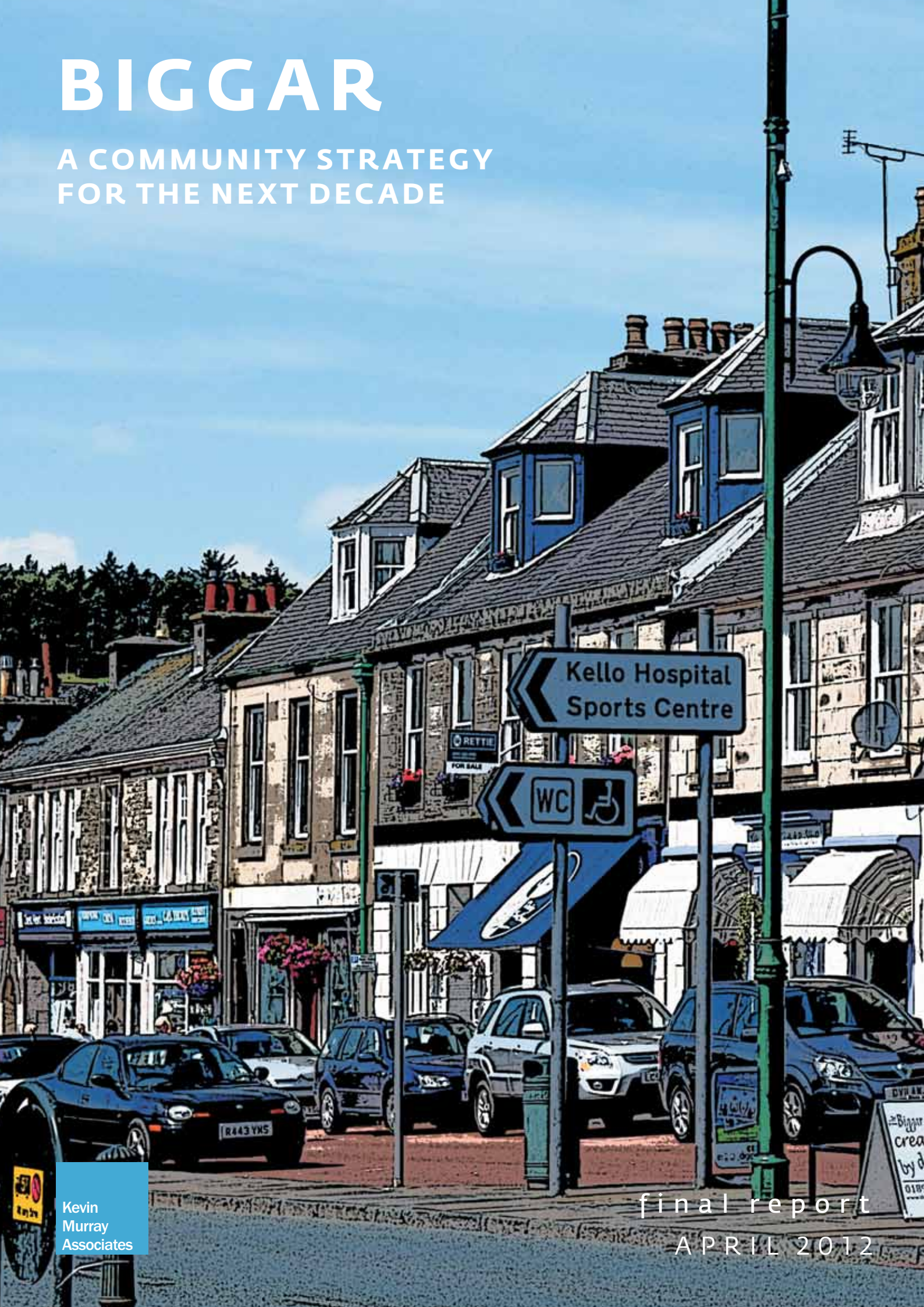


# BIGGAR

A COMMUNITY STRATEGY  
FOR THE NEXT DECADE



Kevin  
Murray  
Associates

final report  
APRIL 2012





# The Biggar Agenda - a community strategy for the next decade final report



april 2012

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## acknowledgments

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- the many individuals, community groups, organisations and businesses of Biggar who have contributed to this study
- Biggar Primary School, Biggar High School and BiggarYouth Project
- Biggar and District Civic Society
- Rural Development Trust
- members and officers of South Lanarkshire Council

Their support, knowledge, advice and enthusiasm in generating the Biggar Agenda is greatly appreciated.

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# The Biggar Agenda - a community strategy for the next decade final report



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# 1 introduction

This report summarises work undertaken in 2011 by a team led by Kevin Murray Associates on behalf of the Biggar community via the Rural Development Trust. The purpose of the work was to make recommendations aimed at improving the vitality and viability of Biggar town centre, with a view to establishing the key priorities for regeneration activity in the town.

To build on Biggar's special qualities and equip it to face a positive future, this report proposes The Biggar Agenda, as we have termed the strategy contained within this report, with three strategic strands:

- 1. keep Biggar local**
- 2. keep Biggar lively**
- 3. keep Biggar looking good**

The detailed actions that make up this Agenda are explained later in the report.

## Market Towns Initiative

This study was commissioned as part of the South Lanarkshire Rural Partnership's Market Towns Initiative. This Initiative focuses on the four rural market towns of Biggar, Carluke, Lanark and Strathaven. It aims to support the establishment of an 'asset-based approach' to community development, in order to ensure the sustainability of both local delivery organisations and community assets. One of the objectives of the Market Towns Initiative is to establish a community owned asset base that can recycle income into community project development. This study is envisaged as playing an important role in informing the Market Town Initiative's future project agenda in Biggar.

High Street, Biggar







It is uncertain just how much funding will be available in the future for taking projects forward. Public sector funding is likely to be severely restricted for a number of years. Although there may be funding available for community-led projects from sources like the Clyde Wind Farm Community/Development Funds, there are as yet no guarantees of how much funding could be available for Biggar.

By showing how initiatives contribute to a long term vision and strategy for Biggar, this study aims to maximise their chances of gaining future funding. But we must warn that inclusion of an initiative in the Biggar Agenda is not a guarantee that funding will be available. Equally, we have deliberately been cautious about the level of funding which might be available, and have therefore put forward a package of proposals which are reliant on minimal external funding and support.

We are of the view that the projects which are most likely to succeed are ones which develop their own income streams, re-investing their income and avoiding reliance on external financial handouts. We realise that this puts responsibility on local people to take things forward, and have tried to support. But we believe that an agenda which relies largely on external funding and support would raise community expectations beyond realistic levels.

## Biggar

This study was undertaken in collaboration with local people, businesses and organisations, engaging closely with them in order that their aspirations and concerns form the basis of a proactive agenda for the next decade of Biggar's history. Importantly, the study was not conceived as a remote technical and analytical exercise by detached professionals working in isolation, as is often the norm.

property on High Street, Biggar





business on High Street, Biggar



The intention is that this document's recommendations reflect what the people of Biggar aspire to achieve for their town. The Biggar Agenda has been prepared by working closely with the local community. Its preparation was facilitated by the consultant team which itself includes experienced specialists who have worked elsewhere in the UK and abroad

Biggar should face the future with confidence. It is an attractive town in a beautiful setting, has a steady flow of visitors and passing trade, and – most importantly – is home to a thriving community with immense energy and commitment in the private and social enterprise sectors, as well as in the fields of the arts, culture, sport and youth activity. The following list of active community groups, just a small selection of the 70-plus community organisations which exist in Biggar, demonstrates the breadth of community activity: Biggar Museum Trust, Biggar Rugby Football Club, Biggar Theatre Workshop, Corn Exchange, Biggar Little Festival, Biggar and District Community Heritage, Friends of Burnbrae Park, Gala Day, Scout Group... the list could continue.

This report, and the process by which it was prepared, gives the town another strength: a clear, joined-up framework for future action which is closely aligned with the increasingly community-based focus of national policy.

The Biggar Agenda should act as an important first step in framing future action, building on the acknowledged enthusiasm and energy of the town's residents, businesses and community groups. The community of Biggar should seize this opportunity to make their town a leading exemplar of locally-led small town development: a town that combines being good to live in for all of its residents with an ability to attract visitors and business spend from much further afield.



## Report structure

The report contains the following chapters:

- **Starting points:** A brief explanation of how we approached the work (chapter 2)
- **What makes Biggar special?** We asked this question of many people in Biggar. Those conversations helped us to understand the unique assets and strengths that Biggar can build on in the future, and the problems and difficulties about life in the town. This section also includes information about the town's special qualities as perceived by the consultant team, and should interest anyone who wishes to get a brief picture of what life is like in the town for different age groups. (chapter 3)
- **The Biggar Agenda:** A three pronged strategy for the next decade, with detailed actions under each of the three points (chapter 4), drawn from local ideas and experience elsewhere
- **How Biggar could look:** Illustrative proposals showing how the face of the town could be transformed – streets, public places, parks, green spaces, getting out into the countryside, and future development (chapter 5)
- **Making it happen:** How to implement the Biggar Agenda (chapter 6)
- **Afterword:** (chapter 7)

The appendices contain more detailed information about specific aspects of the study.

Although the focus of the study is on equipping the town centre to face the future with confidence, it quickly became evident that this could require action beyond the town centre. Helping town centre shops to trade well, for example, could involve helping them to market their products to customers many miles from Biggar. Equally, a successful town centre is likely to rely on good connections to people and things of interest in the rest of the town and its hinterland – which may involve work well beyond the

town centre. The Biggar Agenda therefore includes a number of actions which, although they take place outwith the town centre, are intended to improve it.

Biggar is already a great place in which to live and work for many of its residents and businesses, many of whom are more proactive than in many comparable places, including larger towns. However, towns and villages cannot stand still in an era of limited finance and changing competition. There is always a need to equip and rearm for new challenges in order to sustain them into the future. The Biggar Agenda is a framework for helping this to happen in a co-ordinated manner over the next ten years or so, drawing on the aspirations of those involved on the ground.



## 2 starting points

This chapter summarises the key steps involved in generating The Biggar Agenda.

The study consisted of three overlapping stages of work, undertaken primarily by the consultant team. Each of these stages focussed around engagement with local people and organisations. The three stages are summarised as:

### **Stage 1: issues and aspirations (April - September 2011)**

Meetings with local community representatives  
Interviews with local businesses  
Facilitated sessions in schools, Youth Project, Gillespie Centre  
Place design and functionality survey  
Analysis of existing data and planning policy

### **Stage 2: ideas (August - October 2011)**

First public workshop and town walkabout (30 August 2011)  
Develop range of draft proposals and options

### **Stage 3: action (October - December 2011)**

Second public workshop (4 October 2011)  
Refine proposals and options to produce the Biggar Agenda

businesses on High Street, Biggar







**Stage 1** enabled the consultant team to gather valuable information about how a range of different local people, organisations and businesses felt about the town. Each was asked what made Biggar special, which led on to discussions about what they liked and didn't like about the town, and what things they might improve. The team spoke to businesses, community groups and residents (including young people, families and older people). Appendix 1 lists those who were engaged in this.

Meanwhile, the team's technical research into the town's design and functionality enabled it to understand the town centre's built form, heritage and how people use and move around. This was done by a combination of visiting Biggar and studying existing publications and data. Appendix 2 lists the documents that were referred to. Appendix 3 contains some basic statistical information on the town.

#### community and arts activity in Biggar



#### business activity in Biggar

In **Stage 2**, the team checked that their emerging appreciation of the town's aspirations and issues was correct, and then began to explore ways of meeting those aspirations and addressing those issues in discussion with local people. These activities focussed on the first public workshop, which was held on 30 August 2011. After the workshop, the consultant team developed an initial range of 49 proposals and options for consideration by the community at a second public workshop.

In **Stage 3**, the second public workshop was organised on 4 October 2011. This workshop was designed to allow people to consider the initial range of proposals and options, and to remove, adapt or add new ones as appropriate.

The revised list of proposals forms the basis of "The Biggar Agenda" in chapter 4 of this report. The ultimate aim of this phase of the work was to ensure that the emerging proposals were properly rooted in local aspirations; were likely to be supported; and, wherever possible, taken forward with local energy.



# 3 what makes biggar special?

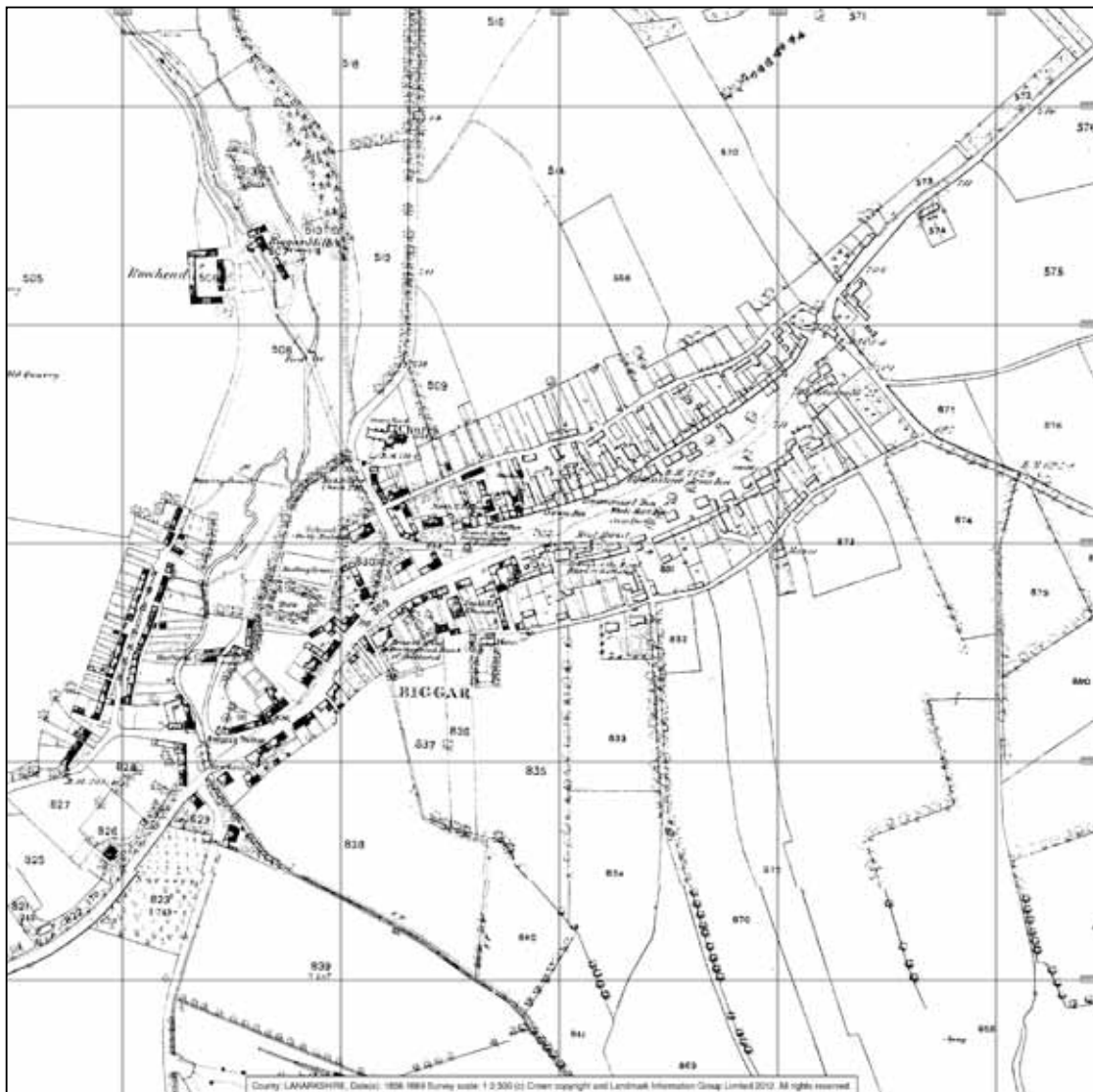
Before thinking of proposals for the town's future, we wanted to understand what makes Biggar special.

