

Frome Town Council

A Strategy for Success 2011-15

Part One

2011 -2013

Frome Town Council

A Strategy For Success.

Part One - 2011 – 2013.

Content

Section One	Introduction.	Pages	2-4
Section Two	Our Aspiration	Pages	5-7
Section Three	Actions	Pages	7-15
Appendix	Appendix	Pages	16-18

Frome. A Strategy 2011-15

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed it is the only thing that ever has”

Margaret Mead

Section One. Introduction.

1.1 In May 2011 a new town council was elected. It inherited a three year Strategic Plan which was to run until an unspecified date in 2011. The Plan followed the traditional format of Corporate Aims, Objectives and Policies.

It is currently unclear how many of the objectives were fulfilled nor whether the Plan itself was judged a success. This is not a criticism of the previous council, through which much was accomplished; strategic plans in the public sector are notoriously time-consuming to produce, frequently play little part in the day to day life of the organisation and often end up sidelined or simply ignored by decision makers.

As a result we have decided to adopt a more radical approach identifying

- A “golden thread” which runs through all of our work,
- Our aspirations for the town and the council,
- Areas on which we intend to focus and, within those,
- The actions we intend to undertake, especially over the next 18 months.

1.2 The “Golden Thread”.

As a town and a council we are faced with both huge challenges, and timely opportunities. Traditional economic growth can no longer be assumed, nor is it environmentally sustainable. Our emphasis will be on the “human economy” which is plentiful, dynamic and sustainable – supporting the resources of individuals, families and the social networks that sustain society. Radical thinking, using the new Localism Bill, will provide opportunities to move beyond just service provision to an equal partnership between the public and those who “serve” them.

Of course we recognise the limited role of the town council but we believe genuinely that small is beautiful and that the time is right for towns like Frome to have a greater influence over their own destiny. We believe that we can sow the seeds of long term change, and make key decisions which will enable Frome to be more resilient and better able to take advantage of the challenges that lie ahead. But we must be bold, our aspirations to 2013 are necessarily constrained by practicality and a time lag whilst institutions and individuals adjust to the new reality, but beyond that, we must dream the impossible in the belief that this will stir debate and enable Frome as a town to continue to move forward.

1.3 Aspirations.

We have articulated our aspirations in a retrospective assessment of achievements; effectively looking back from the year 2015. This is an unusual approach; we acknowledge that we are unlikely to achieve all of the aspirations and we understand that those that are not met might be used as a

stick to beat us in the future. However, we believe that if we don't know where we want to be, we won't know which direction to go in, nor will we know when we are likely to arrive.

1.4 Areas of Focus

To guide these aspirations, and indeed individual decisions as they arise, we have five areas of focus:

- Building a sustainable economy
- A Vibrant Participatory Community
- A Thriving Town Centre
- Efficient and Effective Public Services.
- An Innovative and Supportive Town Council.

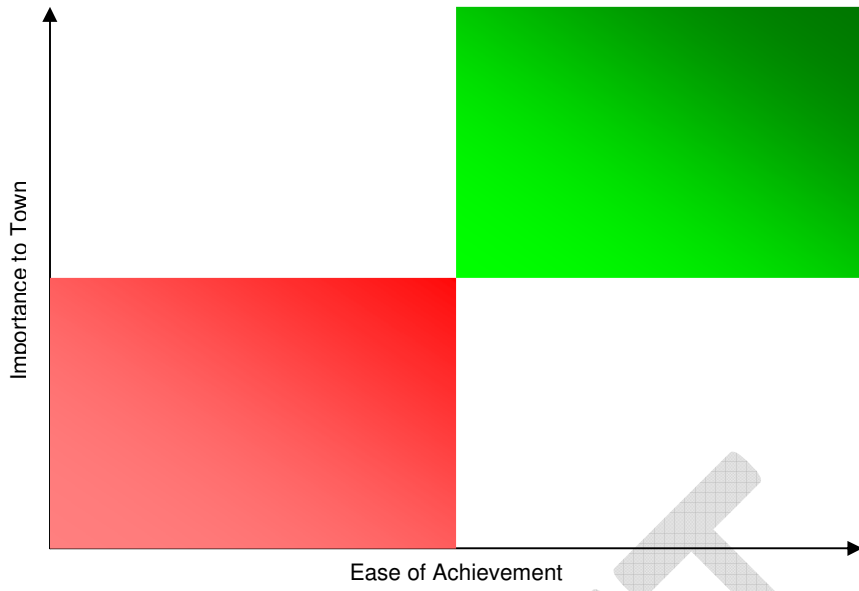
Plans on their own are worth very little, action is the key. We have therefore identified some specific actions which flow from the five areas of focus (whilst also leaving scope for flexibility as new opportunities and problems arise).

