Having just one school where the majority of Frome's children meet is thought to help promote social cohesion. Further community links are maintained by the co-location of the sports facilities, Merlin Theatre and adult learning on campus.

Educational capacity is regarded as adequate for predicted future needs, although a second school for this age group has been mooted and a new First school is included in plans for future housing development.

### Further education

Since the closure of its Technical College in 1992, students have had to travel to Bath, Radstock or Trowbridge for vocational training. The new Frome Education and Training Enterprise project opened in 2008. Currently housed in a temporary building, the Saxonvale Centre, it provides a wide range of mainly vocational training linked to local business. It should move to a permanent site when planned development takes place, and demand is already starting to challenge present capacity.

## Activities

The Youth Service is under-funded and finds it difficult to get workers. Youth clubs have to fulfil funding criteria and cannot be just meeting places; there is currently only one run by the County Council. To some extent this is compensated by the very many hard-working volunteers who devote their time to running a wide range of clubs and activities for children and teenagers. However, access to these is sometimes geographically, culturally or financially challenging. There are few activities or appropriate meeting places for the 13+ age group to meet with peers, chat and hang out. This is a problem compounded by the scarcity of affordable venues and inequalities of play area provision.

## Culture

Frome has a strong arts identity, but relatively little is spent on promoting art and music projects for the more deprived young people, even though volunteers are willing to help and in recent years some of the professional arts venues have received funding to explore this area. On the industrial estate there is a practice studio for noisy bands, provided by a member of the community. The police sometimes provide graffiti art sessions for disaffected youth.



## Play areas

Compared to other Mendip towns, Frome has a high overall level of open space and play space, but the lowest level of strategic and neighbourhood provision. Green spaces and large gardens which previously served as informal play areas are being lost to infill development, and this is not being adequately compensated for by the developers.

The 6-11 age group is the largest user of outdoor space, but also more likely to stay close to home; with no open space and where street play is no longer safe, they have no opportunity to play outside. Older children who want to walk across town to the park are not allowed to because of the dangerous roads and junctions.

New housing estates tend to have smaller rooms, smaller gardens and minimal community space or facilities. All this puts pressure on teenagers wanting an outlet for their energy and a place to meet.

Groups of those with nowhere to go hang around in parks, car parks or near shops, taking 'ownership' of public space; and are perceived by both some adults and some young people as intimidating.

## **Alcohol**

Easy access to drink has exacerbated the problem, while Alcohol Restricted areas, police action and the use of CCTV cameras usually just displace it elsewhere. Frome has a strong pub culture and this, combined with a scarcity of local community venues, perpetuates the idea that adult socialising is centred on alcohol. Although Pub Watch is addressing the problem, under-age drinking in pubs is still thought to be widespread. Anti-social behaviour linked to alcohol presents a problem for which the community needs to find a solution.

## **CONSULTATION FINDINGS**

Comments on youth issues represented 9% of the total responses. It proved quite difficult to engage young people in the consultation process, which is a definite lesson for future activities and efforts.

The majority of comments both from young people themselves and from adults, related to the lack of places for young people to just 'hang out'. Where young people do gather in groups they are seen as threatening and anti-social.

Below is a list of the key issues raised in the 178 comments received, in no particular order:

- Young people seen as threatening
- Not enough for them to do
- Youth are disengaged / alienated from the community at large
- Antisocial behaviour (drinking, speeding cars, noise, litter, vandalism, graffiti)
- Young people feel scared out at night
- Youth need space to hang out
- More consultation of youth needed
- Youth café
- Wardens needed to help prevent bullying of young people
- Move the C&G skatepark to a better location
- Meeting places, sports activities and events for young people

In our consultation, children and young people wanted to see a clean, family-friendly town. A good percentage showed strong eco-awareness, the others none. There was a distinct cultural and economic divide despite the 'mixing pot' nature of the College. This



broadly related to those who thought there was 'nothing to do' and those with 'lots to do'. The difference in views and engagement with young people during the consultation followed similar lines.

Young people who responded liked the ambience of Frome, the music scene, the arts, the Festival, Cheese and Grain entertainment, theatres, Cheap Street and the parks.

