

URBAN PANEL

Review Paper

Bishop Auckland Panel visit 26/27 November 2014

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Note: On 1st April 2015 the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England changed its common name from English Heritage to Historic England. This document has been re-branded, and all references to *English Heritage* have been changed to *Historic England*.

In the process, some paragraph and page numbering has been corrected from the original version.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Two years ago, like so many historic market towns in the north of England, Bishop Auckland, was facing an uncertain future. The structural changes and national downturn in the retail economy, combined with the damaging effects of past planning decisions locally regarding out-of-town retail developments, had drained the vitality from the town's historic core. Although, Bishop Auckland still retained a significant proportion of its locally-generated retail expenditure, little of that was being directed to businesses in the town centre and around its medieval Market Place. As a result, many of its historic buildings were becoming vacant or underused, footfall was decreasing, and the prospects for the historic heart of this fine historic town did not look optimistic.
- 1.2. In 2012 everything changed. The proposal by the Church Commissioners to sell thirteen paintings from Auckland Castle by a seventeenth-century Spanish artist actually transformed the fortunes of the town- but in a wholly unforeseen way. For a community which had witnessed only the slow decline in its fortunes over the previous half century, it was suddenly in the unique and enviable position where sums of money, which would have been thought unimaginable only a couple of years ago, were being invested in the town. As a result, Bishop Auckland now embarks on what is likely to be one of the most exciting phases of its development as it prepares itself to become one of the major tourist destinations in the North East.
- 1.3. However, such large-scale investments and rapid transformations are not without their challenges, however enviable the position appears. Therefore the Urban Panel had been invited to Bishop Auckland to consider how the town might adapt to its new role; to advise on how the benefits of this large-scale investment in the area around the Castle and Market Place might be spread more widely, especially to those historic parts which are suffering decline, and how local communities might engage with, and benefit from, this exciting opportunity.

2. Executive Summary and Report Recommendations

- 2.1. In the course of a full day's timetable of presentations and its walk through the town, the Panel were impressed by the quality of the historic environment of Bishop Auckland. The huge opportunities which the emerging proposals could offer were clear as was the obvious enthusiasm and anticipation of the local authority and community about what could happen to their town.

Summary Recommendations

- The capacity of the community to engage with and take advantage of the potential opportunities arising from the substantial injections of resources into the town needs to be enhanced and supported
- An holistic approach that has a clear objective of ensuring that benefits from the Trusts' projects extend into the wider historic town needs to be developed- these benefits are not just economic but also potentially positive for education, health and social inclusion
- Looking to other areas that have had similar experiences- e.g. Folkestone- to capture the lessons and challenges that accompany major investment based on culture is important
- Identify a town champion to co-ordinate preparation of baseline information, including potential enhancement opportunities in the historic town and act as a focus for external investors
- Pro-actively prepare a strategy for developing the physical infrastructure required for potentially very significant increases in visitor numbers; including in particular car-parking and the improvement of connections to the station enhancing the experience of visitors coming to the town in order to make them want to explore the town itself as well as the attractions

3. The Panel Visit – Walking Tour

- 3.1 **Kingsway and Newgate Street** – After the splendour of Auckland Castle and its picturesque parkland, the walk along Kingsway with its vacant back-land sites, informal car parking, rear servicing areas, and empty and underused buildings was a stark introduction to the economic challenges facing the town; graphically illustrating the effects of low land values coupled with low investment confidence.
- 3.2 In terms of the retention of expenditure arising within its catchment, the overall figures for Bishop Auckland give the impression that the town has weathered the downturns in the retail economy far better than most historic settlements. However, the tour around its Conservation Area and, in particular, Newgate Street (once the heart of the town's retail area) enabled the Panel to see for themselves that little of this expenditure seemed to percolate as far as the town's historic core.