1.5 Community Plan and V4F.

In preparing this document we have relied heavily on the Community Plan prepared by Vision For Frome (V4F) in 2008. Small parts have needed revision, much has happened globally and nationally in the three years since it was prepared, but the bulk of the findings are still relevant. V4F received over 3000 comments arising from a complex and thorough detailed consultation exercise.

Shortcomings in the Community Plan have arisen not in its content but in its implementation. How do you get decision makers to respect its findings? Where will the resources come from? How does the Plan match up to new economic circumstances brought on by a worldwide recession? How can the less tangible or aspirational objectives be achieved? What priorities can be placed on the 85 objectives found in the Plan? There are no easy answers to these challenges and we do not pretend to have resolved all of these concerns.

Accordingly, we have adopted a pragmatic approach, we have pushed some proposals into later years, after all, the Plan was intended to run until 2028. Others can be more easily resolved. We have used the methodology shown below to help determine our priorities. It can be used to measure, along one axis, the ease with which an action can be achieved and against the other axis how likely it will match the aspirations.



It's not perfect, others will attach different weightings to individual elements, but it has the virtue of transparency and simplicity.

DRAFT

Section 2. “Back to The Future.” Our Aspirations – 2015.

If we don't have something to aim for we won't know where we are going and we won't know when we've arrived. So here are our aspirations for Frome **written as a retrospective in 2015.**

2.1 Identity

Thank heavens that three years ago we started to look at how people inside and outside of the town viewed Frome, it has really helped to differentiate us from other market towns. We settled on “*The Innovation Town*” and Frome now has a clear identity, in all its aspects of life, as a pioneering, inventive and exciting place to be..... and in which to invest.

2.2 Employment

We have bucked the trends on employment and there is now a wealth of opportunities in numerous enterprises, especially in the blossoming creative and media enterprises. The Neighbourhood Plan, finished in 2012 in record time, protected employment land but also created space for low cost manufacturing incubators; there is now a waiting list for empty units. Many people work from home because of the way we positioned ourselves in the UK Broadband Strategy but the light industrial estates on the edge of town are also thriving because of the increased interest in new technology aimed at renewable energy. Everyone without full time employment who can work is encouraged to play a part in the life of the town through useful community schemes.

2.3 Education

The Great Education Debate took place in late 2011 and many new ideas surfaced from the hundreds of people that attended. Schools now respond more clearly to the needs of the town and are used much more intensively as hubs and resource centres linked constructively to the community. The secondary schools are now all academies, working together, they are finally achieving their true potential and have transformed attainment levels for all children.

Frome Community College is nationally renowned for meeting the real needs of all local youngsters in a challenging world. Discussions are now advanced for the University of Somerset perhaps with a role emerging for the College as a campus specialising in creative industries . Two new free schools have opened in town increasing parental choice. These are underpinned by thriving programmes of adult and community education, run by the community and taking place in venues throughout the town.

2.4 Town Centre

Since the responsibility for cleaning the town centre was returned to the Town Council in 2011 the town looks a lot cleaner and tidier. What a difference it makes having local paid employees working closely with local communities. In 2012 the Town Council came to an agreement (including on resources) with the County and District to look after all of the environmental issues across the town including; weed control, grass cutting, minor potholes, priorities for highway spend and street furniture.

The Town Centre itself is thriving, thanks partly to the sterling work of the Market Manager and the Economic Development Manager, both appointed in 2012; the former with the help of the Frome Development Trust. The Wednesday and Saturday markets have been revived and moved to the Market Place, specialist markets seem to happen every week, empty shops are few and far between and the independent retail sector, using the online Frome Portal to reach a wider audience, has continued to flourish. The arrival of more sophisticated independently run eateries in 2010 has led to a good selection of new options for eating out in town and the live music scene has gone from strength to strength.