They disliked hostile teenagers hanging around street corners and drinking; litter, dog mess and trolleys in the river; and densely built housing estates with no green spaces.

## **THE FUTURE**

It is the young people of Frome that perhaps have the biggest part to play in delivering this 20 year Plan. We recognise that more needs to be done to consult, involve and engage with young people, otherwise they will continue to feel disaffected and that they don't have an important role in their community.

The main issue that came out of the consultation was that of young people needing something to do, or somewhere to go, so this will be prioritised. In addition, the following were recognised by the young people as important, most of which overlap with other topic areas in this Plan:

- 1) More shops - especially High Street clothes shops and better shoe shops, so they don't have to go to Trowbridge or Bath.
- 2) More sports facilities; access for under 16s to the Leisure Centre gym, a bowling alley, more skate parks and/or ramps, outdoor swimming pool, more football pitches, a boxing ring, ice rink and young children's cycle areas.
- 3) More green spaces, parks and gardens in which to sit and read a book or have a picnic, more flowers, and to maintain the Millennium Green.
- 4) More dog bins, litter bins, a cleaner town and river.
- 5) Holiday activities and more free or cheap events for children.
- 6) Free bus travel, and more services to the villages.

It was generally felt that Frome is currently failing a large number of its young people and that in any 20 year vision their needs must be given high priority.

## **Our Vision:**

*Frome is a town which values all young people, fully integrates them into its society, provides a stimulating, safe environment with facilities to play, socialise, be well educated and train for interesting work, and in which they want and can afford to stay as adults.*

In order to achieve this vision, we commit to the following:

## **AIMS & OBJECTIVES**

### **Aim 1: To provide opportunities for personal development through play**

#### Objectives

- i) To work with the relevant local authority to protect and retain existing formal and informal play areas
- ii) To encourage the local planning authority to ensure formal and informal play areas are provided in all new estates
- iii) To seek to preserve and extend provision of community venues and family support

### **Aim 2: To provide safe opportunities for socialising without alcohol**

#### Objectives

- i) To work with the relevant local authorities to provide more public parks or gardens, with better geographical distribution
- ii) To actively work towards providing community meeting places and organised weekend evening events targeted at 13 – 18 yr olds.
- iii) To promote a more tolerant and respectful attitude amongst all social groups

### **Aim 3: To prepare for an interesting and satisfying adult life**

#### Objectives

- i) To support the relevant authorities and organisations in their provision of as wide as possible a range of life choices
- ii) To actively support the provision of vocational training in Frome



## **WHAT NEXT?**

Producing this Plan has depended on substantial and much appreciated contributions from the community, both directly and through comments provided during the consultation period.

This Plan is our first step towards recognising and achieving the Vision for Frome. The danger is that often a large amount of effort goes into producing a plan, and then nothing seems to happen about implementing it and the community can be left feeling disillusioned and de-motivated. We take encouragement from the work in a number of areas relevant to this Plan that has been ongoing, or indeed completed, by local groups during our consultation and plan development since 2007.

The people of Frome have been so enthusiastic about taking part in this process and have welcomed the opportunity to really have a say in the future of their town, that we must keep this momentum going and drive forward the objectives in this Plan.

But this Plan is just the start. The implementation of its projects will need commitment, realism and good management, plus strong support and working relationships within the community and with all the stakeholders. We will need to establish a well-constructed and efficient implementation organisation.

## **FUTURE STRUCTURE**

With such an important Community Plan for Frome, it is essential that it has the most appropriate structure to help take it forward and keep momentum going.

The main task of Vision for Frome in its current form was the production of the Community Plan. This has been managed by an Interim Executive Team (IET) composed of a cross section of volunteers from the community and a representative from each tier of local government. It was assisted in its work by local government officers and many volunteers from the community.

A second task of the IET's remit was the formulation of a suitable follow-on structure to develop and maintain the Plan, and to identify and support the means for the implementation of its projects. This is proposed to be a Forum composed of a wide representation of stakeholders and active community members, and a Management Team appointed by members of the Forum. On completion of this task and the Plan's issue the IET will cease to exist.