Biggar is situated in the Southern Uplands, around 30 miles from Edinburgh and just over 40 miles from Glasgow. The town occupied a key historical position between the River Clyde and River Tweed and the area is rich in history, being occupied since Mesolithic times. The present form of the town owes much to this important strategic position. Its

structure and form is a direct result of natural features and significant historical developments set in a beautiful agricultural landscape.

The A702 through the town follows the route of a Roman Road which linked the Clyde Valley with Musselburgh. In the 12th century, a motte and bailey castle was constructed by the Normans and the first permanent crossing of the Biggar Burn was built. It is thought that there has been a church at

**Biggar between 1858 and 1889**



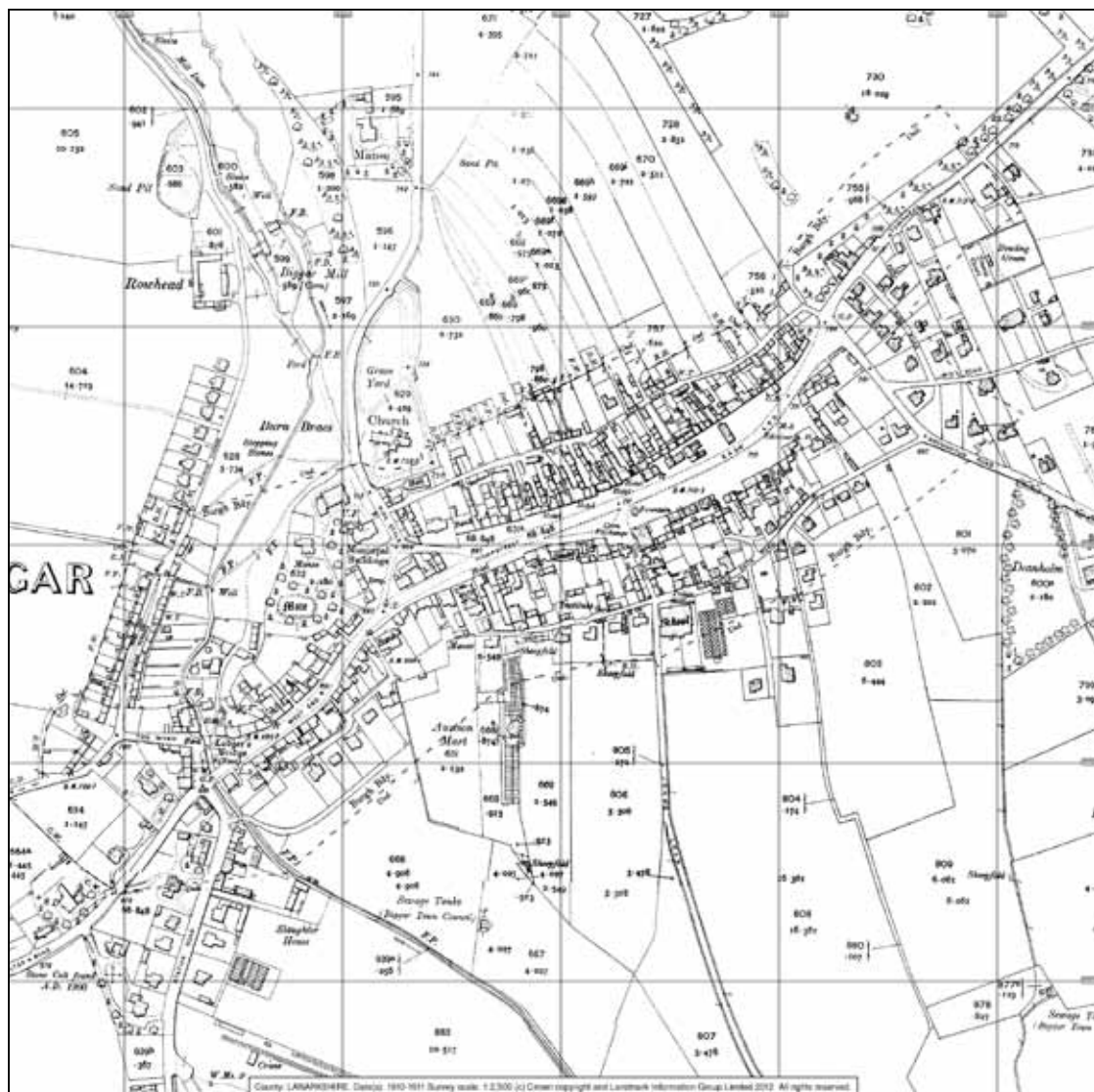


Biggar since the 6th or 7th century, although the first stone kirk was built in 1164, on the site of the existing church. In the 14th century, the Fleming family built Boghall Castle, visible as a ruin until the early 20th century, but now only represented by a few mounds. The town continued to grow as an important market town, and became a burgh in 1451.

The market place remains the central focus of the town but throughout the historic core, there is evidence of

past endeavours, changing fortunes and adaption to the pressures of particular periods. For example, Biggar Gas Works opened in 1836, producing gas from coal. In 1973, with the introduction of natural gas, the works closed but part of the gas works has become a museum. Biggar has several other museums including the Moat Park Heritage Centre, Gladstone Court Museum and the Greenhill Covenanters Museum. Biggar had its own railway station between 1860 and 1953 - the station and signal box are still standing but

Biggar in 1910-1911



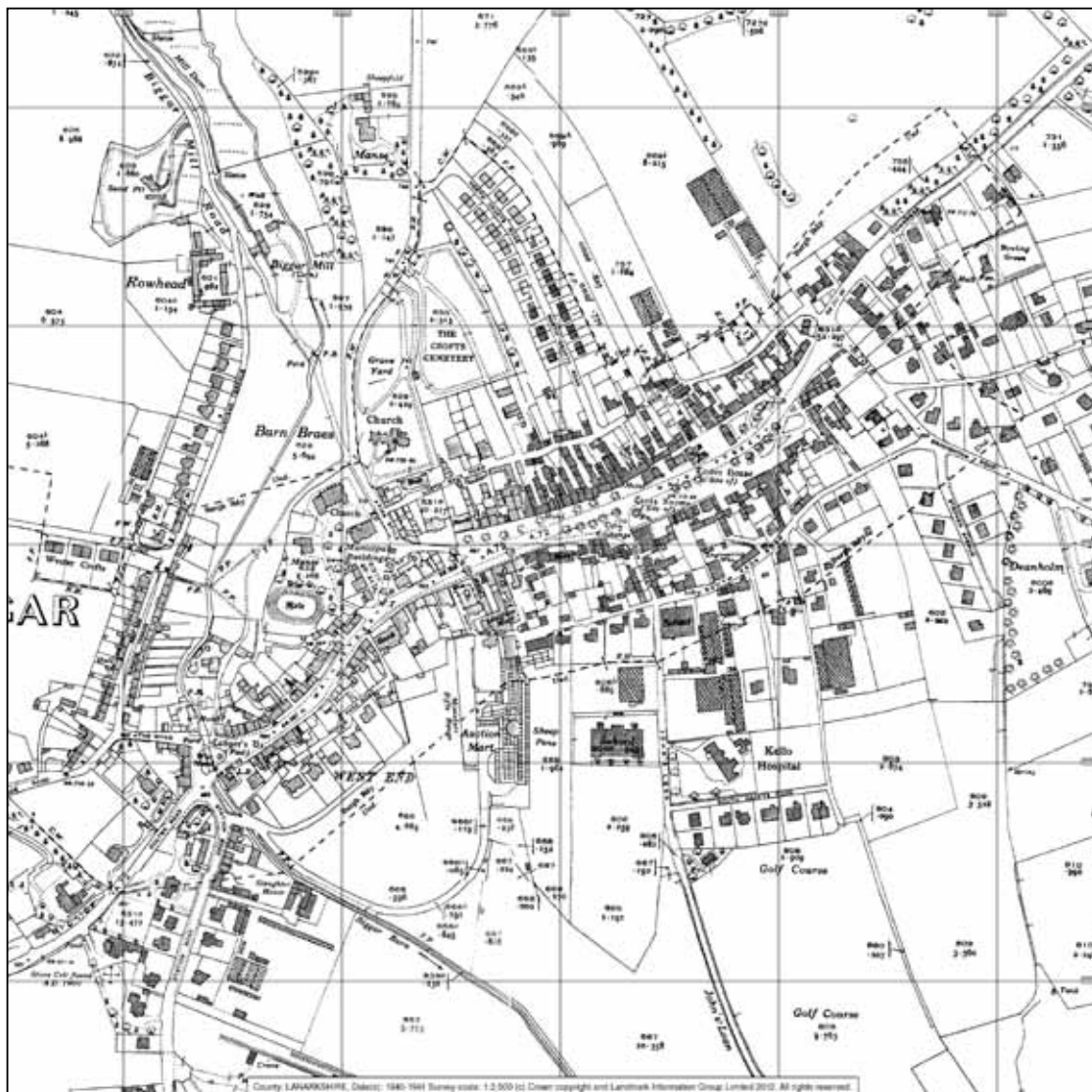
housing has been built on the line running west from the station and the railway running east from the station is a public footpath to Broughton, part of the Biggar Country Path network.

The historic maps show four snapshots of the historical development of the town. It is clear that the central core of the town has maintained its form over a considerable period of time and is largely intact but the rest of the town has

lost much of its original compact and distinctive form. The central area is of course a Conservation Area with a great wealth of historic buildings, many of which are listed as being of architectural or historic importance.

This legacy from the past is one of the town's greatest assets, being about more than simply architecture or aesthetics. It is a fundamental part of the economy of the town, providing a pattern of small scale properties which encourage a

**Biggar in 1940-1941**

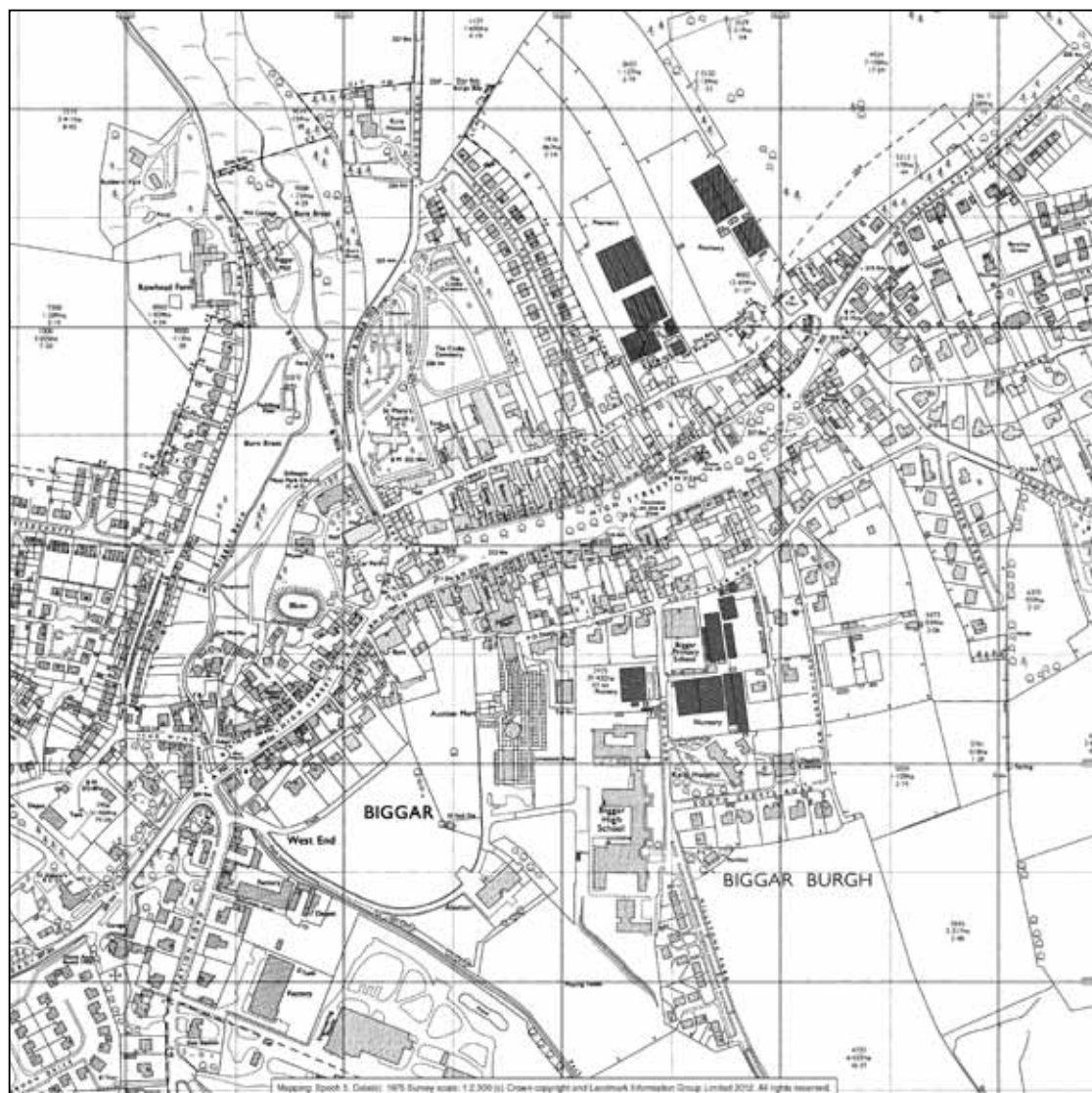




network of resilient and distinctive businesses which not only serve local needs but also appeal to tourists and visitors

Like many other settlements, Biggar has experienced low density sprawl and of course has had to cope with the impact of the car, particularly on the central area. Despite this, the High Street area has remained as one of the principal attractions of the town, the showcase for business and for passing trade.