At last pedestrians feel a lot safer now that the speed limit in the town centre and around schools and shopping centres is 20mph. The Market Place and Bath Street, temporarily closed on Wednesday and Saturdays from 2012, have been transformed as part of the final stages of the "Shared Space Project" which removed all barriers, crossings and unnecessary signs. Many people were wary when Shared Space was first suggested but after some lively debates most were won over when they saw what was possible. Improved alternate arrangements for bus parking and North/South through traffic, with enforcement of restrictions on heavy lorries were also big steps forward.

Parking is not quite free but now that Mendip have handed back the running and maintenance of all of the car parks the income is targeted at local projects and good causes with changes every six months; for example we started with the Joint Arts Foundation, then moved onto supporting services for the elderly and recently spruced up some tired shop fronts.

In 2012 the debate on Saxonvale stopped bouncing around the town once the main protagonists realised that they agreed on 80-90% of what were believed to be their differences. The recession stopped most big regeneration schemes nationally and locally and the Town Council started working with local and far sighted developers to put together a series of interlinked improvements led by the Planning Brief and the Neighbourhood Plan. Thankfully the foundations are now in and work is finally on its way

2.5 Local Investment.

The establishment of the Frome Development Trust (a community interest company) was a significant landmark for the town. The trust, using private donations has enabled several schemes to go ahead that would otherwise have foundered. The Trust and the Trustees have established themselves through support for the market schemes, assistance to the independent retail sector and the purchase of land for allotments. Investment in the Trust continues apace as a revolving budget. The original investment has been matched and is now double that of the initial sum.

2.6 Parks, Trees, Grass and Play.

The Green Space Strategy in 2012 really helped to sort out play and open space across the town and allowed rational discussion to be held on new investment arising from the Localism Act passed in late 2011. The Welshmill development in 2012 was a model of how local groups, the council and the Lottery could work together. Many new trees have been planted within the town; we were especially proud of being able to break up the monotonous Market Yard Car Park with new planting.

2.7 Arts

Frome continues to have a thriving arts scene that, despite some heavy financial blows in 2011, still engages, entertains and energises the town and its visitors. A strong arts sector has also brought economic benefits: jobs have been created and businesses have been drawn to the town. In particular, the arts have helped bring a now well-established creative industries sector to Frome.

This Creative Sector has worked closely with the Town Council to target potential funders but many local arts organisations still rely solely upon the help of these sponsors, local people and the town council. As a result their financial security remains fragile. The introduction of initiatives such as joint marketing and ticketing arrangements have reduced costs and increased market penetration to a wider market.

Security and income has been provided for the Cheese and Grain – three years ago the town’s largest music and arts space installed photovoltaic cells on the roof which now generate a substantial income.

2.8 Public Services

Frome was one of the first small towns in the country to set up a form of pooled community budget. The negotiations have been difficult but the commitment of the County Council, the District and the Police have been crucial. At the very least we now know where all the money goes, are co-ordinating services better and we have formulated ideas on which services, starting with the elderly and youth, are valued by users. The opening of the new police station in the town centre made citizens feel more secure and reduced incidents of antisocial behaviour. Crime levels have dropped to an all time low. The Library is now buzzing since its reformulation as a community learning and communications hub.

The new Health Centre, next to the Community Hospital, opened in 2013, allowing the two organisations to deliver a vastly improved local health service with longer opening hours, more facilities on site, better access by bus from all parts of the town and an increased ability to run successful health campaigns.

2.9 Housebuilding

New housebuilding continues apace, 300 new dwellings have been built of which 100 were deemed as affordable. The Town Design Statement completed and adopted by Mendip District Council in 2012 has at last backed Frome’s demand for high quality development with a statutory planning document. No longer do developers see Frome as a soft-touch. The “new homes bonus” and “community infrastructure levy” have allowed the town to benefit to the tune of several hundred thousand pounds from new housing developments. The majority of these new homes have some form of solar energy collection, and exceptionally high levels of insulation. The designation of a sizeable piece of land for sustainable self build homes minus the normal planning requirements has attracted national interest and the first few homes are definitely distinctive.