- 3.3 Stuart Timmiss, the Head of Planning and Assets at Durham County Council, had vividly described his memories as a child of Newgate Street in its heyday when, with its department stores and independent shops, it was the main shopping area of the town. Today, although the architectural quality is still evident above the fascia level, this once-vibrant thoroughfare now sadly lacks the type or range of shops and accompanying quality of place which would encourage people to venture into the town centre. Whilst the Newgate Centre contains a handful of independents, Newgate Street, itself has a noticeable lack of high street independents, particularly at its northern end. It does have a proliferation of the types of businesses that one normally associates with retail areas trading at the margins and a worrying number of vacant units. The Panel did of course visit on a Wednesday afternoon which was the local half trading day – a local tradition that may need to be reviewed if the town is to welcome more visitors.
- 3.4 The focal-point of the long perambulation northwards along this, now, rather distressed street is the unenticing side-elevation of an early seventies building at the junction of Market Place with Fore Bondgate (an outlet for the local college's art department but unfortunately shut and roller-shuttered at the time of the visit). The Panel questioned why it was necessary to keep the northern part of Newgate Street open to traffic, particularly since removing vehicles would also enable the serried row of bollards that run the length of this street to be removed to its advantage.
- 3.5 **The Market Place** – Despite the obvious problems elsewhere the Panel were impressed by the townscape quality of the Market Place. This comprises a delightful range and variety of eighteenth and nineteenth century stone, brick, and rendered buildings along its southern side; the attractive groups of dwellings at its eastern end with the ashlar gatehouse an alluring attraction at its far end; and the whole square dominated by its French-influenced Gothic Town Hall and the Early English Style Church of St Anne. However, more recent additions, along the northern and western sides, lack the grace and architectural elegance of their neighbours and, with some exceptions, were felt to contribute little to the special character of this important space. It was noted that, even in this, the heart of the town, vacant buildings and empty spaces gave the impression of a town in trouble.
- 3.6 The Panel could see that considerable recent investment has been made to improving the public realm of this area. However, whilst the quality of materials used is good and the finish first-class, the general feeling amongst the Panel was that it had not resulted in a particularly welcoming space. Admittedly the Panel visit was on a cold and grey November afternoon, so one would probably have expected little activity. It may well be the case that, in the summer months (and, certainly,

once the various visitor attractions open), this area is more vibrant. But, nevertheless, the expanse of paving at its south-western corner, the amount of street furniture (bollards, spheres, parking notices, street signs and lighting columns), and the traffic passing through do little to make this a space where one would want to linger.

- 3.7 **Fore Bondgate and North Bondgate** – The Panel were much taken by the potential offered by Fore Bondgate as a route for visitors from the town's main car park towards the Castle and Art Gallery. This is a delightful street at a pedestrian scale, with an interesting range of buildings and some fine traditional shop fronts (although the blank side elevations of the new additions at its eastern end do destroy some of its ambience).
- 3.8 In contrast the vacant sites, underused buildings, some unfortunate sixties infill, and the generally poor quality of the public realm make the route along North Bondgate a far less pleasurable experience than it should be; especially given quality of the approach, from the west along High Bondgate and the views it affords to the buildings in the Market Place.
- 3.9 As part of the background papers in preparation for their visit, the Panel were given the architectural critic, Ian Nairn's, description of the town in 1964 in which he described Bishop Auckland as:-

"a magnificent, underrated town, the best in Durham for all the parts of urban life fitting together and acting together"

The Panel could not help but notice the stark contrast between the town that Ian Nairn enjoyed with the one that visitors experience today.

4. The Panel Visit – Exploring the challenges

- 4.1 The Panel were given a series of presentations on the planning context and the individual projects being developed by the Auckland Castle Trust and the Eleven Arches Trust. In the limited time available, despite David Ronn's [CEO, Auckland Castle Trust] full presentation and the informative discussions afterwards, the Panel were able to gain a general understanding of the specific details of the various projects under development. Similarly a detailed understanding of the likely impact that they might have upon the remainder of Bishop Auckland was not possible. The Panel were hugely impressed by the exciting ideas, degree of commitment to the town, and the extremely high level of expertise being brought together to deliver

these projects. Indeed, there was a unanimous desire to come back to the town in a few years to see how they are delivered.