#### Biggar in 1975





High Street, Biggar before the impact of the cars



High Street, Biggar today







the character of Biggar

High Street



Churchyard



Youth Centre



High Street



masonry



Fire Station



the character of Biggar

landscape context



landscape context



local businesses



joinery business



greenspace



traditional stone architecture







Equally importantly, what do local people think makes Biggar special? It's their community: they know it inside out. What makes it special? What do they like about Biggar? What don't they like? What are their ideas for the future? Do they see themselves as still being here in the future?

The team believed it important to ask these questions because, in today's Scotland, any strategy for a town's future must start from what the local community aspire to for their own place, and not be imposed from the outside. The national policy agenda is increasingly moving towards involving local people in decision-making about the future of their town, and encouraging them to take responsibility for making that future happen through local enterprise. This is a common thread running through recent government policy statements, such as the Scottish Government's new regeneration strategy *Achieving a Sustainable Future* (published in November 2011), and UK government-sponsored research such as *The Portas Review: an independent review into the future of our high streets* (published in December 2011). The Biggar Agenda is placed firmly within that context.

Asking the question "What makes Biggar special?" of local businesses, community groups and residents (including young people, families and older people) led to a whole series of conversations. These conversations helped to develop an understanding of the town's unique assets and strengths. These are important because they are the very things that Biggar can build on for a successful future. The conversations also helped to identify some of the problems and difficulties about life in the town; things that should be addressed to make Biggar better.

The first workshop, which was held on the evening 30 August 2011, was the culmination of much of this activity. It was attended by people from a range of backgrounds and ages (High School students to pensioners), many of whom were involved in businesses or community groups in the town. Most of the conversations with individual groupings within the town – young people, older people, businesses,



walkabout and public workshop 30/08/2011







What the local community said		
What makes Biggar special?	What's not so good?	How could Biggar be even better?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Energy, commitment and diversity of community groups</li> <li>• Independent spirit and self-sufficient attitude</li> <li>• Friendly, safe community: good place to grow up, good for families, good for retired people</li> <li>• Good range of public services</li> <li>• Variety of independent businesses</li> <li>• Local food production and sales</li> <li>• Attractive townscape</li> <li>• Beautiful landscape setting</li> <li>• Range of sports and outdoor activities</li> <li>• Community events</li> <li>• Ease of access to Edinburgh</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not enough for young people – clubs, shops, cafes, places to meet, etc</li> <li>• Lack of commercial space</li> <li>• Complicated parking rules, difficult for long vehicles to park</li> <li>• Heavy/speeding traffic through the town</li> <li>• Difficult to walk and cycle due to traffic/road design</li> <li>• Lack of collective action amongst local businesses (e.g. marketing)</li> <li>• Lack of ongoing support for valuable community groups</li> <li>• Remoteness from seat of local government power</li> <li>• Poor public transport (to Carnwath &amp; villages, to swimming pool &amp; hospital, to Glasgow)</li> <li>• Pedestrian closes need smartening up</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capture more spend from passing trade</li> <li>• Make more of local food production and sales</li> <li>• More dedicated young people's activities, based on their ideas</li> <li>• Clearer parking regime, places for long vehicles to park</li> <li>• Character of new housing should fit and residents should feel part of community</li> <li>• Refresh local parks, re-use derelict sites (temporary greenspaces?)</li> <li>• Improve walking/cycling in town and out into countryside</li> <li>• Get businesses to work together better, within town and with neighbouring areas</li> <li>• More positive and long term support community groups</li> <li>• Tackle other "What's not so good?" issues</li> </ul>

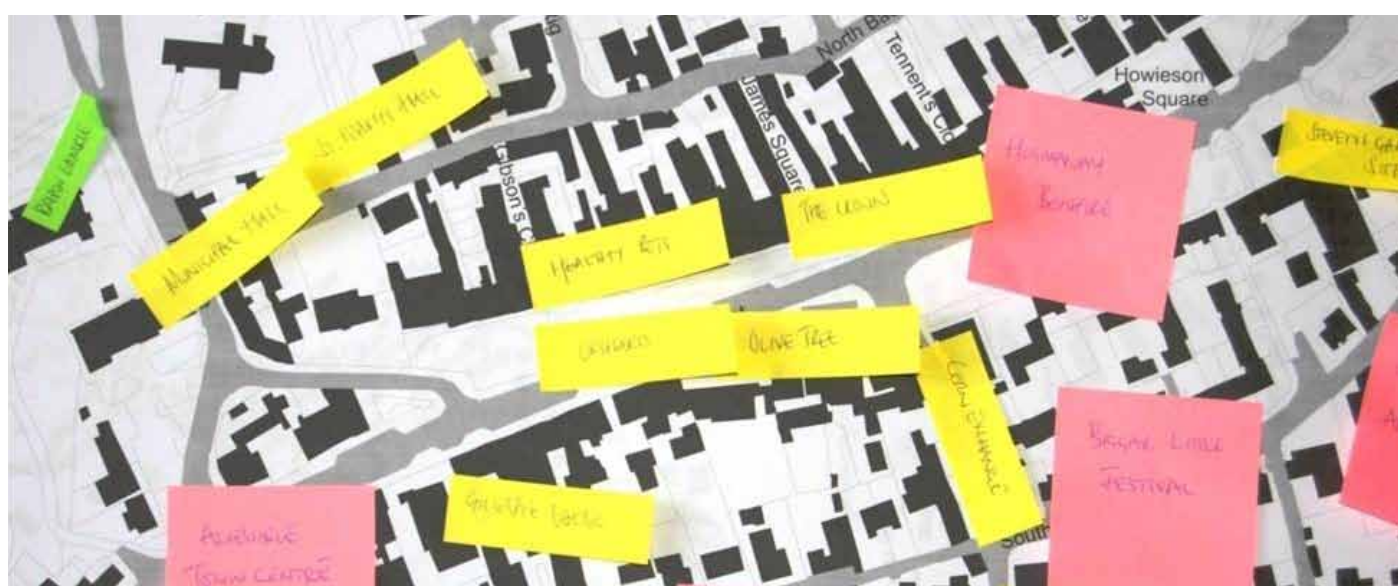
NB – points are not in order of importance.



- ① EXCELLENT HOUSING FOR ELDERLY. (REED HOUSING.)
- ② INDIVIDUAL STAFFS.
- ③ A/K. MUSEUMS. TO BECOME PRESTIGE BUILDING.
- ④ CORN X CHANGE (THEATRE & CINEMA)
- ⑤ SMALL & INTIMATE POPULATION (SO FAR)
- ⑥ RUGBY CLUB.
- ⑦ A/K. ART GROUPS PLUS GALLERIES.
- ⑧ FOLK CLUB, THEATRE GROUP, MUSIC CLUB, YOGA ETC.
- ⑨ BONFIRE YOUTH. ART GROUPS. RAMBLERS\*
- ⑩ B.L.F
- ⑪ EASY ACCESS TO CAPITAL CITY.
- ⑫ SPECIALITY FISH (~~SOME~~ SINGLE SINGLE SINGLES)
- ⑬ TINTO HILL
- ⑭ LANARK FALLS CLOSE BY
- ⑮ GOOD WALKING ALL OVER THE PLACE.
- ⑯ 2 SCHOOLS
- ⑰ HOSPITAL.
- ⑱ GALA DAY.
- ⑲ GOLF COURSE & CARAVAN SITE

### results of the public workshop on 30 August 2011

- Architecture - look + feel not been overdeveloped.
- MUSEUMS
- parking is ok - but what about coaches / tourists
- public services - very accessible / approachable.  
police, fire b, ambulance.
- public transport good links.  
Can get to Prestwick Airport.
- good church community

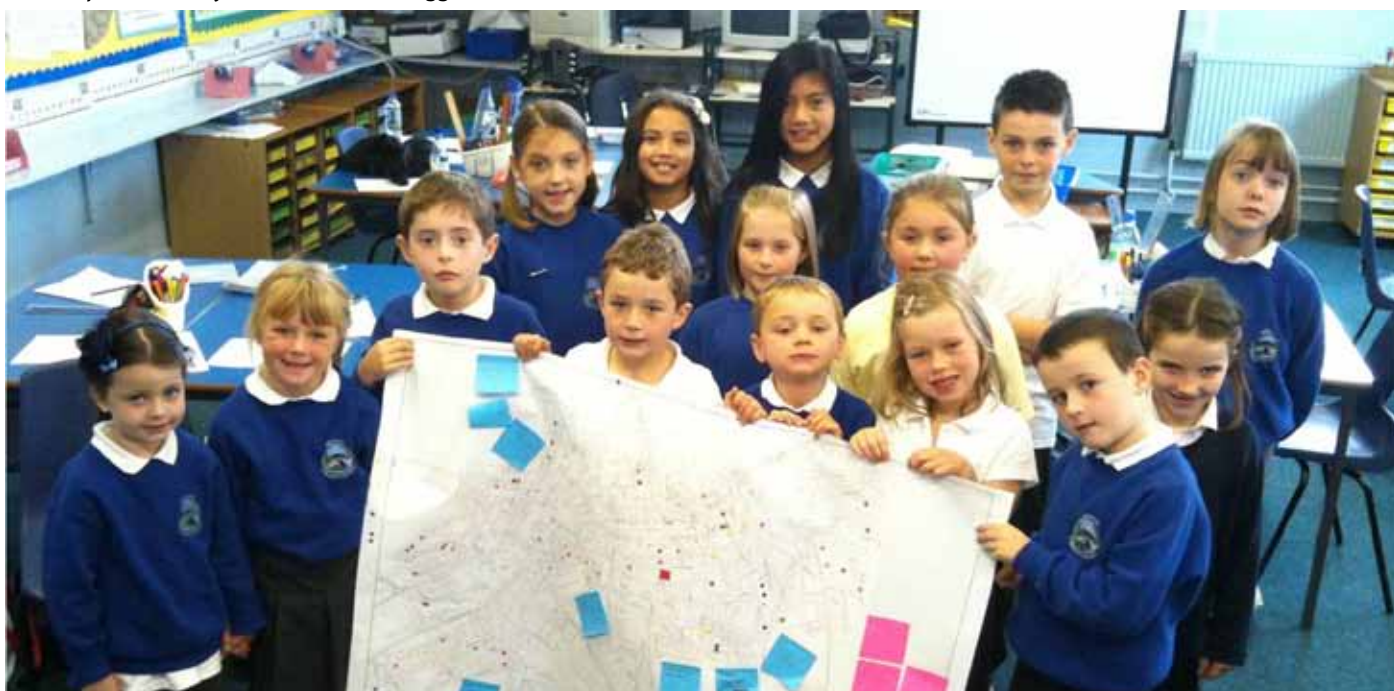


community groups and so on – had taken place before the workshop, and were summarised at the workshop. During the course of the evening, participants worked in groups to explore what makes Biggar special, what's not so good, and how Biggar could be made better in the future.

The essence of all these conversations is shown in the diagram on page 15. This analysis, backed up by the greater detail in the remainder of this chapter and in the appendices, then formed the basis for developing initial proposals.

By way of factual background, Appendix 3 contains basic statistics about the town compared to Scottish averages. The figures show that Biggaronians are – on average – older, healthier, more likely to live in a detached house, more likely to own a car (although a quarter of the town's households do not) and more likely to be economically active than residents of Scotland as a whole.

**workshop with Primary School children in Biggar**







## results and ideas from Primary School children



Friday 2nd September 2011  
 Make Biggar Better

I think a few things could make Biggar better and greener. We should get a new train station in Biggar to help people travel to places like Lanark, Edinburgh, Glasgow and other places. It will also be greener and there will be less cars and pollution. I think we should have more pavements in Biggar to be safer because if you walk on a road it is very dangerous and you could get knocked over. We could get cycle paths to places like Lanark or Coaster so people don't need to cycle on the road.



The rest of the chapter contains more information on the views of different constituent parts of the local community, under the following headings:

- Younger children
- Teenagers
- Young parents
- Older people
- Businesses
- Community groups

## Younger children

Primary School children provided a wealth of information on how to make Biggar better. Staff and members of the Pupils Council organised different inputs from different year groups, including surveys of favourite/least favourite places in the town, developing proposals for particular places in the town with before/after images, writing stories, pictures of favourite places, and a school-wide survey of where pupils live and what they would improve.

The children were asked to focus on what they wanted the town to be like. The most popular things that they said were:

- Walking/cycling improvements for getting to school, around town, and to nearby villages like Symington and Coulter. Particular locations included the immediate vicinity of the school itself, the High Street, Station Road/High Street junction, Carwood Road/High Street junction (opposite the new Sainsbury store), and The Wynd up to Knocklea and Rowhead Terrace.
- Parks and greenspaces should be made more of, and derelict areas brought back into use (e.g. between the Co-operative supermarket and the sports barn, and the former abattoir site by the High School). Ideas included more nature and wildlife, ponds, skatepark, more play



equipment for toddlers/younger children at Burnbraes Park, a new greenspace on the High Street (perhaps making more of the small open space area on the sunny side of the High Street, by the zebra crossing and junction with Kirkstyle)

- Popular aspirations included a pool, skateboard park, cinema and grassy football pitch.
- Closes off the High Street are uninviting and threatening; they need to be made more welcoming. The pend going past the Youth Project to the Co-operative supermarket came in for particular criticism.
- Make the town cleaner and tidier – for example, broken glass around the metal shelter in Burnbraes Park, chewing gum and litter.