2.10 Sustainability

Scepticism about climate-change and the descent from peak oil has evaporated as the reality begins to stare us all in the face. Progress on new schemes has been steady rather than spectacular; the provision of new allotments in 2012 set off a chain of similar developments around the town, the revitalisation of the markets encouraged more local food sales at affordable prices and there is an

exciting proposal to use the bulk purchasing power of the town to buy gas and electricity at reduced prices.

The community led Frome Energy Company has made significant progress in plans for biogas production using Frome's "waste" food and green materials along with industrial side products. Pretty soon we hope no waste will be leaving Frome to be transported around the County and beyond.

Sustainability has increasingly underpinned the work of the town council both in its own activity and in the significantly increased grants made to community organisations. The success of these initiatives in the Town is now being measured in a healthier environment, increased wellbeing and more diverse employment opportunities all of which have ensured more people are staying in Frome and valuing its strong community cohesion.

2.11 The Council and the Community in 2015

As the Council has taken on more services it has grown; the review in 2012 of its role, staffing levels and quality of services set a new direction and ethos. The "power of general competence" introduced by the Government in 2011, allowed the council to undertake any function not deemed illegal and helped to resolve many uncertainties. Gradually the council and members got the hang of using all of the expertise found in the town and supporting the voluntary sector both in resources and expertise. Most work by members is now undertaken outside of council meetings, engaging with the local community. As ever, resources have proved difficult and every year there has been a healthy debate about efficiency and local tax levels.

Section 3. Actions

3.1 Introduction

To achieve the aspirations cited above we need to take action. Below are the actions we intend to undertake in the next 18 months. We will monitor progress on a regular basis and after 18 months undertake a thorough review.

Recognising the limitations of our resources, we intend to focus on 5 key areas;

- **Encouraging a Dynamic and Sustainable Economy;**
- **Creating a Vibrant Participatory Community;**
- **Enhancing a Thriving Town Centre;**
- **Ensuring Efficient and Effective Public Services,;**
- **Establishing an Innovative and Supportive Town Council**

3.2 Encouraging a Dynamic and Sustainable Economy

The bedrock of Frome's economy lies in; the light industry based primarily on the trading estates, the local farming economy, and in commuting to employment outside of Frome. We need to be aware of the pressures that a flat economy, rising fuel prices and climate change place on these sectors, we must provide support for ideas and innovations that soften the blows and take advantage of new and radical initiatives.

In recent years the town has gained a reputation for attracting creative industries. Building on this by attracting and retaining small and medium sized enterprises will be key.

We should also work to carve out a new niche for Frome in green technology, building on our existing status as a Transition Town, and the considerable expertise within the locality.

To achieve these ends Frome needs a clear identity, clarity of approach on economic development and a willingness to market itself to its residents, visitors, innovators and investors alike. This re-positioning will not happen by chance we must stand out amongst many other market towns, highlight the many positives and not be afraid of blowing our own trumpet (because no one else will)

Economic Development.		
We will:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Employ an Economic Development /Town Centre Manager on a two year contract to; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ prepare an economic development plan ◦ oversee activity in the town centre ◦ be involved in all economic development functions and ◦ work with local entrepreneurs and educational establishments to understand employment provision and opportunities in the town including creating a local business directory for local purchasing. 	Spring 2012	
		Autumn 2012
Boost the Identity of the Town.		
We will:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use local and national expertise to create a unique identity for the town, find new ways of disseminating that identity and answering the question “Why would you want to move or visit Frome?” 	Spring 2012	
Help the local economy be more resilient, self reliant and sustainable.		
We will:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support schemes for production of renewable energy in the town’s public and private organisations, linking this to promoting Frome as a place that supports green ideas and enterprise. Including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Support Cheese and Grain project to have PV panels fitted to roof. ◦ Investigate options for supporting lift and car share initiatives. 	October 2011	
		Spring 2012
Assist the unemployed – including school leavers and the under-employed		
We will:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide opportunities in the TC for learning new skills whilst fulfilling a social good. ▪ Support businesses creating skilled jobs and apprentice opportunities - work with FETE ▪ Investigate ways to encourage local micro start ups with grants, advice and new forms of available and affordable space; support volunteer opportunities in re-use, recycling, alternative energy and shared employment spaces. 	Now and expanding	
		Ongoing
		Starting 2012
Creative design fair 2012.		
We will:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support the opportunity for Frome to be represented by its Creative Business sector. ▪ Provide dependent funding ▪ Offer support to the planning and delivery of the event 	Ongoing	
		2012