- 4.2 The Panel commended the proposals which are being developed for the Castle and how its story might be presented in the future. They especially welcomed the opportunities which this scheme had to open up one of the great episcopal buildings of England, with its superb interiors and important collections of paintings and other historic artefacts, to a far wider audience.
- 4.3 The Panel were also excited about the prospect of the new gallery of Spanish art, which is proposed to occupy existing buildings within the Market Place; the significant potential that it offers in attracting people from a wide area to visit the town, and the opportunities it provides to develop a linked tourism circuit with other galleries and museums in the North East. The Panel also supported the intention to use an adjacent property as an educational resource in a joint scheme with the University of Durham.
- 4.4 The currently-vacant site at the corner of the Market Place was felt to be a good location for the new Welcome Building. From the limited details they had about this proposed structure, they did not pass judgement on the architectural merits of Niall McLaughlin's design or how appropriate it might be in relation to other heritage assets around the Market Place. Having said that, it was clear from discussions at the Panel Dinner that the tower appears to be very popular locally, and has the potential to become one of the defining features of Bishop Auckland in the future.
- 4.5 The emerging proposals for the Walled Gardens and the concepts underpinning the new structures within it by the eminent Japanese architectural practice, Sanaa, again, were welcomed by the Panel. They agree that it could help to reinvigorate this currently-underused part of the Castle grounds. Their only concern was that the opportunities for extending its potential benefit into the town were not being fully realised if the proposed restaurant were to 'monopolise' refreshment opportunities.
- 4.6 **The Eleven Arches site** – Although the Panel did not get the opportunity to visit the site itself, the prospect gained during their tour, from the North Bondgate car park, together with the illustrations provided in the presentation, did give Members a good impression of the importance of this site to the setting of both the town and, especially, Auckland Castle. Indeed, the view of the Bishop's Palace from the north, extending over the site is one of the defining views of Bishop Auckland.

- 4.7 The Panel were enthused by the passion and spirit of Anne-Isabelle Daulon, the Eleven Arches Trust's CEO, in her presentation on the potential benefits that the project for the site could bring. It also noted the huge local support and enthusiasm which for this proposal which was reported to them by several of the guests later that day. However, whilst fully supportive of the principles underpinning this proposal, the Panel felt that further work was required to develop a coherent approach to integrating the site physically and culturally with the remainder of the town. They felt that this project, looked at in a strategic way could, potentially, actually deliver far more for the town than just the emerging scheme outlined in the presentation.
- 4.8 **Access and Movement** – The Panel were interested to learn about Kim Wilkie's proposals for connecting the Trust's sites to the remainder of the historic core and particularly the objective to reduce the amount of traffic passing through the Market Place and make the most of the space. The sketch proposals that were presented to the Panel seemed logical and, set within the context of the wider traffic network, could greatly improve the pedestrian experience of the town's central square.
- 4.9 In terms of pedestrian movement from the North Bondgate car park, whilst the Panel were quite taken with the new avenue along the escarpment, they felt that the route ought to encourage visitors to use, in the first instance, Fore Bondgate (whose narrow street and collection of small shops were thought to have huge potential with greater footfall) or, once the town's economy picks up and there is greater investment in the town, North Bondgate. They also expressed a view that the appearance of the car park requires radical visual improvement and the addition of a further area of 'open' surface car parking would be most undesirable.

5. Panel analysis

- 5.1 **Planning Context** – Stuart Timmiss outlined the progress with the County Durham Plan. However, given the timing of the plan, the Panel felt that the rate at which developments were coming forward within Bishop Auckland at present was such that it rendered this document virtually redundant in terms of providing any sort of meaningful framework in which to manage current potential change within the town.
- 5.2 The Panel were informed that DCC had, only that month, updated the draft *Bishop Auckland Regeneration Strategy*. Once adopted, they were told, this would be used as the framework which would guide development in and around the town centre. Although the document was provided slightly too late for the Panel to digest its

contents in any great detail, from what they were able to see, it still did not provide a sufficiently-detailed strategy to, either, ensure that the necessary infrastructure is likely to be in place once these attractions open, or that the town, as a whole, is ready for its new role as a major tourist centre. Moreover, it didn't clearly articulate how the benefits of the Trust's investment in the centre and to the north of the town might be spread to the remainder of the settlement. Indeed, the Panel were of the opinion that what was needed was something that was far broader and wide-reaching than a purely land use planning document.

- 5.3 Such a strategy needs to be proactive, spatial and in particular, visionary. It is a document whose objectives and implementation should be informed by experience from other tourist areas. For example, learning from those settlements where new visitor attractions were opened about how to positively manage a sudden influx of visitors. An important part of the strategy would be establishing what Bishop Auckland offers now both in terms of quality and quantity compared to a successful tourist town of similar size.
- 5.4 Where there are missing facilities or improvements needed, the Strategy would usefully set out how it is anticipated that they will be provided and what can be done in preparation to capture opportunities as they arise. There is therefore a need to develop a greater understanding of the type of visitors the town can expect and their expectations. An important consideration will be public transport infrastructure and how to ensure that visitors' first impressions at the bus and train stations (after all not everybody will arrive by car) are positive and attract interest in the town itself and not just the Castle or Eleven Arches destinations. Establishing proposals for the places between the public transport arrival points and the visitors destinations are a priority.
- 5.5 For example, whilst the Panel could understand why the Trust were proposing pedestrian routes from the new car park which avoided North Bondgate, they considered nonetheless that turning the economic fortunes of the town around so that an attractive and welcoming approach to the town centre could be provided, with the Town Hall being a focal point, was the longer term goal that should not be undermined by a short term strategy of avoidance. Therefore positively planning for the street to have this role would help to ensure the benefits of visitors to the Castle and Eleven Arches are distributed more widely.
- 5.6 Critically, the Strategy needs to be underpinned by the fact that Bishop Auckland will still be a place where people live and work and balancing the integrity of the town as a community with its role as a visitor attraction will be the key to success.