The next stage is from when the Forum is established and the Management Team takes over. As a community group, it will work in partnership with councils and other agencies to achieve mutually acceptable development of the Vision and project implementation. It is anticipated that as a community organisation it would be able to access sources of funding not available to public bodies. This is one of the great benefits of working in partnership – it helps to widen the range of opportunities available to Frome to help realise its Vision.

Action on the ground will be by Project groups. These will consist of existing interest groups, emerging theme groups, local authorities, voluntary groups and other public bodies. These may include some specifically constituted for the purpose, such as Community Interest Companies or Project Teams. The Management Team, by working closely with them, would be able to facilitate delivery and harmonise their work with other projects.

## **MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

The Management Team would lead an annual review of the Plan to ensure it is still relevant and can adapt to changes in Frome and the wider area. Project leaders will be expected to provide periodic updates to the committee and/or Forum.

This review will be in conjunction with public consultation, via periodic specific events and open Forum sessions, to ensure the Plan and its development keeps in step with the community view of what is needed in Frome.

Project evaluation would help guide future priorities and decisions about which projects are no longer required, and would focus on:

- A revisit to the initial project objectives – are they still relevant and appropriate?
- Has the project succeeded in achieving any of the initial objectives?
- Where is the evidence for this?
- What stage is the project at?
- Budget/expenditure details
- What lessons have been learned in undertaking the project?
- How might this change the way other projects are managed in the future?
- Next stages

The reports produced will be shared with partners and relevant funding agencies to help identify and agree the way forward for Frome.

As you can see, there is much to do. We need help to take this Plan forward in a positive way, by involving the people of Frome and other partners.

If you would like more information or would like to be kept up to date, look regularly at our website: [www.vision4frome.org.uk](http://www.vision4frome.org.uk)

**This is our Plan, for our Frome, for our future. Thank you for taking the time to read it.**

# Appendix A

## METHODOLOGY

Our consultation started when we sent out questionnaires in the newsletters of surrounding rural parishes and placed articles in Housing Association and Mendip District Council newsletters. We involved the local newspapers, who covered the launch extensively and gave some ongoing publicity throughout the consultation period. The local radio station enthusiastically promoted the Fun Day, reaching out to a wider audience not previously aware of V4F.

The official launch was on a market day at the Cheese and Grain, in the centre of town. People used Post-It notes and it was an unstructured session where they could write about anything. It was very successful, producing well over 400 useful comments.



We followed this by opening an Info Point with a display of visioning ideas from local groups. This was in the hotel foyer of The George, a visible and centrally-located position kindly offered by the manager. This was manned for the first couple of weeks and then on market days, with volunteers handing out leaflets to passers-by, encouraging them to enter and to provide feedback.

A second event at the Cheese and Grain was organised by Mendip's 'Time to Plan' officers and run as a joint event with V4F. It was more structured, used a number of subject headings, and was also very productive.

A third event at the Masonic Hall was for more in-depth discussion. Using 'Open Space' format, this dealt with issues raised on the day and contributors worked in focus groups. Out of this came some of the material for projects.

As part of the pro-active consultation, a couple of volunteers visited several residential homes and a craft session, holding useful discussions with some long-term residents of Frome.

We left 'V4F Post Boxes' and leaflets at take-aways, convenience stores, pubs, sports facilities and other meeting places away from the town centre. These were used by a variety of people of all ages. We also approached shoppers in the out of town retail areas and received good feedback from them. In both cases, it was about more basic concerns than in the town centre.

Some people emailed their comments directly through the website, which was primarily intended for event information and contact details. The on-line forum discussion was predominately about town-centre topics.

The business community was involved through the Chamber of Commerce and we also contacted individual businesses directly by email and post, asking for completion of a Questionnaire concerning their needs and plans for the future.

Our main event was the Fun Day, held at the Rugby Club on the northern edge of town. Games and activities were either free or £1 a go. It had a relaxed ambience and good weather, and we provided a free shuttle bus to and from the town centre. While the children were occupied, their parents joined in the consultation. This included the 'Time to Plan' cards and V4F Post-It notes as before, plus visioning and mapping exercises. In addition, the police consulted for PACT (Partners and Communities Together), the Town Council about Victoria Park and FROGS (Frome Recreation and Open Grounds Supporters) on green spaces. Each made a summary of their feedback available to us afterwards.