3.3 Creating a Vibrant Participatory Community.

Much of today’s general dissatisfaction and social isolation can be traced to the fact that many of us have relatively little control over our lives and rarely enjoy the fruits of our own labours. We may look on others with suspicion and expect ‘the authorities’ to take care of the public realm - and grumble when it is not done well. Yet the antidote to this might simply be to encourage participation and greater involvement. Frome is already good at this, with a vast network of

societies, informal social services and active community and neighbourhood groups that are the real Frome.

Many of these areas are under intense pressure, with reduced funding, aging membership and increasing demand for services. We must quickly move to identify where best to provide support – not only in funding but in networking and facilitation. We must support and encourage communities and empower them to look after their own neighbourhoods and interests because they know what needs to be done and they will do it best.

Encouraging Community Groups to take the lead.

We will:

- | | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| ▪ Increase the amount of grants distributed by the Town Council every year identifying the funds that are to be used. | January 2012 |
| ▪ Introduce Participatory Budgeting for community grants. | March 2012 |
| ▪ Investigate providing some umbrella services such as insurance, accountancy and so on. | Autumn 2012 |
| ▪ Promote and facilitate engagement through participatory arts projects and street parties especially in 2012. | Before 3 rd June 2012 |

Make the best use of all of the Town's Green Spaces.

We will:

- | | |
|--|---------------|
| ▪ Develop a Town-wide strategy for open and play spaces. We will have a joined-up approach to make the best use of resources including the Queen Elizabeth II Fields Challenge, Community Assets and Village Greens. | December 2011 |
| ▪ Improve the skate and bike facilities in the Town. Approving additional facilities. | Winter 2011 |
| ▪ Support and promote groups to make the best use of the river. Devise a river usage plan with Friends of the River Frome. | Summer 2012 |
| ▪ Identify Council-controlled land suitable for the planting of large trees | Winter 2012 |

Maintain the individual character of the Town while encouraging sustainable growth.

We will:

- | | |
|--|-------------|
| ▪ Use the new Town Design Guide (TDG) in all major planning recommendations. | March 2012 |
| ▪ Ensure that Frome benefits from investment from the New Homes Bonus and Community Levy introduced in the Localism Bill. | Spring 2012 |
| ▪ Assist and advise community and neighbourhood groups in the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan. Excite interest in this Frome wide process. | Winter 2011 |

Help local households be more resilient, self reliant and sustainable.

We will:

- | | |
|--|-------------------|
| ▪ Provide, with the help of Frome Development Community Interest Company, more allotment space within the town. | From October 2011 |
| ▪ Only support new developments which have a strong renewable energy component. | Ongoing |
| ▪ Ensure there is enough recycling provision. Negotiate with SCC to have recycling centre open more often. | Spring 2012 |
| ▪ Provide town centre recycling bins (with choices), funded by local business. | Autumn 2012 |
| ▪ Investigate, with Sustainable Frome, the possibility of the residents of the Town using their combined purchasing power to strike a beneficial deal with energy providers. Complete preparation and investigate national and international examples. | Winter 2012 |

Build on the range of facilities/activities available in the Town.		
We will:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage sports clubs and organisations to work together to share facilities and costs. Set up a working group of the Town Council. 		Summer 2012
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist the college in maintaining theatre and sports facilities currently available on the campus and in the case of the Sports Centre consider the long term viability of the current building. 		Within College's timescale for conversion to Academy status
Provide support for the Town's flourishing Arts scene.		
We will:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure the Cheese and Grain has a clear strategy for the future, is able to function as a viable organisation and continues to provide valuable community services. Put in place a new SLA designed for long-term sustainability. 		Winter 2011
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a platform for the arts organisations to come together and share resources such as common box office and marketing. Set up a working group of the Town Council following the 2011 Festival debate. 		Autumn 2012
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make it easier for large scale outside events to run. Investigate the possibility of general public liability insurance for all council supported events. 		Autumn 2012
Community Involvement		
We will:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Run the education Debate on the future of Education in the Town with all educational establishments including proposed free schools. 		Winter 2011
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organise <i>Frome Question Time</i> in which public can ask questions of directly elected officials and participate in the debate. Review and improve the event to be run two or three times a year. 		Winter 2011
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a <i>Citizen's Jury</i> to review the evidence on the development of Saxonvale and help provide a consensus on this divisive issue. 		Summer 2012
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support participatory arts projects to bring people together through creativity 		