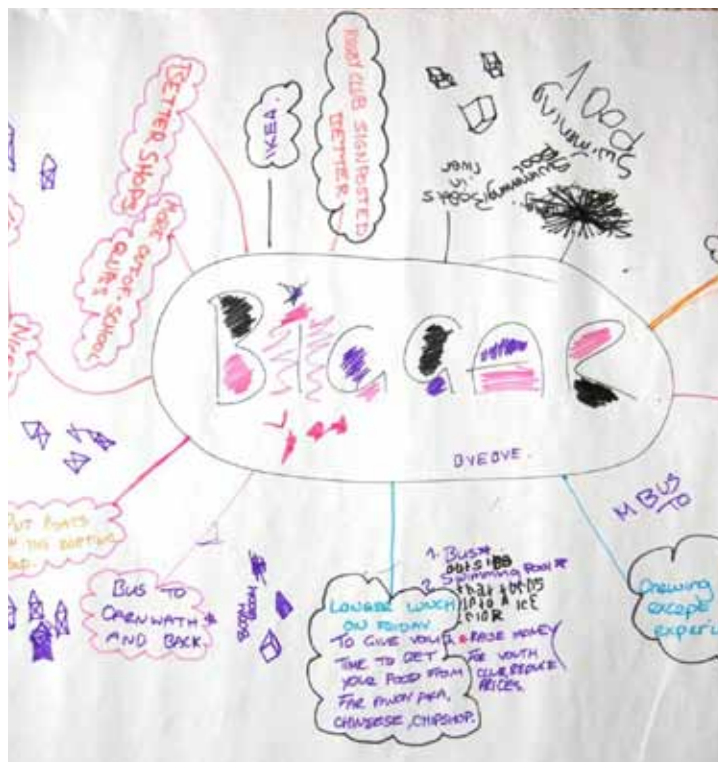
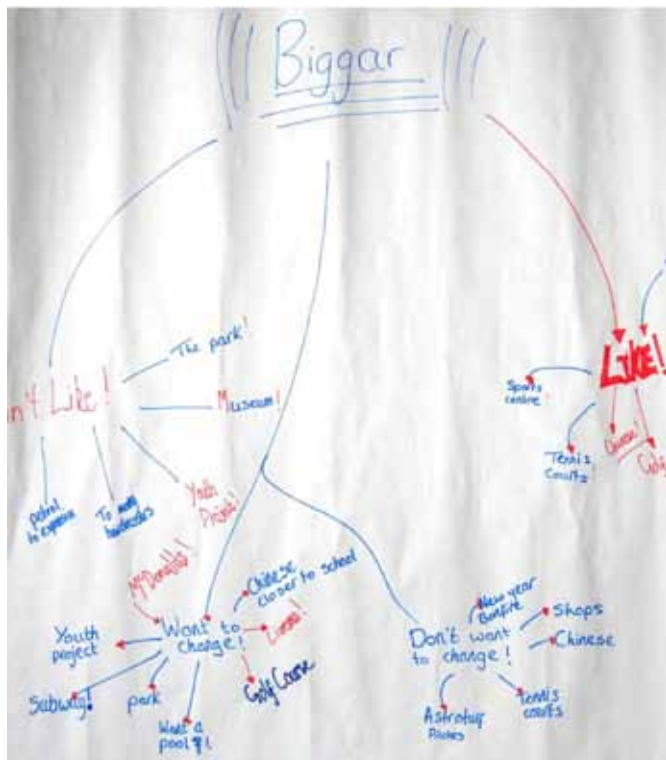
## Teenagers

The teenagers gave their aspirations and issues through two classroom sessions (with S2 and S3 students) and informal conversations during lunch break at the Biggar Youth Project (with young people from all secondary school year groups).

What they like about Biggar:

- parks, sports facilities, golf course, rugby club, the Youth Project (sporting facilities and clubs came through as a strong theme)
- community events like Gala Day and the New Year Bonfire
- the way Biggar looks – particularly the buildings on the High Street

## ideas from teenagers at the Biggar Youth Project





What they don't like:

- not enough to do (e.g. cafes and shops for teenagers)
- public transport to villages (half of High School students live outside Biggar, with many in Carnwath; public transport between Carnwath, Biggar and other villages is poor)
- petrol is too expensive (it was interesting that this came from young people)
- too many hairdressers

What they would like to see:

- a swimming pool, cinema and a skatepark
- support the Biggar Youth Project (open more in the evenings, cheaper prices and more trips)

**Biggar playgroup, see <http://www.biggartoddlersandplaygroup.org/>**

- better bus times and public transport (e.g. better services to Carnwath and villages, and integrate bus times with recent changes to school times)
- refresh the local parks (more fun things to do, better golf course)
- more sports facilities (including out of hours access to the existing astroturf pitch, skatepark/bmx at former abattoir, easier access swimming, a new cricket pitch, , swimming)
- more cafes and shops which cater for young people
- easier to get around by bike

## Young parents

Twenty-three members of the Biggar Babies and Toddlers Playgroup completed a questionnaire survey with their likes, dislikes and things that they would like to change.



The main things that they like about Biggar:

- good quality and range of shops and services (including museums) – 13 responses
- sense of community (7 responses)
- safe (7 responses)
- good schools and playgroup, clubs (5 responses)
- clean (5 responses)
- plenty to do all year round for kids and grown-ups – lots of groups to join, lots of events on (4 responses)

The main things that they don't like:

- no swimming pool
- not enough parking

The main things that they would like to see:

- improve parking
- swimming pool or skatepark

There was also mention of footways that are unsuitable for prams, a need for more investment in jobs, and a little discontent about social issues (particularly housing and anti-social behaviour) – issues which we heard less about from other age groups.

## Older people

At a focus group with older people in the Gillespie Centre, participants said that what they like about Biggar is:

- it's welcoming, a good place for retired people
- it has lovely small shops
- it has good public transport to Edinburgh, Peebles + Lanark (although not so good to Wishaw General Hospital)

They had fewer downsides to living in Biggar. Those mentioned were:

- parking is complicated for visitors
- things are closed on Sundays, so there is little for visitors
- there is some minor Friday/Saturday night trouble

Their aspirations for the future were:

- "don't spoil Biggar" – which they defined as meaning don't allow a big supermarket
- more smaller homes for retirement

## Businesses

Biggar's commercial sector comprises High Street businesses (mainly retail with some service sector) and a number of industrial businesses (including manufacturing) particularly around Station Road. The focus of this study is however the town centre, which will therefore be the focus of this section.







The consultant team spoke to approximately fifteen local businesses on a confidential one-to-one basis during the course of the study (with others contributing in open workshops). Since the study concentrated on the town centre, the focus was on businesses on and near the High Street. The aim was to get a flavour of how the town centre's business sector was performing (a full business survey was beyond the scope of this study). The interviews built up a good picture of what Biggar is like as a place to do business at the moment, in recessionary 2011. Appendix 4 contains a full note of the points raised in discussion.

Nearly all of the retail businesses on the High Street are independent; many own their own premises and are family run. There is a definite sense of a high quality High Street, due to a combination of the kinds of shops, the generally high quality appearance of the buildings and public realm, and the low vacancy rates. It should be stated that this sense of quality is much better than for many towns and villages of comparable size elsewhere in Scotland.



There is a good range of businesses by type and sector, catering for a range of local and visitor needs – indeed, the range and quality has improved in recent years. It is also evident that some shop units are now moving to services-type uses (witness the growth in the number of hairdressing salons). Change in the town goes in cyclical phases; for instance, when one shop relocates, it creates a chain reaction, and a number of others may also change premises.

Food is a particular strength locally – both its production and sale. There is a good range of local food production, including fruit and vegetables, preserves, meat, dairy, pies, cakes and ice cream. There are outlets for local sales in Biggar, in High Street shops and the quarterly farmers' market.

The tourism season is relatively limited, and is focussed around English school holidays in the summer. We understand from several local retailers that the Christmas period is actually more important for them commercially.

Peebles or Moffat are regarded as the nearest competition. Further afield, Edinburgh, Livingston and, of course, Glasgow are big retail destinations, notably so for those with household members who also work near there, for instance for the weekly shop.

Older people tend to have a 'walking route' around the town centre – the chemist, Post Office, Co-op, doctors and back. Visitors tend to do a 'quadrangle walk' on either side of the High Street between the pedestrian crossings outside the Gillespie Centre and the Corn Exchange.

From these interviews, the main issues raised by businesses were:

- the difficult economic climate and people's changing retail habits – issues which affect town centres across the country

- small resident population, with a large proportion of shopping being done outside the town
- parking issues – a shortage of long term parking, complicated parking regimes and lack of parking for coaches, buses, lorries or caravans

The main opportunities appeared to focus around:

- more, clearer and better structured parking for different types of users (town centre residents, those who live nearby, visitors who are passing through, commuters and businesses) and different types of vehicles (including longer vehicles)
- promote Biggar to locals, visitors and daytrippers – based on good quality shops, food + drink, and events
- encourage further collaboration between event organisers + businesses
- there appears to be demand for more retail and commercial business space in the town
- improve signage to and within Biggar
- link the upper and lower High Street (John Street and Cadger's Brig)
- reinvigorate the local business association
- work jointly with other areas in south of Scotland

## Community groups

Biggar has an extremely active voluntary sector: there are estimated to be around 70 active community groups in the town. For a town with a population of around 2,000 people, this represents a high level of voluntary activity. The groups are diverse in their interests. Some, like the Museum Trust, own substantial assets. Others, such as the Youth Project, provide services or organise events (see selection in panel). Others are simply organised groups of people who share common recreational interests such as music and gardening. Appendix 5 gives a flavour of this diversity.

## Selection of main events in Biggar

- **Gala Week (June)**
- **Agricultural Show (July)**
- **Vintage Car Rally (August)**
- **Biggar Little Festival (October)**
- **Farmers' Market (Quarterly)**





- **Dog Show**
- **Volkswagen Weekend Event**
- **Caravan Weekend**
- **Hogmanay Bonfire**

For its population, Biggar has a considerable number of groups and locally organised events. The significance of community groups to the town's life means that it is important to understand the sector. Discussions with representatives from a number of groups in the town,

both individually and in workshop sessions, revealed the following points:

- There is an immense amount of voluntary activity which, taken together, contributes a huge amount to the social, economic and environmental life of the town.
- The same people are often involved in critical positions in a number of groups. This level of commitment is excellent – but there is a risk of burn-out.
- Some groups which fulfil valuable roles in the community need struggle to find ongoing financial support and sufficient volunteer capacity.
- There is no one voice or champion to co-ordinate and promote the voluntary sector's volunteer needs and financial requirements.

**Biggar Vintage Car Rally**





# 4 the biggar agenda a strategy for the next decade

This chapter outlines The Biggar Agenda: a three pronged strategy for the next decade, with detailed actions under each of the three headline themes.

The Biggar Agenda has been developed from an examination of “what makes Biggar special” – the aspirations and concerns expressed by local residents and organisations, as summarised in the previous chapter. The process by which the aspirations and concerns led to the Agenda is explained below.

## from aspirations to proposals

The team’s first action was to study all of the comments, ideas and suggestions which had been received. The purpose was to understand the major aspirations and concerns, and gather together every idea and proposal. At the same time, the team drew upon its own professional experience to bring additional ideas and knowledge that could help address people’s aspirations and concerns.

High Street, Biggar





workshop 04/10/2011



The result was an initial list of proposals – some 49 in total, each of which were directly rooted in aspirations or concerns generated by the local community. These 49 proposals were taken to a second community workshop on 4 October 2011. Working in groups, participants were given packs of 52 'cards' (i.e. the 49 proposals plus 3 blanks). Each pack of cards was split into four suites, covering four different areas of proposals: connections, business and marketing, governance and decision making, and attractions and draws.

Each group was asked, first of all, to review the cards (changing individual proposals as they wished, adding new ones and deleting those that they thought unnecessary); and then to prioritise the remaining cards. The aggregated results of this review and prioritisation exercise are shown in appendix 6.

## strategic aims

To build on Biggar's special qualities and equip it to face a positive future, we propose The Biggar Agenda should have three core strategic strands:

- 1. keep Biggar local**
- 2. keep Biggar lively**
- 3. keep Biggar looking good**

These three strategic aims act as the overarching intent of The Biggar Agenda, and also overlapping 'containers' for the proposals that have emerged during the course of the project.

The three strategic strands are described below. But first, there is one action which would greatly facilitate successful implementation of the strategy as a whole.

## strategic co-ordination

The one action which should be seen as facilitating successful implementation of the overall strategy is the creation of an overall body, rooted in the local community, which would take ownership of the Biggar Agenda.

The role of this body should be to be responsible for implementing and updating the Agenda on behalf of the town, which would include co-ordinating implementation, encouraging collaborative working and helping external funders to allocate resources using the Biggar Agenda as a strategic framework.

The focus of this body should be about providing leadership, maintaining strategic direction and sustaining momentum. Detailed project implementation issues should be the responsibility of individual groups or agencies; the group should not get hung up on issues of process and administration.

workshop 04/10/2011



What is also important is that the chair of this group has the energy, capacity and authority to act as the champion for the Biggar agenda, with credibility amongst the local community, businesses and public authorities.

The local group could be called a town team, strategy body, steering group or one of many other titles. The name doesn't so much matter as its role and function.







## the three strategic strands

### 1. keep Biggar local

One of Biggar's greatest strengths is the independent spirit and self-sufficient attitude of the local community. Not only does Biggar have good public facilities for a town of its size, it also has a hugely active and energetic community sector and a good range of locally owned businesses. This is perhaps related in part to the distance of the town from bigger centres of population.

The people of Biggar, quite rightly, see this level of local activity as a strength. We think it could be stronger still, not least because both private and social enterprises are often fragile, for example, operating at the margins of profitability or depending on unsustainably small numbers of volunteers. It would be a mistake to think that long-established enterprises will stay around just because they are long-established. Businesses could do better and community groups could achieve more with a clear emphasis from key partners on supporting local activity in all its forms.

We have highlighted some of the key actions below; others could be added over time to fit the overarching goal:



#### 1.1 Biggar 'town team' and champion

- Establish a Biggar 'town team' or equivalent (along the lines explained above) with membership drawn from the local community (including private and social enterprises) and key public sector organisations, particularly the local authority. Its aim should be to work collaboratively and proactively to lead and co-ordinate implementation of The Biggar Agenda, working within the town and more widely as required. Part of the role of the group should be to capture and disburse funds for the actions contained within this Agenda, as well as encouraging local organisations to work collaboratively for the town's greater good. The group should be locally led (see next bullet point). Every member should see their role as being to move the Biggar Agenda forward and to animate and enable positive change, rather than as office holders, regulatory gatekeepers or critics.
- Identify a champion for Biggar – a credible local individual who has the strategic vision, ability, position and commitment to bring others along and make it happen.
- Continue to use the Market Town Initiative to help establish the 'town team' or equivalent.