Ensuring the economic benefits of potential increases in visitor spending in the town in supporting the whole community and not just small sections, is critical.

- 5.7 **Local leadership** – The Panel sensed that in the past, there seemed to be a view that any investment in Bishop Auckland was a good thing without giving more detailed consideration to the wider economic benefits of good design and place-making - the out-of-town retail development and the impact it had upon the town centre is a good case in point. The Panel were concerned that, if the same approach was adopted to the emerging proposals for the town (whilst perfectly understandable), it might fail to fully / adequately realise the huge potential benefits that this investment might bring to the wider area (and, even, cause harm to some other aspects of the town).
- 5.8 They considered that there was a need for strong, collaborative leadership at the local level and, in particular, for a body who was prepared to take the difficult decisions about whether the raft of proposals in and around the town centre are, actually, in the best interests of the community of Bishop Auckland. The Panel considered that this leadership role must have a local focus, possibly within the recently re-established Bishop Auckland Town Council. However, the Panel accepted that this is an extremely challenging and demanding role and the County and Town Councils should be supported by a Project Officer embedded within the community and whose role is to advise both Councils, act as a Champion for Bishop Auckland in negotiations with the Trusts, developers and the community to help develop, co-ordinate and deliver the strategy for the town. The PO could provide the assistance and necessary guidance to those running or considering setting-up new businesses related to the changing role of the town, and ensure that the quality of offer is commensurate with the expectations of its visitors.
- 5.9 The Panel recognised that such a position is likely to be extremely challenging and were of the opinion that it would require somebody with a wealth of relevant experience. The Panel suggested that this position might be one that could, potentially, be jointly funded by Historic England, DCC, the Town Council, and the Trusts.
- 5.10 **Auckland Castle Trust Projects** – In his presentation, David Ronn likened the attractions of Bishop Auckland (including both those being developed by the Trust (such as the Castle, the parkland, the Welcome Building and the new gallery) and those owned by others (such as the Town Hall, St Anne's Church, Fore Bondgate and Newgate Street)) to a "string of pearls". The Panel were rather taken with this

analogy. However, they did not get a sense that the “string”, which held these “pearls” together, was there at the moment.

- 5.11 In effect, there was no overall holistic strategy which connected what the Trust was doing with the remainder of the town. The Panel found it hard to understand how the benefits of the investment happening in and around the Castle and Market Place would percolate to the remainder of Bishop Auckland or what needed to happen in the remainder of the settlement to ensure that Bishop Auckland is ready for what is anticipated to be a considerable influx of visitors in only two years’ time.
- 5.12 The Panel found the Trust’s overall approach to car parking deeply worrying, however, Panel members had been informed by DCC that car parking in the town was already at capacity. Even on the day of the Panel visit, when there was little activity on Bishop Auckland’s streets, the North Bondgate car park was over half full. Members were extremely concerned, therefore, that, even with the additional car parking proposed, this might still deliver insufficient parking within the town if the visitor figures to the Castle and Gallery were anything like anticipated.
- 5.13 **The Eleven Arches Trust** – The Panel were concerned that, at the moment, the Eleven Arches development appears more concerned with the mechanisms for the Project’s delivery rather than with the architectural elements that might be built on the site. Whilst it is quite understandable why the focus is on this aspect of the scheme at the Development Phase, the Trust does need to start considering, fairly soon, how it will be possible to create such substantial structures right outside Bishop Trevor’s window without destroying the setting of the town and its extremely important heritage assets (a new stand capable of accommodating 8,000 people, for example, is of a scale that one might get along one-side of a 20,000-seater stadium).
- 5.14 The starting point for this detailed design process should be a consideration of landscape as a whole (Kim Wilkie’s experience could be invaluable in this respect). Because of the sensitivity of this site, Members felt that consideration should be given to adopting the type of approach which has been used very successfully at events like the Garsington Festival where the stage and seating are demountable and are removed at the end of each season. The erection of these buildings each year, not only could form an additional element of the scheme’s training and apprenticeship programmes, but could also provide opportunities to support wider objectives. These include raising the profile of Bishop Auckland by for example having an annual design competition for the structures, encouraging community participation in the commissioning process and stimulating repeat visits to Bishop

Auckland in much the same way that people go to visit the new Serpentine Pavilion in London each summer.