3.4 Enhancing a Thriving Town Centre,

The town centre generated most comments in the Community Plan. The debate continues around the future of Saxonvale. Undoubtedly the people of Frome want more diversity in their shopping and "eating out" choices. Town centres should however be more than just retail, we need to "re-imagine the High Street" as a place to live in, a place of learning, somewhere that is green and safe and somewhere that is creative and exciting. Little of this will happen if we do not rise above a hygiene threshold; so that the streets are clean and repaired, pedestrians feel safe, the markets function well, empty shops are filled quickly, parking issues are resolved and so on. We need to demonstrate that someone cares, and it can only start with us as a Town Council.

Managing the Town Centre.		
We will:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make this the number one priority for the Town Council and for others for example floral decoration, enhanced cleansing and so on. 		Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore the introduction of a town centre improvement zone. 		Summer 2012

Improve the range of shopping in the town.		
We will:		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Encourage developments in the Town Centre, including Saxonvale, that add to the diversity of shops and products on offer, providing the shops that people want most often. We will support all such developments that fit with existing design briefs, the new Town Design Guide and the proposed Neighbourhood Plan. 	March 2012
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assist Frome CIC in reviving the twice-weekly market ensuring more quality stalls and more opportunities for buying locally produced food. 	Spring 2012

Environmental Thresholds

We will:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure that Frome Town Centre is considered to be clean by 90% residents. This is likely to mean enhancing and running that service locally. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Negotiate with MDC ◦ Start Survey 	October 2011 Winter 2012
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review all of the street furniture and signage in the town centre with a view to replacement or improvement. Part of the Frome Design Guide. 	Spring 2012
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Open negotiations with SCC and MDC to manage all environmental aspects of the town; grass cutting, litter picking, weed control, potholes etc. under one Environmental Manager. 	Winter 2011
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support and promote litter picking by voluntary groups, shop and pub owners in the town centre. 	Winter 2012
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Offer education and discussion in areas where there is a litter problem. Also offer rewards to groups who can make a change to prevent or ameliorate littering. Start by liaising with schools. 	Winter 2012
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work with the County Council to ensure priority for resurfacing roads and pavements in and around the town centre. 	Winter 2011 Winter 2011
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Replace the current outdoor service vehicle with an electric van. 	

Make it easier to move around the Town Centre.

We will:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Explore how we can make pedestrians safer and feel safer in the Town Centre. Options we will look at will include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ a lower speed limit (20's plenty campaign) ◦ lobbying for pedestrian crossings and ◦ introduction of 'Shared Space' 	Spring 2012 January 2011 December 2012
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Negotiate with business owners about the use of on-street signage – particularly the proliferation of A-boards. Start with voluntary scheme run by Chamber of Commerce. 	Winter 2011
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prepare and consult during the Neighbourhood Plan for the Market Place including car parking, bus stops, resurfacing, partial pedestrianisation through shared space and the future of the market. 	Spring 2012
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Signage as public art to help visitors negotiate around town. Open debate, encourage ideas and look for commissions. 	Summer 2012

Improving the Built Environment

We will:

- | | |
|--|-------------|
| ▪ Survey all disused Mendip toilet buildings with a view to disposal or demolition. Prepare an action plan for disposal. | Winter 2011 |
| ▪ Develop a “toilet strategy” that meets the needs of all users (including severely disabled). Research and implement a scheme by which businesses are supported to provide toilet facilities. Work with Mendip to ensure that remaining toilets include provision for severely disabled people. | Winter 2012 |
| ▪ Improve the Market Car Park by more tree planting | Summer 2012 |

3.5 Ensuring Effective Public and Voluntary Services.

Towns such as Frome are heavily dependent upon public services, for example the police and social services, being delivered in a timely and effective manner. Many agencies, voluntary and public, work in Frome and spend millions of pounds in the town every year; and yet there is no co-ordination, no one measures their effectiveness and integration is generally ignored. To a layman or anyone running a business this must seem like madness, it certainly makes navigating your way to the right services a trickier task than it should be.