## 1.2 Local community initiatives to maximise their potential

- Community-based organisations should aim to maximise the financial value of their assets as far as possible, particularly where they own buildings, land or brands. The aim should be to develop self-sufficient income streams from their own resources rather than look to external funders to provide revenue funding, and adopting more business-like governance and financial models if necessary.
- Through the 'town team', the public sector and other relevant partners should look to assist community-based organisations in whatever way they can; this could include advice and assistance (such as helping organisations to adopt sustainable business models and helping to navigate through regulatory requirements) or by helping to source additional funding if it is required to make organisations or projects viable in the long term. Assistance should be prioritised to those community groups which contribute directly to implementation of the Agenda, many of which are mentioned in Appendix 1 (e.g. youth, civic, events, cultural, business and tourism organisations).
- Create an umbrella community forum to help existing community groups share knowledge, volunteers and resources, and to co-ordinate their future development activities. This should not be conceived as another organisation or meeting for hard-pressed community organisers to attend, but as a role of the town team or a sub-group of it (see 1.1 above).

## 1.3 Thriving local entrepreneurs

- Local businesses to work together on marketing (see 2.1 below for more information).
- Local businesses to come together to form an association (or Town Tourism Group) to work collectively on marketing and other issues. This could be part of the 'town team' (see 1.1 above) or a separate grouping (see 2.1 below). It may be appropriate to consider a mechanism like a Business Improvement District if the opportunity becomes available.
- More small-scale employment opportunities (e.g. satisfy demand for more industrial floorspace through provision of appropriate floorspace in partnership with local businesses; should be sensitively designed). This should be co-ordinated with the Council's industrial platform project for serviced sites.
- Continue to develop + promote Biggar's good food offering, working in partnership with local producers, wholesalers and retail/catering outlets.
- Encourage new businesses in all sectors to increase range of what's on offer, particularly for younger and visitor markets.
- Planning policy should prohibit supermarkets or large format retail stores outwith the town centre (see note below).

## 1.4 Make more of events

- Provide information about what's on / what's available locally, both online (website, Facebook, other social media) and hard copy (noticeboard and/or leaflet).
- Collaboration between businesses + major events, so that they are mutually supportive.
- Businesses and facilities should open during major events (e.g. appropriate shops, toilets).

## 1.5 More sports and recreation

- Better outdoor sports facilities for all – including easier out-of-school-hours access to astroturf pitches for young people, grassy pitches for ball sports, and support for Biggar RFC existing and proposed activities.
- Implement proposals for local footpath/cycling network out into the countryside and to nearby villages like Symington, including improvements to existing paths, new links and signage/promotion (see chapter 5 for more information). The network should be designed for use by locals and visitors alike.
- Improved access to indoor sports facilities, including swimming and tennis (evenings and weekends).
- Support young people to develop a skateboard/bmx park (even on a temporary site, such as at the former abattoir).
- Friends of Burnbraes Park to provide new toddlers'/adventure play equipment, refresh teenage shelter, naturalise the burn and investigate incorporating Biggar Motte into the park.
- Biggar Scouts to obtain indoor space to meet their growing needs, possibly by working collaboratively with other young people's organisations and providers of public space in the town.

Note: A popular desire for greater choice and affordability of groceries emerged during consultation. A new supermarket (Sainsbury) has since opened on the High Street to complement the existing Co-op store. This increase in competition within the town centre is more likely to address this particular aspiration than any viable proposals that could be included in this report.



## 2. keep Biggar lively

The second strand of proposals is a package of measures designed to keep the town lively, vibrant and active – for the benefit not only of local residents, young and old, but also visitors to the town. The aims are to encourage passers-by to stop and new visitors to come, and to enhance the town as a lively and thriving community in which to live.

Many of the young people we spoke to liked Biggar and wanted either to stay on in the town, or return after further/higher education. Not every town is so attractive to its young people. Equally, the older people that we spoke to thought that Biggar was a good place to live. Being attractive across so many age groups is a truly positive feature, and helps to make Biggar the lively community that it is – which in turn attracts more visitors and helps to keep residents.

Nonetheless, many people agreed that things could be better, both for residents and visitors. Also, it became apparent that some of the characteristics which keep the town lively – such

as the wealth of community groups and the relatively large number of small businesses – are actually quite fragile.

We have therefore highlighted some of the key actions needed to keep Biggar lively into the foreseeable future. Others could be added over time in support of the main aim:



### 2.1 Destination Development

- Prepare tourism strategy using the “Destination Development” toolkit from Tourism Intelligence Scotland (see Appendix 7 for more information). This should be the basis for actions 2.2 to 2.4. It should be led by the town team (see 1.1 above) or Town Tourism Group (see next bullet point).
- Create a forward looking Town Tourism Group to bring together tourist-related business people, event organisers and creative/arts people to build wider collaboration and promotion (see also 1.3 above).

### 2.2 Market and promote Biggar

- Prepare and update a what’s on guide for the town (see also 1.4 above).
- Consider customer loyalty scheme for independent town centre shops and businesses.
- Better promotional signs from M74 and Edinburgh bypass.
- Market + promote Biggar (day trips within 30 miles, walkers + cyclists, Edinburgh Festival).
- Promotional campaigns at Christmas etc.



### 2.3 More things to do for visitors and locals: arts, culture, sport and the outdoors

- Existing community initiatives to continue to implement existing and planned activities wherever possible – e.g. Biggar Museum Trust, Biggar Rugby Football Club, Little Theatre, Corn Exchange, Biggar Little Festival, Biggar and District Community Heritage, Friends of Burnbrae Park, Gala Day and so on. A number of specific proposals are included elsewhere in this Agenda.

### 2.4 Improve visitor infrastructure: places to stay, parking, toilets

- Revise parking management to encourage use of High Street parking spaces for passing trade (maximum 2 hours).
- Promote long stay parking in spaces behind High Street.
- Create central parking space for longer vehicles such as coaches and cars with caravans; given practical difficulties, this might be a long term aspiration.
- Research potential demand for different types of visitor accommodation in the area. If appropriate, follow up with targeted action to attract appropriate developers/operators, or encourage local business development or diversification.
- Better visitor information facilities (possibly as part of museum or another facility); in the current climate, this is likely to be a locally led initiative rather than from VisitScotland.
- Open the public toilets more (evenings + events).

### 2.5 More for young people

- Longer term financial support for Youth Project to enable forward planning, plus additional resources to allow evening opening.
- Biggar Scouts to obtain indoor space to meet their growing needs, possibly by working collaboratively with other young people's organisations and providers of public space in the town (see 1.5 above).
- Set up young people's cinema programme, possibly in collaboration with the Rotary Club's Little Cinema and/or Corn Exchange.
- Enliven Biggar Park with more activities + fun things to play on.
- Help young people to create a skateboard park: including finding a site, and designing, building and running the facility.
- Biggar Rugby Football Club to continue developing range of sporting activities for the area.

### 2.6 Better transport links for young and old

- Better transport to public facilities outwith Biggar, e.g. Wishaw Hospital, Lanark Pool.
- Align bus services with start/finish of high school day.
- More out-of-school-hours transport for young people, e.g. evening/weekend links between Biggar, Carnwath and outlying villages; collaboration with RDT's community bus scheme.... rather than dedicated budget and/or vehicle for school and Youth Project to organise trips.
- Re-opening the railway link is a long term aspiration.

### 2.7 Communications

- Faster broadband and better mobile phone/3G reception.



### 3. keep Biggar looking good

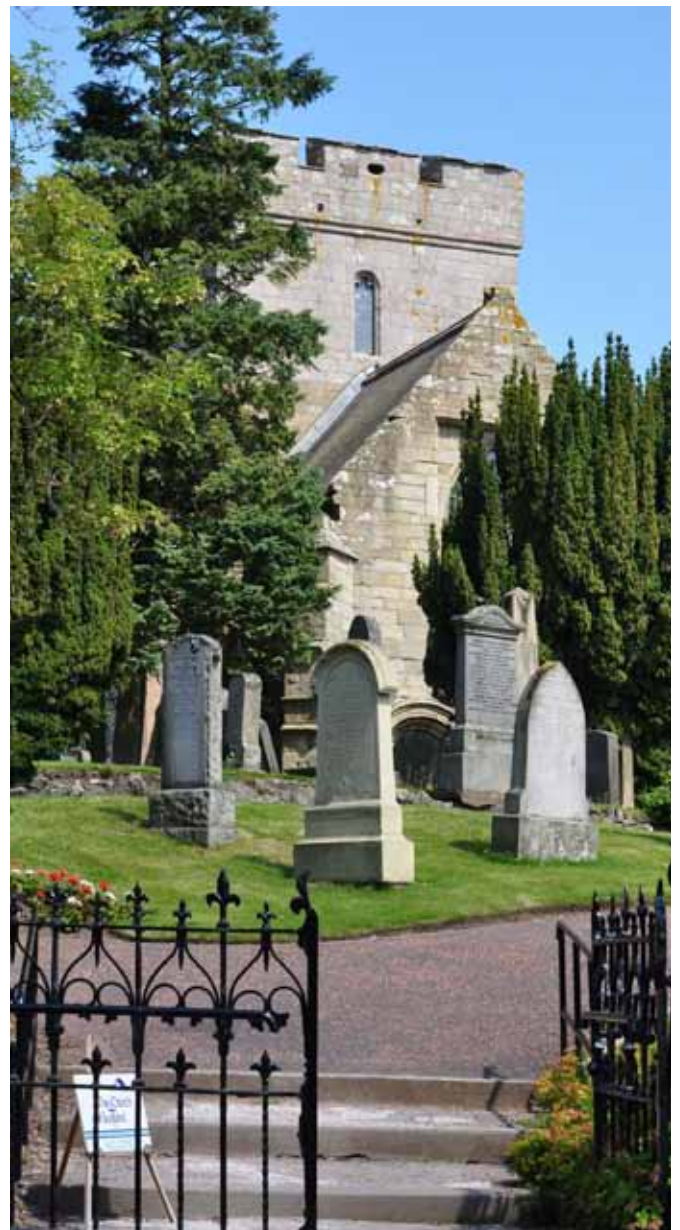
From teenagers to pensioners, Biggaronians are proud of the look of their town. The unique historical interest and visual appeal of the High Street and side streets, the pedestrian closes linking through to the back roads, and the landscape setting – all of these are of great quality and attractiveness.

That aesthetic and historical appeal contributes greatly to Biggar's quality as a place to live, as well as making it a pleasant place for visitors to spend time in. But, as with the other strands of the Biggar Agenda, the town will not remain attractive without conscious effort; and there are a number of specific areas where improvement is needed.

Unfortunately, many of the spaces and landmarks that give Biggar its special character and identity have been eroded over the years by an over-emphasis on highway measures and the wide dimensions and sweeping geometry associated with trunk roads. Restoring the balance between movement and the social and economic benefits of place-making emerged during the study as an important element in securing Biggar's future. This is not simply about traffic, parking and movement: it is part of a broader strategy aimed at improving sociability, economy, quality of life and environment.

Highlighted below are some of the key actions. Again, others could be added over time to fit the overarching goal:

St Mary's Church, Biggar



### 3.1 High Street and town centre more pedestrian and cyclist friendly

- Implement streetscape improvements for entrance points to town centre on A702 and primary public spaces along the High Street (see chapter 5 for more information).
- Implement improvements to secondary public spaces at John Street, John's Loan, Health Centre and Gas Works Road (see chapter 5 for more information).
- Change trunk road signage to encourage HGVs to use M8/M74 between Edinburgh and Abington (would require Transport Scotland approval, likely to involve joint working between South Lanarkshire Council, Scottish Borders Council and Midlothian Council).

### 3.2 Community-led environmental initiatives

- Community groups to implement existing and planned activities – e.g. Biggar and District Civic Society, Friends of Burnbrae Park, Biggar and District Community Heritage, Biggar Museum Trust, Corn Exchange, Poetry Garden and so on. Examples include replacement planting of roadside trees on approach roads and bulb planting at the entrances to the town, Biggar Town Trail signage and leaflet, Burnbraes Park improvements, the bringing together of the Museum sites, and refreshing the Poetry Garden on the High Street.
- Temporary greening or recreational uses of derelict sites such as former abattoir or High School sites, preferably with public access (e.g. for skateboarding/bmx or wildlife).

### 3.3 Protect and enhance the character of the High Street

- Continue to protect visual/heritage character through Conservation Area status. Help businesses to find acceptable solutions where businesses need to create new signage or adapt buildings.
- Property owners to improve painting and maintenance of buildings, particularly High Street frontages and elevations onto closes.
- More active use of public space, such as pavement cafes, entertainment and arts/cultural activities.
- Smarten pedestrian closes off the High Street – public spaces and buildings fronting onto them. The aim should be to make them interesting, attractive and unthreatening. The programme should include community art (e.g. a map of Biggar on the sidewall of the close leading to the Youth Project and Co-op).
- Reduce amount of litter on the High Street through working with schools and lunchtime businesses.

### 3.4 Ensure that new development complements the character of the town

- The design of new residential and business developments should complement the town's existing built character.
- New street and footpath layouts should be designed to encourage walking and cycling as the easiest and most convenient way of getting to the town centre and facilities.
- Future development should be focussed on the potential development sites identified in chapter 5.





The Gladstone Gallery, Biggar

# 5 how biggar could look

The previous chapter set out The Biggar Agenda: three inter-linked sets of proposals designed to keep Biggar lively, local and looking good. This chapter illustrates how Biggar could look in the future if The Biggar Agenda were to be implemented, through a selection of 'before and after' images and plans.

The purpose is not to illustrate every proposal contained in The Biggar Agenda, but to give a taste of how the town might be transformed for the better. It is worth emphasising that the Agenda has many non-physical proposals – from the town team to business development – that, although not readily apparent in these images, remain integral parts of the overall strategy to keep Biggar lively, local and looking good.

