



Our Future Cirencester...

A Community Plan

Contents

Executive Summary.....	4
WHAT CIRENCESTER WANTS.....	6
HOW DID WE GET HERE?.....	7
WHAT WE’VE ACHIEVED SO FAR.....	9
How does cirencester’s community plan fit into the wider public service framework?.....	10
THEMES AND ACTION PLANNING.....	11
OUR FUTURE CIRENCESTER WILL BE A SUSTAINABLE MARKET TOWN.....	12
Cirencester Local.....	13
Safer Community.....	14
Sustainable Transport.....	15
Sustainable Cirencester.....	17
OUR FUTURE CIRENCESTER WILL BE A GOOD PLACE TO GROW UP.....	19
Schools at the Heart of the Community.....	19
Sport and Physical Activity.....	20
Fun Places.....	21
Safe Routes to School.....	23
Cirencester Youth Town Council.....	23
Cirencester Open Air Swimming Pool.....	24
OUR FUTURE CIRENCESTER WILL BE AN ATTRACTIVE TOWN TO LIVE IN, VISIT, AND WHERE WE CAN ENJOY VIBRANT CULTURE.....	25
Heritage Strategy.....	25
Amphitheatre.....	28
Cirencester Festival.....	29
Market Place.....	30
City Bank.....	31

Our future Cirencester

OUR FUTURE CIRENCESTER WILL BE A BETTER PLACE TO DO BUSINESS	33
Town Centre Management	33
Links between the projects in the plan.....	35
Where we go from here.....	37
references and sources.....	38

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

“Our future Cirencester” is a community plan for the town that builds upon previous consultation exercises and community aspirations to set out a unified and coordinated action plan for all stakeholders.

The Plan will ensure that Cirencester is a sustainable market town that serves its rural hinterland, has sufficient employment within a five mile radius and has viable services, retail and social infrastructure to meet the day-to-day needs of its residents.

The Plan is broken down into four themes:

Our Future Cirencester will be:

- a sustainable market town
- a good place to grow up
- an attractive town to live in, visit and where we can enjoy vibrant culture
- a better place to do business

Sustainability in all senses of the word underpins the projects and proposals.

OUR FUTURE CIRENCESTER WILL BE A SUSTAINABLE MARKET TOWN:

- **CIRENCESTER LOCAL:** Create a product brand called “Cirencester Local” to be displayed on locally produced and sourced goods and services and provide support for local retailers and commercial services providers.
- **SAFER COMMUNITY:** Put into place measures that ensure the town feels safe for people of all ages, in all locations and at all times of the day.
- **SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT:** Work with the Highways Authority, District Council and local transport providers to reduce the negative impacts of traffic in Cirencester.
- **SUSTAINABLE CIRENCESTER:** Develop measures as a town that uses resources wisely, reduces its carbon footprint and help to prepare for rising energy costs.

OUR FUTURE CIRENCESTER WILL BE A GOOD PLACE TO GROW UP:

- **SCHOOLS AT THE HEART OF THE COMMUNITY:** Engender stronger joint working between schools, Town and District and County Councils, the private sector and the Community to provide more and better activities and programmes for young people and their families and to make these activities more accessible and inclusive.
- **SPORT AND FITNESS:** Create opportunities for sport, fitness and related activities designed with young people in mind.
- **FUN PLACES:** Create places in Cirencester that are fun for children of all ages.
- **SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL:** Ensure that children have safe routes to school and around their neighbourhoods to enable them to be mobile and independent.
- **CIRENCESTER YOUTH TOWN COUNCIL:** Create opportunities to allow children and young people to become involved in their community and to help shape its future.
- **CIRENCESTER OPEN AIR SWIMMING POOL:** Seek funding to upgrade and restore the Cirencester open air pool so that it can continue to provide a recreational opportunity.

OUR FUTURE CIRENCESTER WILL BE AN ATTRACTIVE TOWN TO LIVE IN, VISIT, AND WHERE WE CAN ENJOY VIBRANT CULTURE:

- **HERITAGE STRATEGY:** Undertake a review of all aspects of Cirencester's heritage and develop a strategy to enable better interpretation and participation by all sectors of the local population and visitors to Cirencester.
- **AMPHITHEATRE:** Introduce new access and acoustic infrastructure to the site to improve public access to/from the town centre, and enable the Amphitheatre to be used again for regular public events.
- **CIRENCESTER FESTIVAL:** Hold a regular themed festival in Cirencester, bringing together existing events and activities in a coordinated manner.
- **MARKET PLACE:** Improve paving, urban environment, seating, and pedestrian access to the Market Place by introducing a pedestrianisation or shared space scheme with traffic calming and traffic management.
- **CITY BANK:** Improve the functionality, amenity, safety, attractiveness, archaeology, environment and biodiversity of City Bank.