- 5.15 Where permanent buildings are unavoidable, the Panel believed that detailed designs should seek to minimise the impact on views from the Castle (perhaps by partially-concealing them under mounds – similar to the existing golf course mounds).
- 5.16 There was a general concern that, were this area to be developed with permanent structures, if the scheme was not as successful as forecast, then there might well be pressure for the erection of additional buildings (such as retail outlets) purely to generate revenue and which could also then impact upon the viability of businesses in the town centre.
- 5.17 The Panel were also concerned about what appeared to be the danger of a lack of integration with the remainder of the town. They expressed a real fear that people would simply drive into this site, watch the show, and drive away again. As a result, the potential benefits to the town of such large visitor numbers might not actually be realised any further afield than the site itself. The Panel considered it essential that the development of this site included not only the necessary physical linkages to the town centre but also a framework which sets out how it is envisaged its visitors might be persuaded to use the shops and other facilities within Bishop Auckland (possibly by issuing discount cards for shops in the town with the event tickets).
- 5.18 The Panel were unclear about what happens on this site in those periods when shows were not taking place or in production. There was a feeling that sensitive use of the site, aside from the events, through the whole year could help generate additional revenue to help finance the project. Members also believed that this site and its facilities also had huge potential as a facility for community use (the horses which, the Panel were informed, would be stabled on site throughout the year, could be used for people with special needs, for example).
- 5.19 There are stunning views of the Chapel from this area and the approach to the Castle up the escarpment could become a spectacular part of the visitor experience to the town. A further consideration should be how this area might be used as a visitor arrival area, possibly though the use of the eleven arches car park and a new pedestrian bridge over the river.

- 5.20 **Access and Movement** – Whilst the Panel noted that considerable investment had only recently been made in improving the quality of the public realm in the Market Place, they considered that the type of proposals outlined by Kim Wilkie could be achieved through some limited interventions across the square without the wholesale destruction of the works that are there at the moment (and the attendant disruption to trade that such an approach would inevitably cause).
- 5.21 In his presentation, Stuart Timmiss had highlighted the poor connectivity of the town to the Primary Road Network and its limited rail service. He pointed out that the *Bishop Auckland Regeneration Strategy* had identified getting people into the town as one of the big challenges which the town needed to address. The Panel concurred. In their tour around the town they had experienced the poor and rather dispiriting introduction to the settlement to those arriving by public transport and the high number of vehicles already penetrating into its historic core. They considered that, with the huge numbers of additional trips that are likely to occur within the town once the new tourist attractions open (not only by car but, potentially train as well connecting to the National Railway Museum at nearby Shildon), there is a need for a Strategy which addresses pedestrian and traffic movement in the town (and, especially, around its historic core).
- 5.22 Such a Strategy needs to include a review of existing car parking provision (potentially removing some of the less-attractive areas of informal back-street parking), ensure that sufficient car parking is available (of a quality likely to be expected by those visiting the types of attractions that are coming forward) once the new visitor attractions come on stream, and improve the experience of those who visit the town by public transport.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 In 15 years the Urban Panel had never visited a historic town on the brink of such a radical transformation in the way that it functions or one where such vast amounts of money were being invested over such a short period. If the views of those at the Dinner were representative of the community as a whole, it is clear that the people of Bishop Auckland are, understandably, hugely excited by what is happening to their town
- 6.2 It was evident that the Trust have engaged the services of an extremely experienced team of specialists to drive their various projects forward and the Panel was very impressed by the exciting ideas and degree of commitment the Trust has to the town.