College media staff helped with a 'Vox Pop' to record views and then repeated this for the students during the week. Youth workers held a Post-It session at the College and ran visioning sessions using a Questionnaire. Middle schools were involved initially through leaflets in the school bags and later used the same Questionnaire in tutorial groups.

While the remaining data was being collated and analysed three Writers' Workshops were run on Sunday afternoons by Julian Mellor



of 2md, who had previously compiled the Baseline Study. Teams of 3 or 4 people then wrote a chapter each, based on feedback received. These were presented to the Interim Executive Team for editorial review. The whole was then put together as a single document, approved by the team and submitted to the Market and Coastal Towns Association shortly before it was wound up.

Over the summer, that document was sent to Mendip District Council and Somerset District Council and their feedback noted. Also during this period, a specialist team consulted with various groups commonly described as 'hard to reach' and produced a report. In the autumn, a series of meetings was held to discuss each chapter in greater depth. As a result of this, amendments were made and additional material for this final version of the Plan was gathered.

A copy of the Community Plan was formally presented to the Mayor, for the Town Council, at the 2009 Annual Town Meeting. Vision for Frome hopes that all three tiers of local government will take note of the community's aspirations and work with the people of Frome to help implement parts of the Plan.

## Appendix B

### CONSULTATION ACTIVITIES

#### V4F Consultation Activities 2008:

- March 29 – Launch at Cheese & Grain – open post-it note session
- March/April – Questionnaires in Parish Newsletters
- April 16 – Shared post-it event with Mendip District Council Planners
- April 26 – ‘Open Space’ event where participants defined their own agenda
- May 10 – Fun Day (joint with Mendip Planners)
  - Post-Its
  - Mendip Flags
  - Workshop Flags
  - Visioning workshop
  - Vox Pop
- April/May - The George Foyer information point displayed some theme groups’ ideas and used theme-specific feedback forms. Open comments were also invited. Manned on Market Days (Wed, Sat)
- April/May – website encouraged email comments and on-line discussion
- April/May – phone-line for comments
- April/May – feedback forms and V4F post-boxes in takeaways, pubs and clubs
- April/May – interviews/group discussions in Residential Homes
- May 13 – group discussion at Key Centre for Children & the Community
- April/May – Interviews outside Asda, Tesco Express, Homebase, Halfords, Football Club
- May – business questionnaire mailed to 574 named contacts of Frome businesses
- May – questionnaires in Frome Community College and Middle Schools
- May – College Post-it notes session
- May – College Vox Pop
- May to August – Consultations with ‘hard to reach’ groups
- September/October In-depth discussion meetings for individual chapters

# Appendix C

## CONSULTATION RESPONSES

### Detailed breakdown by chapter

Chapter	Main Groupings	Number of responses	Key points raised
Economy	Shopping locally	231	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Little support for out of town</li> <li>• Develop the local markets</li> <li>• Good balance of shops needs protecting</li> <li>• Need for more high street names to supplement independents</li> <li>• More shops needed</li> <li>• Shuttle buses to ASDA are stealing town centre trade</li> <li>• Free parking Markets</li> <li>• Need men's clothing shop</li> <li>• Value our local independent shops</li> </ul>
Economy	Cleaner streets	79	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Litter</li> <li>• Dog fouling</li> <li>• Fly tipping</li> <li>• Street cleaning frequency</li> </ul>
Economy	Improve town image & facilities	77	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Issues around upkeep of key buildings</li> <li>• Consistent treatment (e.g. shop fronts, street furniture)</li> <li>• Local press putting the town down</li> <li>• Image views</li> <li>• Retain uniqueness of Frome</li> <li>• Toilets should be reopened</li> <li>• Return removed benches - elderly need seats</li> </ul>
Economy	Local employment	52	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More focus on local job creation</li> <li>• Cutting the level of commuting</li> <li>• Live work balance</li> <li>• Closure of business a concern</li> </ul>
Economy	Eating out	28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A wider range of eating places - fast food, healthy eating</li> <li>• Venues for kids/youth, families</li> <li>• Quality restaurants and bars</li> </ul>
Economy	Support to local businesses	27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business support</li> <li>• Save business premises from housing development</li> <li>• Encourage and support small businesses</li> <li>• Broadband upgrade for the town</li> </ul>
Economy	Develop the local, creative economy	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop the creative economy which Frome is getting a reputation for</li> <li>• Develop links of creative industries in the town</li> <li>• Arts in public spaces</li> </ul>