OUR FUTURE CIRENCESTER WILL BE A BETTER PLACE TO DO BUSINESS:

- **TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT:** Introduce a formal mechanism for managing the town centre and Love Lane industrial estate.

The projects are described fully in the Action Plan which is a separate document.

Technical Appendix One highlights results from consultation.

Technical Appendix Two provides statistical background to the report.

June 2008.

WHAT CIRENCESTER WANTS...

Over the last decade there has been a lot of talk about what the people of Cirencester want for the future of their town. Many initiatives have come, some have gone, but most remain and are being acted upon.

This is the next logical phase of the evolution of our thinking. With this document, we begin to tie all the loose ends together. This project, called “Our Future Cirencester” is a Community Plan for Cirencester. It is based upon information and opinions gathered in the earlier exercises and will bring them together into a full strategy that will help the Town Council and its partners to develop and improve Cirencester for years to come.

The main aim of the project is to make Cirencester a sustainable market town. This does not just mean that Cirencester will change under the concept of “sustainable development” where there will be an emphasis on reducing our carbon footprint by encouraging sustainable transport, energy savings and progressive purchasing strategies, though this will certainly play a major part. Cirencester’s position as the main market town serving a rural hinterland also needs to be acknowledged. Many surrounding villages have few amenities and their residents depend on Cirencester.

To be sustainable, Cirencester, which serves a rural hinterland, should have sufficient jobs of different types in or nearby (within five miles) to meet the needs of those living in the community to find employment. It must have viable services, retail and social facilities such as doctors’ surgeries and schools to meet the day-to-day needs of the community.¹

We want to keep Cirencester thriving and alive, serving its surrounding villages and settlements and providing an active and enjoyable environment for its inhabitants now, and into the future. Many market towns are in decline as work and shopping patterns change. They are at risk of losing their critical mass of shops and services and becoming less and less viable, until, as we have seen in many smaller villages, they simply become dormitory settlements were their inhabitants must drive elsewhere to get the basic services they need.

We don’t want this future for Cirencester.

Cirencester is a wonderful and unique town with a fascinating history. Our aim is to make it stronger, better and fitter for purpose. We want our young people to stay here and start their families. We want older people to have the services they need within easy reach of their homes. We want a full range of shops and services and fun activities to make our lives here enjoyable. We want a safe and pleasant environment.

In short,

Our Future Cirencester will be:

- **a sustainable market town**

¹ Rural Economic Strategy for Gloucestershire 2007-2015 (revised 2006), pages 28-29.

- **a good place to grow up**
- **an attractive town to live in, visit, and where we can enjoy vibrant culture**
- **a better place to do business.**

This Plan seeks to capture and develop Cirencester's unique characteristics and to use them to make it a truly sustainable market town. The Regional Development Agency and South West Tourism, both potential supporters to the Plan, identify that a sustainable town needs to help residents, businesses and local government to achieve the following:

- Buy local
- Support quality
- Use resources wisely
- Respect distinctiveness
- Offer car-free access where appropriate
- Get local involvement
- Explain the sustainability message!²

"Our Future Cirencester" will follow this approach, but apply it locally to fit Cirencester's unique circumstances and characteristics.

Smaller towns can create opportunities for themselves by creating a separate identity to differentiate themselves from competing towns. The trick is to define what the role of the local centre is and plan accordingly. As a starting point, we need to understand the following: competition, catchment, character, choice, and convenience.³

This document is the first step in putting the Community Plan into action.

HOW DID WE GET HERE?

Cirencester's future prospects have no doubt been debated since the earliest settlement here before the Romans' arrival. Our current project can be traced back to debates that began in the 1970s by the Civic Society and the 1990s when the District Council began to seriously consider the physical development of the town as part of the Cirencester Traffic and Environment Plan. Since then, a number of projects have proceeded, some originating with the Town or District Councils, some with the local community. The table below reviews the major projects that have and will form part of this process.