## streets and public places

As explained in chapter 4, many of the spaces and landmarks that give Biggar its special character and identity have been eroded over the years by an over-emphasis on highway measures and the wide dimensions and sweeping geometry associated with trunk roads. Restoring the balance between movement and the social and economic benefits of place-making emerged during the study as an important element in securing Biggar's future. Although the proposals described below focus on changes to traffic, parking and movement, these must be seen as part of a broader strategy aimed at improving sociability, economy, quality of life and environment.

traffic/road condition High Street, Biggar





An important element of 'keeping Biggar looking good' is making the High Street and town centre more pedestrian and cycle friendly. Of course, reducing the impact of vehicles and traffic in the town will do far more than simply improve the town's appearance: it will also improve road safety, allow people to walk and cycle within the town more safely and comfortably, reduce traffic noise, increase visitor numbers and benefit town centre businesses.

#### **before/after visualisation of School Green/High Street junction**



In broad terms, the proposals build on emerging best practice for traffic in towns and villages, drawing on examples from throughout the UK and mainland Europe. The principles here are intended to support The Biggar Agenda's broader initiative of supporting and enhancing the economic vitality of Biggar. The 'before and after visualisations' on the following pages illustrate some of the techniques for (a) reducing the impact of traffic and vehicles and (b) enhancing a sense of place at the various selected locations. They help to improve the legibility of key sites and places within the town, and are strongly premised around advantages in safety, civility and economic vitality from lower design speeds.

Notwithstanding the definition of the main High Street through Biggar as a trunk road, our recommendations seek to achieve traffic patterns based on low-speed, continuous





flow. A design speed of around 18-19 mph through the central part of the town would be achieved through a range of minor changes in paving, alignment and geometry consistent with the largely pedestrian context. Opportunities for informal crossings would be maximised, and would remove the requirements for signals, guardrails and controls.

The aim would be to achieve a closer match between the

**before/after visualisation of John Street**



characteristics of the High Street and the spaces and morphology of the town. Wherever possible, street design elements would highlight and emphasize the specific context, such as the crossing of the burn near Cadger's Brig and the presence of historically or visually significant buildings. Opportunities would be created to make more of local public spaces, such as potential for re-opening the ford by Cadger's Brig and improving pedestrian access up The Wynd to Knocklea and Rowhead Terrace, for example.

The lower design speeds would, in part, be achieved through creating clearer entry points to highlight the key transition between the inter-urban highway (e.g. the A702 outwith the town) and the public realm within the town. This should involve attention to signing and road markings at the outlying entry points to the town to maximise the change from higher speeds to the low-speed context. In particular,





we would recommend deleting (or not renewing) centre line markings from the carriageway at these points.

The key streetscape recommendations aim to strengthen the presence and legibility of two key “bookend” spaces at either end of the High Street (map 01). To the west of the town centre, the space around Cadger’s Brig and the ford, bringing together The Wynd, Park Place and Station Road, marks

**before/after visualisation of the Health Centre environment/car park**



the transition between the A702 Coulter Road and the High Street. To the east, the buildings and green spaces fronting George Square and the site of the former petrol station (the site of the proposed Museum) would form the transition from the Edinburgh Road. Defining the town centre in this way will help to link the upper and lower parts of the High Street, an aspiration of local businesses.

The treatment of the road surface at the “bookend” transition points into the town centre, and also town entrances, is likely to include the visual narrowing and lack of markings shown in the visualisation for the High Street/School Green. ‘Before and after’ visualisations of this junction are shown on page 33 It is a key junction between the upper and lower parts of the High Street where the width of the bell-mouth makes it hazardous to cross for pedestrians. A desire to improve this particular junction for pedestrians was clearly expressed by people of all ages.

Measures to strengthen and define a number of secondary spaces would also improve legibility and safety. These could include the square fronting the Gladstone Court Museum, the area fronting the Corn Exchange, the streetspaces fronting the primary and secondary schools, and the vicinity of the Health Centre. 'Before and after' visualisations of the latter are shown on the previous page.

A number of the very wide junction entrances onto the High Street could be reduced in size without loss of highway capacity to improve pedestrian continuity and safety. This is especially important for the John Street/ High Street intersection and the B7016 junction (School Green, opposite the newly opened Sainsbury store). 'Before and after' visualisations of the latter are shown on page 33

Rationalisation of existing on-street parking arrangements is necessary for the reasons explained in chapter 4. We recommend consideration of a "restricted parking zone" throughout the town centre in order to reduce the need for yellow lines, to clarify parking patterns and to ease enforcement.

Appendix 8 contains a policy justification for the proposals, together with more detailed notes on the 'before and after' visualisations.

**map 1, streetscape recommendations locations (hatched)**



**map 2, secondary spaces (in yellow)**







## Parks, green spaces and getting out into the countryside

For some years there has been a local aspiration to create a signposted path network in and around Biggar. A feasibility study was commissioned by Biggar and District Community Heritage in 2007 to consider the options. There has been progress on a town trail within the built up area, and new signage has been erected for some paths outside the town.

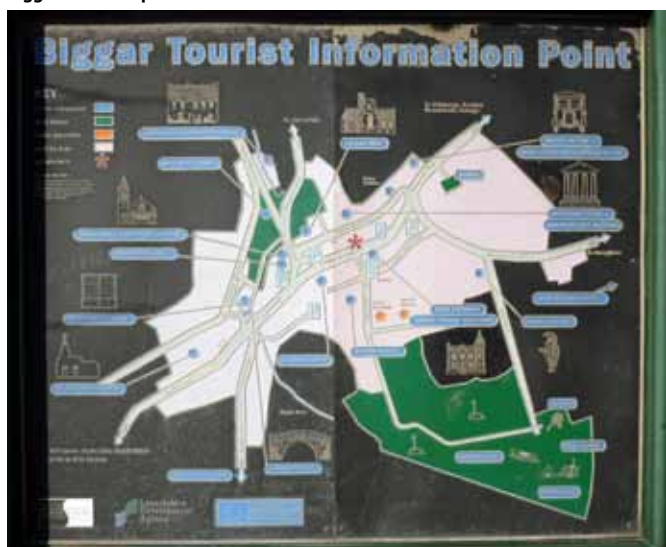
Local people value the town's parks, greenspaces and surrounding countryside, and have a desire to be able to access these assets more easily – both for their own quality of life and as part of improving the town's tourism offer, and therefore also the local economy.

As the accompanying plan shows (map 03), the two parks (Biggar Park and Burnbraes Park) are the largest areas of greenspace in the town. There are also a number of other

important green spaces: for example, Little Mitchellwood community woodland to the west of the town and the showground to the east. Taken together, the green spaces indicated on the accompanying plan provide a variety of opportunities for biodiversity, recreation, events and community activities. As outlined in chapter 4, one element of the Biggar Agenda is to make more of these green spaces; there are existing proposals for new play equipment at Burnbraes Park for example, as well as aspirations from young people to create a skateboard/bmx space within the town and increase the range of activities available at Biggar Park.

Connecting these various green spaces should, we believe, be an important part of the overall agenda. The accompanying plan shows an indicative footpath network which links green spaces within the town, and extends out into the countryside. Some of these path links are already in place and need only some signage and ongoing maintenance; others, such as the former railway track, will involve

**Biggar Tourist Information Point**



**map 3, Biggar greenspace network**



landowner agreements and construction work.

The path network can be built up incrementally over a period of years as money becomes available. Signage, interpretation and promotion will be an important element, particularly for visitors. Implementation is likely to involve a number of players, including the local authority (who are responsible for Biggar Park) and local community groups (such as Friends of Burnbraes Park and Biggar & District Community

Heritage). The community groups may have specific requirements around capacity and resources which may need support for them to be fully involved; this is referred to in chapter 4.

map 4, indicative footpath network





## Future development

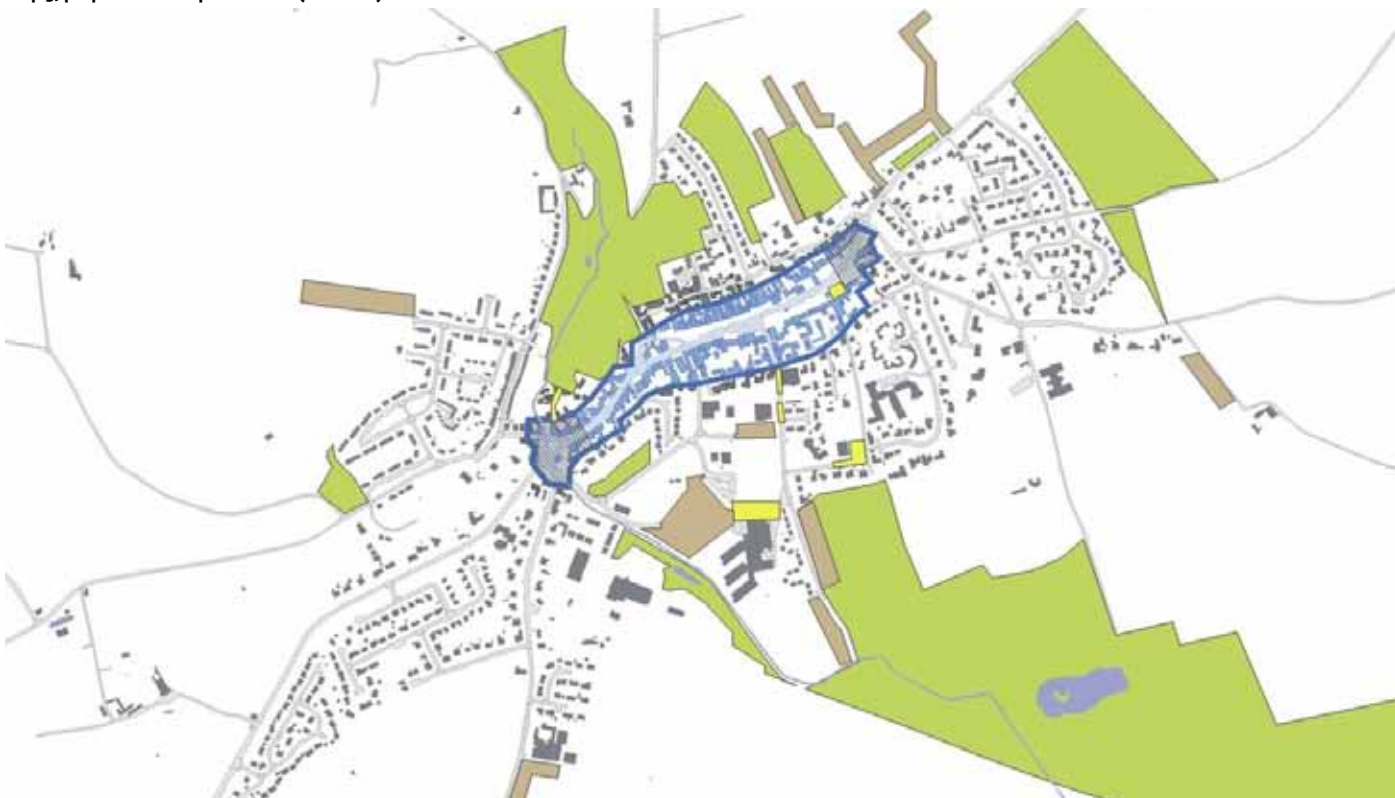
Biggar's population over time	
1831	1,454 residents
1841	1,395 residents
1851	1,530 residents
1861	1,448 residents
1871	1,471 residents
1881	1,556 residents
1891-1941	-
1951	1,437 residents
1961	1,774 residents
1971	1,637 residents
1981	1,937 residents
1991	1,994 residents
2001	2,098 residents

Towns constantly change. Biggar is no exception; census data shows that its population has grown by around 50% since World War Two, from around 1,400 in 1951 to 2,100 in 2001 (the latest census data). More people means more houses, especially with decreasing average household sizes; and those people need jobs, schools, shops, health facilities and so on. All this means new development.

The South Lanarkshire Local Plan (2009) identifies sufficient land to build around 280 new houses in the town over approximately the next decade.

A clear aspiration from local people is that new development should complement the character of the town. This has been translated into a set of proposals in the Biggar Agenda (see chapter 4, paragraph 3.4). To support this aspiration, we have undertaken our own analysis of development

map 5, proposed development sites (in brown)





opportunities which, if sensitively designed, could complement the town's character. The sites are shown in the accompanying plan (map 05). They need not be developed only for housing, although that is likely to be the main use.

## design principles for new development

Some of the design and layout principles that should guide new development in Biggar might include:

- the provision of high quality communal spaces designed to facilitate a sense of shared ownership
- the inclusion of public spaces which have a positive interface with private surroundings based on principles of overlooking, visibility, active frontages and opportunities for informal social exchange
- the creation of a positive and active public realm for a wide range of users not only in everyday use but also through creating support and facilities for events
- flexibility, adaptability and the ability for neighbourhoods to change in the future
- the maintenance or enhancement of the built and natural heritage of the town
- minimum space standards that exceed Parker Morris standards by 15%
- a balance between movement and place which is in favour of pedestrians
- a significant contribution to the carbon and ecological impact reduction in relation to transport, construction, energy and recycling
- the integration of working environments in the fabric of the town rather than separating out uses
- design for mixed communities in terms of a range of house types and tenures
- the co-location of facilities where this enhances opportunities for proximity, density, vitality and diversity
- a positive relationship with the town centre and its facilities in terms of walking distance
- a density pattern for new development, whether residential, mixed, business or employment which is determined by context, avoiding uniform density spread, seeking to maintain or enhance existing density levels and considering lower densities where connections to landscape are made
- intensification of the existing settlement rather than dispersing it over land which is productive or provides recreational facilities or habitats
- consideration of the form of the existing town and its immediate landscape setting – this will often entail building in narrow linear forms along existing routes rather than in deep whole-field patterns
- green or open spaces established to link together, creating an informal but planned network including parks, gardens, woodland, green corridors, wildlife sites, open spaces, watercourses, street trees, gardens and the open countryside
- the provision of spaces that can perform a number of different functions – such as formal and informal recreation, nature conservation, food production enhanced settings for existing development, routes for walkways and cycle ways, areas for flood risk management, an education resource – as an integral part of new building



# 6 making it all happen

Having outlined The Biggar Agenda (chapter 4) and given a flavour of some of the physical changes proposed (chapter 5), this chapter maps out how to make that Agenda happen.

Change will not be achieved overnight. We anticipate that it will take around a decade to put all these measures in place. That should not be taken as a reason for procrastination, however, as it will take all that time to build support and gather resources. Some parts of The Biggar Agenda involve physical works like road surfacing or new footpaths; other sections seek to change how people and organisations behave. Too often, plans founder because they fail to address the behavioural changes required. Biggar already has a proactive community, and it will be important for local people to maintain this mindset as the town and its population evolve and grow. Failure to work proactively together carries a real risk of declining vitality and quality of life.