The next 4 years will see a massive upheaval in all services, secondary schools will migrate to academies, the health service will once again be reorganised, the police will come under increasing budgetary pressures and volunteers will take on key roles in many of these services. The district and county councils are already changing radically, some services will disappear, perhaps forever.

Frome has to break away from merely complaining about the changes. We must learn to; bring everyone together for the greater good of the town, take advantage of any new opportunities, claim resources where tasks are being delegated and ensure training and support is given to volunteers in new roles.

Work with other authorities and the voluntary sector to ensure Frome ‘s needs are recognised

We will:

- | | |
|--|-------------|
| ▪ Through the proposed Frome Forum look at all services provided to the elderly and youth, identify what is missing and what needs more support. Establish a group of providers and others to look at the overview. | Winter 2011 |
| ▪ Hold a Frome Assembly twice per annum for all elected members, from the County, District and Town Councils to discuss areas of mutual concern and lobbying; to be held to account by the public and chaired by an independent facilitator. | Winter 2011 |

3.6 Establishing an Innovative and Supportive Town Council.

The Town Council must be bold in pursuance of its aspirations and will explore novel and creative approaches. It must actively support organizations from within the town in genuine partnerships, to meet the aspirations of both the council and the people. The council must be an exemplar employer and constantly seek to run, or organise, its own services effectively. When enacted the Localism Bill will extend the powers of the council and the opportunities presented for Frome must be explored as a priority. The council must:

- Inspire the people of Frome, accepting they are the innovators, if only we can see our way to empower them.
- Work with and through others, facilitating and co-ordinating what people do rather than doing it for them.
- Hold others to account, especially in the provision of services.

These are lofty ideas, requiring significant thought. The council as a whole will need to reflect on whether its current organisation and ethos is fit for purpose.

Rethink the role of the Town Council

We will:

- | | |
|---|--------------|
| ▪ Make the best use of the Localism Bill so that more decisions can be made in Frome. | |
| ◦ Develop a specific plan for adopting localism provisions | Spring 2012 |
| ◦ Lead on a pilot Neighbourhood Plan | January 2012 |
| ▪ Review the purpose, role and effectiveness of the Town Council | Spring 2012 |

Promote Greater Engagement

We will:

- | | |
|--|---------------|
| ▪ Make maximum use of the expertise of local people and groups in helping to make the best decisions. Create a database of local interest and expertise. | February 2012 |
| ▪ Make it easier for everyone to understand meetings and taken an active role. | |
| ◦ More opportunities for more people to speak at less formal meetings. | October 2011 |
| ◦ Find ways to broadcast meetings | December 2011 |

3.7 Focus April 2013 to April 2015

This council runs until 2015 and we don't expect to achieve everything in the next 18 months. Listed below are some further actions we'd like to implement following our initial programme. Some of these actions follow on from those in the first 18 months and some are new. Again many come from the Vision for Frome Community Plan.

These priorities may change over the next 18 months. Our decision will be influenced by the changing political and economic situation, our success (or otherwise) in the first 18 months and what the people of Frome say they want.

Ensure the town is cleaner and looks cleaner

We will:

- Provide more permanent greenery in the town inc. the planting of Trees in car parks.
- Enhance the river frontage
- Help reduce the number of plastic bags in the town – enable Frome retails to work together to provide alternatives.

Make it easier to move around within the Town Centre.

We will:

- Apply the results of investigation and consultation into options to make the Town Centre safer for pedestrians. Negotiate with other authorities to implement new plans especially for Shared Space.

Maintain the individual character of the Town while allowing growth

We will:

- Claim the right to make planning decisions (not just recommendations) within the Town Council in

consultation with the community.

- Ensure that medium and large developments include long-term job opportunities for people of the Town.
- Ensure that existing employment land is safeguarded.

Help the local households be more resilient, self reliant and sustainable

We will:

- Ensure there is enough recycling provided.
- Look to claim the right to run services locally.