² Towards 2015: shaping tomorrow's tourism, South West England, South West Tourism and South West Regional Development Agency, 2005.

³ The Smaller Towns Report: Delivering retail-led renaissance in towns and smaller cities, BCSC, 2004

YEAR	PROJECT	DESCRIPTION
1996 - 2003	Cirencester Traffic and Environment Plan (CTEP)	A partnership between the District and County Councils agrees a programme of works to change traffic and urban environment in Cirencester Town Centre. Phase 1 is completed as a new traffic scheme on Park Lane and Silver Street. Funding is dropped by the District Council for later phases including a redevelopment of the Market Place.
2003-2004	Cirencester Town Centre Health Check	A complete review of all aspects of public service provision, economic health, amenities, etc. is undertaken following guidance from the Countryside Agency on the production of Parish Plans and the Gloucestershire Market Towns Forum. Consultation identifies what people in Cirencester would like their town to become in the future.
2004-2008	Market Place renewal project	Action Cirencester, a local community group, puts together proposals to revive and modify the CTEP proposals for the Market Place. A small consultation exercise is held with local shop owners and other interested parties and there is significant media interest.
2006 - 2008	Towards a Vision for Cirencester	Cotswold District Council does work to bring together a number of its evolving policy initiatives and requirements with high developer interest in the town centre. It also considers Action Cirencester's proposals for the Market Place. A detailed consultation exercise is undertaken to learn people's views about what they want. The main focus is to produce land use planning policies and to strengthen the land use aspects of the Council's archaeology strategy. A wide range of stakeholders are included in the exercise, including the Town Council.
2007	Archaeology Strategy	The District Council completes its draft Archaeology strategy, taking into account land use planning matters arising from the Vision exercise.
2007 - 2008	Market and Coastal Towns Initiative (MCTA)	The Town and District Councils are successful in their joint application to the Market and Coastal Towns Association for a £20,000 grant to produce a Community Plan for Cirencester.
2008	Cirencester Town Centre Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)	The District Council publishes its land use strategy for the town centre. This forms the basis of decisions on planning applications for the following 10 years. It is not an implementation strategy
2008	CDC SPD Action Plan	The District Council identifies a number of projects arising from the SPD that it can progress, e.g.: parking, pedestrianisation, cycling, etc. In addition, planning applications will be decided in accordance with the SPD and the Vision that informed it.
2008	Cirencester Conservation Area management plans	The District Council publishes further planning policies that deal specifically with conservation areas and listed buildings.
2008	Community Plan: Our Future	The Town Council uses the MCTA grant to produce a Community Plan called "Our Future Cirencester". The basis of

Our future Cirencester

	Cirencester	the Community Plan is to draw out issues that have been raised in all the preceding exercises and consultations, and that are within the remit of the Town Council and its partners. The Community Plan will contain an implementation and funding strategy for a range of specific projects.
2008 onwards	Community Plan: Implementation Phase	The Community Plan will be implemented. The Town Council is a partner in all aspects of the Plan and will provide the lead and support where appropriate.

One of the largest inputs into the Community Plan is the work undertaken in 2007 for Cotswold District Council (CDC), a main stakeholder in the Community Plan. CDC undertook a wide ranging consultation exercise to learn what local people wanted for the future of their town as part of a project called “Towards a Vision for Cirencester”. An engagement exercise lasting around three months sought views from the general public, interested stakeholders, young children and young people. The views expressed, as they relate to this exercise, can be viewed in Technical Appendix One.

The Vision project focussed upon the area within the main ring roads and upon land use and archaeological matters. That project will now move into its implementation phase. The matters that might be taken forward by CDC and its partners such as the County Council would relate to changing and improving parking provision, better traffic management, improved pedestrian access and safety, and using Section 106 developer contributions to improve the public realm in the town centre.

A number of issues were raised that the District Council cannot deliver because they are not within its remit. These and other matters that have not progressed satisfactorily yet, will fall under the Community Plan.

The Town Council is a partner in these activities and will provide support where appropriate but will lead on all issues relating specifically to the town.

WHAT WE’VE ACHIEVED SO FAR...

The success of the Community Plan will largely be dependent on how well the many stakeholders will be able to work together to achieve common aims.