Chapter	Main Groupings	Number of responses	Key points raised
Economy	More provision of vocational training	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More on the job training</li> <li>• Support Frome Education and Training Enterprise</li> <li>• Apprenticeship schemes</li> </ul>
Getting Around	Town centre traffic	142	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to pedestrianise centre</li> <li>• Please do not pedestrianise town centre</li> <li>• Bus stop changes mean that buses cause bottlenecks</li> <li>• Restrictions on deliveries to shops</li> <li>• Take traffic out of town centre</li> <li>• Frome needs a clear transport strategy for the wider town centre</li> <li>• Promote "shared space" for pedestrians, bicycles and vehicles</li> <li>• Reduce HGV traffic</li> <li>• Pollution</li> <li>• Reduce traffic</li> <li>• Road maintenance</li> </ul>
Getting Around	Parking	118	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More parking needed</li> <li>• Parking is too expensive</li> <li>• Calls for free parking</li> <li>• Illegal or inconsiderate parking on streets causes traffic chaos</li> <li>• Insufficient parking in residential areas</li> <li>• Parking should be free on market days</li> </ul>
Getting Around	Public transport	117	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community transport</li> <li>• Promote car sharing</li> <li>• Poor bus services</li> <li>• Linkage of rural bus services to Bath services needs addressing</li> <li>• More rail services to Bristol, Bath, London and other centres</li> <li>• Rail fares too expensive</li> <li>• Rail service is variable quality</li> </ul>
Getting Around	Cycling & walking	89	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of more cycle routes to and from various locations</li> <li>• Identification of pedestrian routes with danger points</li> <li>• Safe crossings needed in town</li> </ul>
Getting Around	Disabled access	26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessibility - e.g. bus steps too high</li> <li>• Cars parked on pavements</li> <li>• Fear of going out at night</li> <li>• Playground inaccessible for disabled youth</li> <li>• Disabled car park spaces abused</li> <li>• Dial a Ride needs to stay</li> <li>• Shop accessibility difficult when no ramps available</li> </ul>
Getting Around	Traffic speed	19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speeding in various locations, address by speed humps, 20mph limit zones</li> </ul>

Chapter	Main Groupings	Number of responses	Key points raised
Housing & Heritage	Improve/protect our open space	113	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor maintenance</li> <li>• A need to plant more trees and generally green the town</li> <li>• An overall lack of open space</li> <li>• More wildlife areas with interpretation</li> <li>• Promote food planting in open areas</li> <li>• More play areas needed</li> <li>• Stop the losses of small open spaces within the town</li> </ul>
Housing & Heritage	Enhance & promote the river corridor	74	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many observations seeking the improvement of the river corridor as a wildlife and recreational asset</li> <li>• Partnership approach needed to manage this resource</li> <li>• Potential as a tourist attraction</li> </ul>
Housing & Heritage	Promote appropriate housing & development	69	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote more comprehensive developments</li> <li>• Sparing use of greenfield sites</li> <li>• Stop filling in the towns urban spaces</li> <li>• Need to get on with development in the centre (Garsdale/singers)</li> <li>• Proper mix of housing</li> <li>• Annual design competition</li> <li>• Promote modern architecture</li> </ul>
Housing & Heritage	Value of Frome's heritage	55	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect towns image, maintain its heritage, use character as a strength</li> <li>• Frome's heritage is valued by the town</li> </ul>
Housing & Heritage	More affordable housing	21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need for more affordable housing</li> <li>• Make sure new affordable housing blends in better with other development</li> </ul>
Land use, food, energy & waste	Improve recycling / dealing with waste	55	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local dump is not able to cope with demand</li> <li>• More kerbside collection of wider range of materials</li> <li>• Must collect/recycle plastic and cardboard</li> <li>• Stop garden bonfires</li> <li>• More compulsion to recycle</li> <li>• Bin collections and waste reduction</li> <li>• Composting bins needed</li> </ul>
Land use, food, energy & waste	Alternative energy	29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incentivise renewable energy within new development</li> <li>• Eco Housing &amp; energy saving</li> <li>• Reduce fossil fuel use</li> </ul>
Land use, food, energy & waste	Develop local food economy	23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Farmers markets</li> <li>• More local produce on sale</li> </ul>