- 6.3 However, the Panel were not convinced that there was, as yet, any clear strategy which linked what the Trust were doing with the remainder of the settlement. As a result, they found it hard to understand how the benefits of the Trust's investment might be spread beyond the Castle and Market Place. Moreover they also felt that that the town had not yet identified what needed to happen in order for it to be ready for what will be (in perhaps only two years) a massive increase in visitors.
- 6.4 The Panel believed that, more than ever, the County Council needs to take a greater leadership role, as part of a collaborative process, to ensure that the transformational changes that are happening around Bishop Auckland will actually deliver the anticipated benefits to the town's communities. The Panel felt that there was a need for a champion for the town and that this was a role that ought to be undertaken locally, possibly by the Town Council. However, the Panel accepted that this is likely to be extremely challenging and considered that they needed to be supported in this by an appropriately-experienced project officer to not only advise the County and Town Councils but also to lead in negotiations with the Trusts, developers and the community, help develop, co-ordinate and deliver the strategy for Bishop Auckland, and to provide the assistance and necessary guidance to those running or considering setting-up new businesses related to the changing role of the town.

7. Detailed Recommendations

The Panel concluded there is a need for strong local leadership to ensure that the opportunities offered by the town's new tourism role are realised and that local expectations about how the settlement should develop are not compromised. To this end, the Panel recommends that:-

1. Durham County Council, Bishop Auckland Town Council and the Auckland Castle and Eleven Arches Trusts prepare a joint Strategy which sets out:-

(a) What the town needs to do in order that it is ready for its new role as a major tourist destination

This should include the following areas:-

(i) Infrastructure:

Car Parking

- The amount of car parking that will need to be available to meet the anticipated numbers of visitors who could be coming to the town
- The locations which are likely to bring maximum additional footfall to remainder of the town centre.
- The means by which any additional car parking might be provided and its phasing
- Whether any existing car parking areas could be redeveloped or reused for other purposes, so as to improve the currently degraded environments.

Traffic movement

- With the anticipated increase in the amount of vehicular movements around the town centre, how traffic within and around the historic core will be managed
- The means by which traffic within the Market Place might be reduced

Public transport

- The interventions that are necessary to improve the areas around the railway and bus stations
- The means by which a regular shuttle-bus or land train might be established from the station to the Market Place

Public realm

- The improvements which are both necessary and desirable to the public realm of the routes which connect the main visitor car parks and the bus and train stations to the Market Place.
- The strategy for addressing vacant and underused land
- A way-finding across the town

Retailing within the Town Centre

- Re-appraise retail needs, the impact of out of town developments with a view to adopting policies for the retail regeneration of the town centre in a manner that might mutually benefit from and support the Trust initiatives.

(ii) Tourism-related facilities:

Gaps

- The means by which it is intended to address the gaps in the current range of facilities available to visitors in Bishop Auckland compared to those in existing successful tourist towns

Quality of product

- The mechanisms by which it is intended to raise the quality of the existing tourism and retail offer and to ensure that future provision within Bishop Auckland is of a consistently-high standard

Advice and training

- Methods by which assistance and training will be delivered to those in or who are considering establishing tourism-related businesses.

(b) How the benefits of the Trusts' investment and increased tourism will be spread to the remainder of Bishop Auckland and its communities

This should include the following:-

- (i) Detailed proposals through which it is intended to spread the benefits of the investment in and around the Castle and Market Place to the wider communities of Bishop Auckland.
- (ii) A spatial strategy for the streets which connect to the Market Place identifying short and long-term aspirations for the buildings and spaces.

2. An appropriately-experienced project officer is appointed by the partners, possibly joint-funded by Historic England, DCC, the Town Council and the Trusts to:-

- Provide expert advice to Bishop Auckland Town Council
- Act as a Champion for Bishop Auckland
- Develop and co-ordinate the strategy for Bishop Auckland and deliver the activities within it
- Engage with the local communities and to help ensure that their views are effectively represented in discussions regarding the future of Bishop Auckland.
- Provide the assistance and necessary guidance to those running or considering setting-up new businesses related to the changing role of the

town and to ensure that the quality of offer is commensurate with the expectations of its visitors

3. The detailed proposals for Eleven Arches need to maximise the potential that this area can deliver towards the town's regeneration but also reduce the risk that it could harm Bishop Auckland's landscape setting:-

- In preparing the detailed designs for this site, consideration should be given to the following:-
- The use of buildings and structures which can be dismantled and removed from the site at the end of each season.
- Where permanent buildings are required, minimise the impact on views from the Castle
- Improving connectivity with the town centre and routes to the Castle.
- How the site might be used during the periods when there are no shows thereby increasing the revenue generated to the project