## action plan

The action plan (overleaf) prioritises each action in the Biggar Agenda, and identifies who should be involved in taking them forward.

The action plan should be the town's template for action over the coming years. It should be considered as a working document; specific proposals may come and go to reflect changing circumstances, but we anticipate that the overall strategy – keeping Biggar local, lively and looking good – should remain valid for the next decade or so.

High Street, Biggar







	year 1	years 2-5	years 5-10	lead players	support players	governance, policy + communications	events + marketing	transport, roads + public realm	parks, sport + green spaces	paths, signage + interpretation	buildings + property
<b>keep Biggar local</b>											
1.1 Biggar town team and champion	x	x	x	Rural Development Trust Community groups, businesses Local authority members + officers	Other funders	x					
1.2 Local community initiatives to maximise their potential	x	x	x	Local authority + community planning partners Community groups Rural Development Trust	Other funders + policymakers	x					
1.3 Thriving local entrepreneurs	x	x	x	Local authority + community planning partners Rural Development Trust Businesses	Visit Scotland Scottish Enterprise	x					
1.4 Make more of events		x	x	Businesses Event organisers	Town team Public agencies	x	x				

1.5 More sports + recreation		x	x	Local authority Community groups	Schools, Youth Project	x			x	x	x
<b>keep Biggar lively</b>											
2.1 Destination Development	x	x	x	Rural Development Trust Businesses Local authority	Visit Scotland Lanarkshire Area Tourism Partnership Scottish Enterprise	x	x			x	
2.2 Market and promote Biggar	x	x	x	Businesses Local authority	Visit Scotland Lanarkshire Area Tourism Partnership Scottish Enterprise Transport Scotland	x	x			x	
2.3 More things to do for visitors + locals: arts, culture, sport and the outdoors	x	x	x	Local authority + community planning partners Community groups	Other funders + policymakers	x	x				
2.4 Improve visitor infrastructure: places to stay, parking, toilets	x	x		Local authority Transport Scotland Visit Scotland				x			x
2.5 More for young people	x	x	x	Schools Youth Project Local authority	Community groups Other funders + policymakers	x	x		x		x
2.6 Better transport links for young + old		x		Local authority SPT Transport operators				x			
2.7 Communications	x			Broadband/mobile suppliers	Scottish Enterprise Local authority + community planning partners	x					
<b>keep Biggar looking good</b>											
3.1 High Street + town centre more pedestrian + cyclist friendly	x	x		Local authority Transport Scotland	NHS			x		x	
3.2 Community-led environmental initiatives		x	x	Local authority + community planning partners Community groups Schools	Other funders + policymakers	x			x	x	x
3.3 Protect + enhance the character of the High Street	x	x		Landlords Businesses Local authority	Schools			x		x	x



## quick wins

Many of the proposals in the action plan will need concerted effort over 5 or 10 years. But not everything has to wait that long to see success. A significant number of 'quick wins' are possible, to demonstrate immediate progress on the ground to the local community and key partners like the local authority.

The accompanying table shows the wide range of potential quick wins. Progress on just a select few of these would generate momentum to carry the whole agenda forward.

### quick wins

- Public launch event for The Biggar Agenda with commitment to Agenda/town team from key partners [1.1]
- Secure easier evenings/weekend access to indoor and outdoor sports facilities [1.5]
- Develop tourism strategy using Destination Development toolkit [2.1] Support young people to develop skateboard/bmx track, permanent or temporary [2.3]
- Set up young people's cinema programme in Corn Exchange [2.3]
- Maintain and extend opening hours for public toilets [2.5]
- Align bus services with start/finish of school day [2.5]
- Increase school transport budget [2.5]
- Complete implementation of Town Trail [3.2]
- Bulb planting at entrances to town [3.3]
- Customer loyalty scheme for town centre businesses [3.3]

## roles and responsibilities

Successful implementation of the Agenda will require commitment and collaborative action by a number of parties, primarily:

- community groups
- local businesses, acting individually and collectively
- local authority officers across a range of capital and maintenance budgets and policy areas



community workshop

- local politicians
- other key agencies and service providers, both public and private (such as Transport Scotland and broadband/mobile suppliers)

South Lanarkshire Council also a very important role to the play, as the lead partner for community planning and the provision of local public services, as a supportive enabler, as the planning authority, and as a conduit for at least some funding (such as potential windfarm income). It is vital that:

- the Council endorses The Biggar Agenda as strongly as it can (for example, using the document as an input to the new Local Development Plan and to Community Planning, and adopting it as Supplementary Planning Guidance)



businesses on High Street, Biggar





- Council departments and officers have a proactive, supportive and enabling attitude towards local organisations who are implementing individual elements of the Agenda
- the local community, through the town team and champion, demonstrate to the Council and other partners that they are driving implementation of the Agenda and not simply waiting on the public sector to do it for them

Critically, this Agenda and action plan need local leadership. As explained at the start of chapter 4 and in proposal 1.1 in the action plan, the first task must be to create a 'town team' (or equivalent) and champion to take this responsibility. It may be that the team and champion consider that dedicated paid support is required to assist them. If this is the case, they should be aware that funders are likely to require a justification and analysis of capacity which demonstrate the added value that paid support would bring.



## 7 afterword



Biggar should face the future with confidence. It is already better positioned than many towns of comparable size, as well as some larger places.

It is an attractive town in a beautiful setting, has a steady flow of visitors and passing trade, and – perhaps most importantly – is home to a thriving community with immense energy and commitment across the private and social enterprise sectors. In The Biggar Agenda, and the process by which it was prepared, the town also now has a clear yet integrated programme for the future.

These things are all assets in today's politics of development, policy and funding. As identified in chapter 3, the national policy agenda is moving towards involving local people in decision-making about the future of their town, and also encouraging them to take responsibility for making that future happen through local enterprise.

The truth is that Biggaronians have already been doing this for many years. Implementing the new policy agenda of locally based community development is not so much a change in direction for the town, but a natural extension to how the town already operates. The Biggar Agenda is about looking forward to the next stage, and linking and co-ordinating the various programmes and actions in a coherent way.

That is not to say that it will be easy: community groups will need to continue to invest time and energy, and will often need to work together more closely. They may need to adopt new ways of working, and may have to be prepared to compromise to achieve their main objectives. Equally, the public sector should embrace a more collaborative and enterprising approach, seeking to work in genuine partnership with local community organisations.





The Biggar Agenda should act as an important first step in framing future action, building on the acknowledged enthusiasm and energy of the town's residents, businesses and community groups. The community of Biggar should seize this opportunity to make their town a leading exemplar of locally-led small town development: a town that combines being good to live in for all of its residents with an ability to attract visitors and business spend from much further afield.



# appendix 1

## key consultees

This appendix lists the main groups and organisations that we consulted during the study:

- 1st Biggar/Tinto Scout Group
- Biggar and District Civic Society
- Biggar and District Community Heritage
- Biggar Babies and Toddlers Playgroup
- Biggar Corn Exchange Trust
- Biggar High School (S2/S3 students, staff)
- Biggar Museum Trust
- Biggar Primary School (Pupils Council, P2 and P3-P7 pupils, staff)
- Biggar Rugby Football Club
- Biggar Youth Project (lunchtime students, volunteers)
- Friends of Burnbrae Park
- Gillespie Centre
- Scottish Enterprise
- South Lanarkshire Council (planning, regeneration, transportation)
- Visit Scotland
- local businesses
- local residents





# appendix 2

## key documents

This appendix lists the main published sources of information that we consulted during the study:

- Biggar Heritage Interpretation: Options for Future Development James Carter for Biggar and District Community Heritage, 2007
- Lanarkshire Tourism Action Plan to 2015 Lanarkshire Area Tourism Partnership, 2009
- Maps of Scotland Online National Library of Scotland ([www.nls.uk](http://www.nls.uk))
- Multiple Location Town Centre Surveys MRUK Research for South Lanarkshire Council, 2008
- Old Biggar and Biggar Since the War Ann Matheson, Stenlake Publishing, 1998 and 2003
- Scottish Census Results Online Scottish Government ([www.scrol.gov.uk](http://www.scrol.gov.uk))
- South Lanarkshire Core Paths Plan [final draft] South Lanarkshire Council, 2010
- South Lanarkshire Local Plan South Lanarkshire Council, 2009
- South Lanarkshire Rural Strategy 2007-2013 - Working Towards Sustainable Rural Communities South Lanarkshire Council, 2007
- Transportation Section Briefing Paper: Public Transport Links to Edinburgh and West Lothian South Lanarkshire Council, 2008
- Traffic Regulation Orders for Biggar South Lanarkshire Council



# appendix 3

## selected statistics about Biggar

AGE	Biggar	Scotland
Median age – male	45	37
Median age – female	50	39
Total resident population	2,098	5,062,011
% under 16	15 %	19 %
% 16-pensionable age	56 %	62 %
% pensionable age and over	29 %	19 %

HEALTH	Biggar	Scotland
Average age of a person with good health	39	33
Average age of a person with a limiting long term illness	66	58
Percentage of economically inactive people who are permanently sick/disabled	12 %	21 %
Total resident population	2,098	5,062,011
% good general health	67 %	68 %
% fairly good general health	24 %	22 %
% not good general health	9 %	10 %

HOUSING TYPE	Biggar	Scotland
Total number of households (with residents)	1,007	2,192,246
% Detached	41 %	20 %
% Semi-detached	20 %	24 %
% Terraced house	18 %	20 %
% Flat or maisonette or apartment	21 %	36 %

HOUSING TENURE	Biggar	Scotland
Total number of households (with residents)	1,007	2,192,246
% owned	70 %	63 %
% social rented	21 %	27 %
% private rented	6 %	7 %

CAR OWNERSHIP	Biggar	Scotland
Total number of households (with residents)	1,007	2,192,246
% no car or van	26 %	34 %
% 1 car or van	47 %	43 %
% 2 or more cars or vans	26 %	22 %

ECONOMIC ACTIVITY	Biggar	Scotland
All persons aged 16-74	1,519	3,731,079
Economically active: % Employees - Part time	12 %	11 %
Economically active: % Employees - Full time	40 %	40 %
Economically active: % Self-employed	10 %	7 %
Economically active: % Unemployed	2 %	4 %
Economically active: % Full-time student	2 %	3 %
Economically inactive: % Retired	2 %	14 %
Economically inactive: % Student	3 %	4 %
Economically inactive: % Looking after home/family	4 %	6 %
Economically inactive: % Permanently sick/disabled	4 %	7 %
Economically inactive: % Other	2 %	4 %





TYPES OF EMPLOYMENT	Biggar	Scotland
All persons aged 16-74 in employment (excluding full time students)	930	2,163,035
A. Agriculture and hunting and forestry	4 %	2 %
B. Fishing	<1 %	<1 %
C. Mining and quarrying	<1 %	1 %
D. Manufacturing	14 %	14 %
E. Electricity and gas and water supply	<1 %	1 %
F. Construction	11 %	8 %
G. Wholesale & retail trade and repairs	14 %	13 %
H. Hotels and restaurants	4 %	5 %
I. Transport and storage and communication	6 %	7 %
J. Financial intermediaries	3 %	5 %
K. Real estate and renting and business activities	9 %	11 %
L. Public administration and defence and social security	4 %	7 %
M. Education	9 %	7 %
N. Health and social work	15 %	13 %
O.P.Q. Other	5 %	5 %

UNEMPLOYMENT	Biggar	Scotland
Average age of a person who is unemployed (excluding full-time students)	33	35
% households with at least one person aged 16-74 who is unemployed (and not a full-time student) or permanently sick	8 %	16 %

# appendix 4

## business feedback

### A: WHAT DO PEOPLE SAY ABOUT BIGGAR?

People say Biggar is:

- 'Happy town – well served'
- 'Attractive town – lots going on'
- 'Old Fashioned farming town'
- 'Has a market town feel'
- 'a Border town without an identity'
- 'real sense of community'
- 'love the little shops'
- 'Very proud community'

Where do people position Biggar?

- 'South Central Scotland'
- 'Edge of the Borders'
- 'North edge of the Southern Uplands'
- 'Capital of Clydesdale'
- 'South West of Edinburgh'
- 'Lanarkshire'
- 'Between the River Tweed and the River Clyde'
- 'Capital of Clydesdale'
- 'South Strathclyde'
- 'half hour out of Edinburgh'
- Middle of nowhere – centre of everywhere
- Mid-way between Edinburgh and Glasgow
- Biggar

### B: ISSUES RAISED BY BUSINESSES

Business climate and economy

- Economic climate
- Difficult to get support from banks
- Cost of supplies
- Next 12 months will be crucial for local businesses
- Lack of employment opportunities (especially for young people)
- Completion of windfarm will reduce trade
- Potential impact of the quarry project
- Shortage of industrial space for start up units, shared space, and room for expansion
- More support required for medium to large businesses (particularly around rates relief)

Retailing

- Changing retail trends – including the growth of online shopping, of supermarkets and out-of-town retail, of shopping in other centres like Edinburgh, Livingston and Glasgow, and the mixing of shopping and leisure activities
- Shopping patterns are changing – people commuting (so they are not in town during the day to shop), shopping on line, time pressured – stops people coming into town
- Declining footfall
- Nearly all the shops close on a Sunday
- Negative impact of local 'internal' competition within the town
- Retail units are too small for chain stores – but there is a threat more chains will come. Most small businesses



were proud of the absence of chain stores, although others felt that a smaller cheaper supermarket would be good for lower income households.

- Only 2,000 resident population – not a sufficient critical mass to support some specialist retailers – and 66% of shopping done outside of Biggar

#### Regulation

- Prohibitive business legislation, particularly around employment regulations and alcohol licensing
- Business overheads
- VAT
- Perception that planning regulations/enforcement around shopfront signage are damaging to business, with small businesses in particular concerned that they are treated heavy-handedly

#### Parking and transport

- Parking: limited quantity and visibility of long term parking. Restrictions are confusing due to four different parking zones.
- People use their car as a 'shopping trolley' and move their car around town, parking outside each shop. Some Edinburgh commuters park their cars in Biggar. There is nowhere for buses, coaches, lorries or cars with caravans to stop easily (e.g. to visit a café or chip shop). Coach parking could be improved.
- Traffic bad at school times
- Tricky junction at High Street/Station Road
- Pedestrian crossings are in the wrong place
- Rural transport links (e.g. bus and rail links to Glasgow and Edinburgh) are poor, especially in the evening. There is a big demand for bus timetables!