Chapter	Main Groupings	Number of responses	Key points raised
Land use, food, energy & waste	Resource use	19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to reduce wasteful use of resources - oil, plastic bags, materials</li> <li>• Peak oil</li> </ul>
Land use, food, energy & waste	Allotments	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need more</li> <li>• Encourage more local food production</li> </ul>
Society & Wellbeing	Improve & increase community/sports/leisure facilities	117	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve or provide new sports centre and pool</li> <li>• Provide more facilities at the schools which the community can then access</li> <li>• Community facilities within new development</li> <li>• New arts centre</li> <li>• More community space</li> <li>• Library bus</li> <li>• Bowling alley</li> <li>• Interpretation facility needed for speakers of other languages</li> <li>• Walking buses to cover school runs</li> <li>• Better sports facilities, more access, cheaper prices</li> </ul>
Society & Wellbeing	Policing / perception of safety	80	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perception that the town is not safe especially in evenings and at night</li> <li>• Expectations of more police presence</li> <li>• More CCTV surveillance</li> <li>• Greater PCSO presence</li> <li>• More policing in response to youth</li> <li>• Antisocial behaviour issues</li> <li>• Level of police service to Frome is poor</li> </ul>
Society & Wellbeing	Entertainment/things to do	68	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Town is boring</li> <li>• Better cinema and other leisure uses</li> <li>• More family activities</li> <li>• More youth activity</li> <li>• Activities for the elderly</li> <li>• Nightlife is very limited</li> <li>• Good Cheese and Grain venue</li> </ul>
Society & Wellbeing	Community engagement	47	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More efforts to keep people/groups aware of issues</li> <li>• More clubs for all ages</li> <li>• Involve the community more in decision making</li> <li>• Community events</li> <li>• Activities by Town Council, MDC and other groups</li> <li>• More pride in town</li> <li>• Support volunteer/community activities</li> <li>• Frome FM</li> </ul>

Chapter	Main Groupings	Number of responses	Key points raised
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get involved with the carnival, operatic society, Lions and Rotarians</li> </ul>
Society & Wellbeing	Education provision	35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School funding</li> <li>• Need for a competitor to Community College</li> <li>• Nurseries</li> <li>• FE College</li> <li>• Eco School</li> <li>• Alternative teaching - Forest School</li> <li>• Provision of extra-curricular skills</li> <li>• Lifelong learning</li> </ul>
Society & Wellbeing	Community leadership	23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council tax levels</li> <li>• Local determination</li> <li>• Local Democracy</li> </ul>
Society & Wellbeing	Community integration	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some resentment of immigrant groups</li> <li>• Friendly town</li> <li>• Gypsies - threat of eviction, no access to a GP, more pitches needed, experience of racism/harassment</li> <li>• Homes for the elderly</li> </ul>
Society & Wellbeing	Health provision	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concern over some loss of capacity at new hospital</li> <li>• Care in the Community</li> <li>• Support for Carers</li> <li>• Difficulty getting GP appointments</li> <li>• Promote healthier eating</li> <li>• More NHS dentists</li> </ul>
Youth	Youth - issues and needs	178	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Young people seen as threatening</li> <li>• Not enough for them to do</li> <li>• Youth are disengaged / alienated from the community at large</li> <li>• Antisocial behaviour (drinking, speeding cars, noise, litter, vandalism, graffiti)</li> <li>• Young people feel scared out at night</li> <li>• Youth need space to hang out</li> <li>• More consultation of youth needed</li> <li>• Youth café</li> <li>• Wardens needed to help prevent bullying of young people</li> <li>• Move the C&amp;G skatepark to a</li> </ul>

Chapter	Main Groupings	Number of responses	Key points raised
			better location <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting places, sports activities and events for young people</li> </ul>