Build on the range of activities available in the Town

We will:

- Look at all services provided to the unemployed and underemployed and identify what is missing and what needs more support.

3.8 The Role of Negotiation

There are a number of areas where, as a Town Council, we would like to have an impact but where it is very clear that the power to act and change lies elsewhere. In these areas we will act as the spokesperson for the Town – advocating, negotiating and demanding the right course of action with the appropriate decision makers.

Parking

Frome needs a strategy that encourages the people of the town to walk and cycle but has a car parking policy that allows the Town's business to compete with those in surrounding Towns like Trowbridge, Warminster and Bradford-on-Avon.

Public Transport

Frome is one of the largest towns (in terms of population) whose station is not directly on a mainline. Trains to and from the town should be more frequent, more convenient and go to more destinations. Buses will continue to be essential to the Town but the Town needs services that complement rather than compete with each other and bus stops that don't clog flow of traffic (of all types) in the Town Centre.

Roads and Highways

There should be more enforcement of Town Centre weight and speed limits. Proper care needs to be given to the historical nature of the Town's streetscape – replacing important old street furniture with inappropriate modern alternatives will be resisted.

Cycling

We want to see the completion of the 'missing link' in the Sustrans cycle network.

Policing

Find ways to reduce the impact of alcohol related anti-social behaviour particularly in the Town Centre

Health

Make sure there is access to 24 hour a day emergency treatment for all the residents of the Town.

DRAFT

Appendix 1

In a combination of the Vision for Frome Community Plan and of our own priorities there are simply too many objectives to allow sufficient focus to ensure achievement. To help us decide where our initial focus might lie we employed a matrix based on assumptions of how easily the Town (council and residents) might achieve an objective and how important that objective was to the town as a whole.

Questions were asked of each of the Objectives from the Community Plan's six areas of focus. The focus of these questions were:

Ease with which the Town Council can achieve an objective	Importance of the objective to the Council's Aspirations
Where the authority to make the necessary decisions lay.	How widespread the resulting benefits would be.
Whether the skills/knowledge/expertise existed in the town or would have to be brought in.	Whether the benefits will be felt directly or indirectly.
If funding was required, where that funding might need to come from.	The perception of importance to the people of Frome of the specific objective and whether it was the only way forward.
How long it might take to achieve that objective	Were the likely benefits sustainable

The phrasing of the questions and the potential answers allows for the group or individual completing the exercise to express their own perception of the objective's relevance.

The answers are scored and collated producing two scores; one for ease and one for importance. The two scores are then plotted against each other on a graph and those in the upper right quadrant (i.e. those that are perceived as both important and more easily achieved) are those which we put a greater emphasis on.

The objectives in the V4F Community Plan are wide ranging aspirations, we have used them to focus on areas of action.

In the example below the objectives from the 'Getting Around' section of the community plan have been plotted. The results show that Objectives C, K, N and R are those where our initial focus should lie. Therefore, within our strategy investigating Open Space for the town centre features heavily, we are promoting local control of planning through the Town Design Statement and Neighbourhood Planning and there is specific mention of using non-fossil fuel vehicles.

Objective	
A	To campaign for the provision of new official crossings where pedestrians routinely cross roads
B	To encourage pedestrian priority schemes
C	To examine best use of the Market Place, in order to unite the shopping areas and provide a safe location for the Saturday market
D	To aim for the provision of clean, even and continuous pavements
E	To aim for the provision of town-wide linkages with dropped kerbs
F	To aim for the provision of new river crossings for pedestrians and cyclists
G	To encourage walking by providing seats at intervals along pedestrian routes
H	In consultation with the Heritage team, to look at ways of improving the design of the Market Place and moving bus stops
I	To work towards the implementation of vehicle size and weight restrictions in the Conservation Areas
J	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.
K	To investigate possibilities for new road links and parking provision within large development schemes
L	To look at the provision of cycle networks and encourage the completion of the Sustrans cycle route through the Frome area
M	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
N	To seek to ensure traffic light controlled crossings are provided on the A362 through town at regular intervals
O	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
P	To negotiate with bus service providers and Somerset County Council for a more appropriate service for Frome and surrounding villages
Q	To make a business case for improving rail provision to Frome, including a main line service
R	To seek alternative ways of getting around that do not use fossil fuels