#### Tourism

- Limited visitor accommodation – a number of B+B's have closed recently, and there are understood to be only around 18 rooms in the town

#### Other points

- Need to find better ways of linking the east end of the High Street with the west end of the High Street – so that the west end is more visible to visitors and pedestrians. The 'Zest' site is pivotal to encouraging people to keep walking and find the west end of town.
- Weather (bad winter, bad summer)
- Mobile phone coverage and broadband service could be improved
- Toilets are often closed when events are on

#### Local community

- Lots of clubs – but only a few people running everything (from out of town) – risk of fatigue
- New houses proposed – can the school cope? Will businesses survive until then? How will this affect the local community?
- Not much to do for young people

#### Communication

- Need for better marketing and communication – internal and external. On the edge of administrative boundary – can feel ignored and misunderstood.
- Does the Business Association need assistance?
- Inter-council tourism collaboration is currently almost entirely with North Lanarkshire.

## C: OPPORTUNITIES RAISED IN DISCUSSIONS

### Infrastructure and environment

- Need to harness the spending potential of passing traffic by:
  - creating better and clearer parking
  - finding out more about people passing through town (where are they going to and from? how could they be persuaded to stop?)
- The old fitness centre could be a temporary car park, accessed from Market Road – it would need signage, resurfacing and coach parking
- Better boundary signs and visitor interpretation
- More collaborative and supportive approach by local regulatory authorities towards small businesses (e.g. planning, licencing)
- Resist new out-of-centre retail developments which would compete with existing town centre businesses
- Make the High Street more animated and attractive – e.g. pavement cafes, Biggar in Bloom

### Marketing and communication

- Create a private sector led promotional, tourism and marketing group – making use of the Destination Development toolkit available from Tourism Intelligence Scotland
- Better noticeboard/leaflet/website/social media to share information for locals and visitors about what's available and what's on
- Create a more permanent arrangement for Visitor Information Centre, probably a partnership arrangement, possibly at the proposed new museum
- Integrate local events more with the town centre and

help them work better for local businesses

- Better integration and co-ordination so that businesses work more closely together, e.g. more cross-selling – requires a series of networking events for local businesses, learning journeys to meet business groups elsewhere
- Take more active part in wider formal tourism organisations in Lanarkshire – such as Lanarkshire Area Tourism Partnership or any sub-groups that may be established
- Make Biggar more of a tourist destination (NB the main current tourist circuit is Biggar/Moffat/Tweedsmuir) – could use the Destination Development Toolkit to improve the tourist offer, working with neighbouring areas on marketing
- Make more of the 'Biggar' name through branding
- Sainsbury's may create a Sunday shopping habit locally
- Target more customers in Biggar and within a 30 mile radius – through a targeted marketing campaign promoting the quality, convenience and diversity of local shopping/eating out
- Collaborate with other neighbouring areas e.g. LEADER projects, food & tourism projects, day trips from Edinburgh, food trails with neighbouring areas – again the Destination Development toolkit could help here
- Build quality of customer service – Scottish Enterprise could facilitate a 'Listening to our Visitors' workshop

### Tourism

- The museum trust project
- Outdoor education
- Windfarm development – business tourism during development phase
- More visitor accommodation – what is the potential market?





- Make use of all the tourism information and support currently available through Tourism Intelligence Scotland – research, training, advice etc

#### Community

- Make the High School a focus for attracting and keeping people in the area

# appendix 5

## community groups

This appendix is intended to give a flavour of the 70 or so community groups which exist in Biggar, rather to be a comprehensive list. We apologise if there are any omissions.

- Accordion & Fiddle Club
- Albion Archive
- Angling Club
- Art Groups
- (Biggar) Big Band
- (Biggar) Business Group
- Bowling Club – Ladies
- Bowling Club - Mens
- 1st (Biggar) Brownies
- 2nd (Biggar) Brownies
- Brownsbank
- Camera Club
- Church of Scotland Guild
- (Biggar) Church
- (Biggar & District) Civic Society
- Clydesdale Folk Group
- (Biggar) Community Council
- (Biggar & District) Community Heritage Ltd
- Cornets Club
- (Biggar) cricket club
- (Biggar) Farmers Club
- Friends of Biggar Museums
- Friends of Burnbraes Park
- Gala Week Committee
- Gillespie Centre Association
- Golf Club
- Guides
- Horticultural Society
- Jazz in Biggar
- (Biggar) Junior Badminton Club
- (Biggar) Kirk Youth Group
- Lamington Chapel (part of the BMT)
- (Biggar) Little Festival
- Macmillan Cancer Support
- Mothers and Toddlers
- (Biggar) Mother & Baby Group
- (Biggar) Music Club
- (Biggar) Museum Trust
- (Biggar) Museum Archaeology Group
- (Biggar) Patient Participation Group
- (Biggar) Pre School PlayGroup
- Probus Club
- (Biggar) Public Art Group
- (Biggar) Ramblers Club
- (Biggar) Rotary Club
- Royal British Legion Club
- RBL Pipe Band
- (Biggar) Rugby Club
- (Biggar) Samba Band
- Scottish Country Dancing
- (Biggar) Scouts, Cubs and Beavers
- Scottish Country Dancing
- (Biggar) Singers
- Social Club
- Scottish Action on Climate
- Tennis Club
- (Biggar) Theatre Workshop
- (Biggar) Writers Group
- Yoga
- Young Archaeologists Club
- (Biggar) Youth Project
- (Biggar) Young Farmers Club



# appendix 6

## Ranking of propositions cards at second public workshop, 4 October 2011

NB: Ideas in italics were added by participants at the workshop.

	Priority 1: MUST	Priority 2: SHOULD	Priority 3: COULD	Priority 4: WOULD	Participant comments
<b>CONNECTIONS</b>					
Create space for coaches + caravans to stop on the High St	xxxx				Get coach-friendly status for Biggar! Attract more tourists. Also motorhome parking could be better.
Free up High St parking spaces for passing trade, encourage long stay behind	xxx	x			
Better public transport for young + old (Carnwath, Lanark pool, Wishaw Hospital, Glasgow)	xx	xx		x	
Walking/cycling safer + more comfortable	x	xxx			...and buggy-friendly too!
Make the High St more pedestrian friendly	x	xxx			
Make parking easier for visitors	xxx				
Faster broadband + better mobile reception	xx			xxx	
Re-open railways			xxx	xx	
More transport resources for schools + Youth Project		x	xx		
Take long distance HGVs off the A702		x		xx	
<i>Motorhome parking with waste disposal + fresh water</i>	x				
<i>Use development opportunities to deliver transport improvements for the town e.g. off street parking, new transport interchange (park and ride)</i>	x				
<i>Twinning</i>				x	
<i>Connecting shops in upper and lower High St</i>				x	





	Priority 1: MUST	Priority 2: SHOULD	Priority 3: COULD	Priority 4: WOULD	Participant comments
<b>BUSINESS + MARKETING</b>					
What's on Facebook page/website + noticeboard	xxxx				
Encourage more people to stop and spend time in Biggar	xxx	x			Need better parking to encourage people to stop.
Encourage local businesses to work together on marketing	xx	xx			Need clear identity for this.
More employment opportunities (build more industrial units)	xx	x	x		Build with planning sensitivity please!
Better promotional signs to Biggar (from M74 and Edinburgh bypass)	xx	x	x		Welcome to Biggar signs.
Continue to develop + promote Biggar's good food offering	x	xxx			Need clear identity for this.
Market + promote Biggar (day trips within 30 miles, walkers + cyclists, Edinburgh Festival)	xxx				
Support new shops + business to increase range of what's on offer (especially for tourists + younger generation)	xx		xx		Skate park?
No new supermarket outside town centre	x	x			Agreed – still a need for a more comprehensive weekly shop – Co-op not enough.
Promotional campaigns at Christmas etc	x		x		
More choice of groceries, more affordable	xxxx	x	x		Not more supermarkets! Need to allow families on smaller budgets to live in Biggar – local initiatives, loyalty club?  Independent retailers.
More collaboration between businesses + big local events			xx		

	Priority 1: MUST	Priority 2: SHOULD	Priority 3: COULD	Priority 4: WOULD	Participant comments
<b>GOVERNANCE + DECISION-MAKING</b>					
Protect + support community events	xxx	x			
Research potential demand for different types of visitor accommodation	x	xxx	x		
More support for local clubs + initiatives	x	xx	xx		
Design new housing for Biggar, not "anytown suburbia"	xx	x	x		
Set up Biggar Town Team (businesses, Council, community groups – with a champion?)		xxx	xx		
More support for local facilities (halls, parks etc)		xx	xx		
More responsive local authority	x	x		xx	
Town Tourism Group for businesses + events organisers	x		xx	x	Don't want too many groups! Need to consolidate groups – perhaps the champion idea is better.
Community wind farm	x				
<b>ATTRACTIONS + DRAWS</b>					
Protect character of the town centre (historic buildings, independent shops, shopfront improvements)	xxxxx				
Walking/cycling paths along old railways east and west	xx	xx	x		
Signposted rural path network for locals/visitors	x	xx	xx		
Less litter on the High St (especially school lunchtimes + outside pubs)	xxx			x	
Open the public toilets more (evenings + events)	xx	x	x		And have the facility to give change!
Better sports facilities for all (astroturf, swimming, grassy pitches, access to sports barn, indoor tennis, cricket)	xx	x		x	Astroturf access on Sundays, more evening access to sports barn.



	<b>Priority 1: MUST</b>	<b>Priority 2: SHOULD</b>	<b>Priority 3: COULD</b>	<b>Priority 4: WOULD</b>	<b>Participant comments</b>
Young people's cinema programme in Corn Exchange	x	xx	x		
Biggar Park (more activities + fun stuff)	x	xx		x	Organisation necessary. Canoeing on lake. Discussion about algae/liability issues.
More activity on the High St (pavement cafes, entertainment, art + culture)	x	x	xx		
Start Biggar in Bloom project with businesses + schools		xx	xx	x	No Biggar in Bloom at the moment.
Smarten up closes off the High St	x	xx			Include lighting, young people should do the artwork.
Skatepark/bmx on former abattoir site (temporary?)	x	xx			Possibly going to happen.
Biggar Town Trail signs + leaflet	x		xx		
Refresh the Poetry Garden	x		x	xx	Underway by Brownsbank Committee. Not sure where it is?
Paint + maintain High St properties better	x		x	xx	
Burnbraes Park (support Friends, new toddlers'/adventure play equipment, refresh teenage shelter, naturalise the burn)	x		xx	x	
Permanent visitor centre			xx	xx	Let's do the museum first!
New Scout Hut to service the needs of Biggar Scouts and their soon to be enlarged membership of 150 local children.	x				
Nature park/pond between Co-op + sports barn (temporary?)				xxxx	
Open up Biggar motte				xxx	
Connecting shops in upper and lower High St				x	
Re-instate the ford at Cadger's Brig				x	

## appendix 7

### more detailed information on the Destination Development Toolkit

Destination Development is an online toolkit for area groups and destination marketing organisations. It is aimed at areas in Scotland that have the ambition to use a destination focus to enhance their tourism potential.

The '5 Steps to Destination Development' provides partnership groups with the tools required to create a plan of action. This can be used by groups at any stage of their destination development.

The toolkit helps bring together businesses with a common purpose, and helps them work together to improve the visitor experience. It helps areas identify how they are performing, how they can develop and deliver a realistic plan for the future, and how they can measure the difference they make.

Each section of the toolkit includes a series of challenges for group work, along with a checklist and signposting to the practical resources required. The materials also include a range of best practice examples from across Scotland. They illustrate how success can be achieved through a collaborative approach.

More information is available online from the Tourism Intelligence Scotland website at:

<<http://www.tourism-intelligence.co.uk/practical-tools.aspx>>





# appendix 8

## more detailed information on public space proposals

### Policy justification

The approach illustrated in the 'before and after' visualisations in chapter 5 builds on the principles outlined in *Designing Streets: a Policy Statement for Scotland* (Scottish Government, 2010) as well as the policy direction of *Manual for Streets 2* (Chartered Institution of Highways & Transportation, 2010) and *Local Transport Note 1/11: Shared Space* (Department for Transport, 2011).

When work proceeds to the next phase, it will be necessary to engage with the Scottish Government / Transport Scotland and their managing contractors, BEAR Scotland, to explore ways in which these interventions should be designed and implemented.

### Notes on 'before and after' visualisations

All of the interventions described below would be fairly straightforward to achieve, especially if they were combined with a resurfacing / road repair programme. In most cases applied surface treatments would be used, using products such as Adbruf's "Hycolour 193" or similar (a textured highly durable two-part paint which is available in any colour).

Reducing the visual, apparent widths of the carriageways can significantly reduce speeds, typically by around 2-4 mph. Removing the centre line markings similarly reduces speeds. It is hard to judge the overall effect on speeds and behaviour of the place-making aspects of the proposals, but we can be confident that they would have some beneficial effect.

All elements would be part of a palette of measures to reduce the highway characteristics of the street network within

the town centre, and to emphasize the specific and unique context of Biggar.

**High Street/School Green junction:** Secondary surfacing material likely to be a surface-applied "High Friction Grip" bauxite (commonly used for increasing skid resistance). Small sett finish on the pedestrian crosswalk across the junction can be used to closely mirror the existing footway finish in tone and colour. Similar materials and principles could be applied at the transition points on roads entering the town.

**Outside Primary School, John Street/John's Loan/South Back Road:** The spaces between radiating lines of setts or cobbles should be in the same red asphalt as the carriageways; the square formed by the intersection should be framed with a line or double line of setts. The setts could be a little darker, ideally with some indication of a roughish texture, and set around the garden wall on the far left of the junction, and where the space butts up against the buildings and wall. The lines of setts can be inserted into asphalt with careful disc cutting and narrow trench cutting, subject of course to location of existing services etc. It would be beneficial to add a feature to the top of the old school gate, such as a light combined in an arch, to lend focus to the layout.

**Health Centre, South Crofts Road, off John's Loan:** Parking areas shown with reinforced grass surfacing (e.g. grasscrete, golpla grass grid or similar). Although prices of these treatments are reducing, cheaper alternatives could be used such as hogging, compacted gravel or similar.







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