Cirencester has an excellent track record of delivering community led projects on the ground. This demonstrates that joint working through partnerships can be successful in Cirencester and consultation with the community leads to action.

Here are some of the projects that the Town Council have achieved in the past year:

- Partnership with the Police
- Partnership with the Chesterton Project
- Partnership with Cotswold District Council regarding CCTV
- Signing up to the Severn Wye Energy Neighbourhoods Project
- Partnership with the Scouts on their Go Green initiative.

But there is much more to be done. The Community Plan will act as a blue print for future community development and will form the basis of the Town Council's work programme for many years to come.

HOW DOES CIRENCESTER'S COMMUNITY PLAN FIT INTO THE WIDER PUBLIC SERVICE FRAMEWORK?

The Community Plan can trace its roots back to the Rural White Paper which was published in 2000. It sought to help people living in rural areas to be fully involved in developing their community and shaping the decisions that affect them. Town Councils are being given the opportunity to better manage themselves and their towns by working with other tiers of local government to provide local services. The Rural Economic Strategy for Gloucestershire also seeks to build capacity by increasing the role of Town Councils implying a greater degree of partnership between District Councils and Town Councils than may currently exist. This also means that Town Councils must take greater responsibility for what happens in their communities.

The Rural White paper introduced the concept of the Quality Parish and Town Plans, both of which Cirencester Town Council is seriously pursuing.

Local Authorities such as the Town Council have recently obtained new powers for social, economic and environmental well being.⁴

These will enable the Town Council to play a more active role in Cirencester's development than heretofore and will enable it to take a lead through this Community Planning process.

The role of market towns as critical to the success of rural areas such as ours is an important feature the Rural Economic Strategy (RES). The Market and Coastal Towns Initiative (MCTI), under which this plan was prepared, is probably the most important offshoot of the RES in helping a town council to take on the level of responsibility envisaged in these strategic policies.

The MCTI has been running for a number of years and will to close as this Community Plan is adopted. In its short life, the MCTI has been the catalyst for a range of important and meaningful projects across the South West region such as community centres, consultants' studies, environmental programmes, creation of a local community cinema, cultural interpretation and much more.

Cirencester plays an important role in the Cotswold area and fills a unique niche between the competing towns of Cheltenham, Swindon and Stroud. Market towns like Cirencester should be the focal points for the provision of locally significant development and their importance to surrounding villages and hamlets cannot be overstated. The scale and mix of development should increase a market town's self-containment and should develop their functions as service centres, especially in terms of employment and service accessibility.⁵ The land use planning elements of these objectives fall within the remit of the Planning Authority, but the Community Plan can do much to secure the social and economic aspects of these aspirations.

⁴ Local Government AND Improvement in Health Act 2007.

⁵ Draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West 2006-2026, Development Policy B.

THEMES AND ACTION PLANNING

A full review of the 2007 Vision consultation exercise is a rich seam of information giving a clear indication of what should be included in the Community Plan. Valuable information can also be drawn from the Town Centre Health Check from 2004 and activities of groups such as Action Cirencester. Four themes have emerged.

Our Future Cirencester will be:

- **a sustainable market town**
- **a good place to grow up**
- **an attractive town to live in, visit, and where we can enjoy vibrant culture**
- **a better place to do business.**

The Community Plan will be the summation of the action plans and will form a strategy for the Town Council to use as the basis for its prioritisation and budgeting processes for the coming years. It will also be used by local community groups and other stakeholders to implement projects of their own.

Each theme and action plan was developed through the work of groups of local experts and interested people who were invited to offer advice on the Community Plan. Each group met twice to discuss the action plans for each project.

The work of the theme groups was supported by a number of focused interviews with other relevant stakeholders.

OUR FUTURE CIRENCESTER WILL BE A SUSTAINABLE MARKET TOWN

To make Cirencester a truly sustainable market town that continues to thrive and offer a full range of shops and services to local people, including those from surrounding villages, we need to take positive action. It will probably not be enough to continue as we are in the hope that the town will continue to thrive.

A recent study highlighted the renewed interest in market towns as rural centres for services, employment and housing. They are seen as a means of sustaining the quality of life for rural communities and as the logical centres in which to focus regeneration initiatives for rural areas. Market towns have functional specialisms as service centres, visitor attractions and employment centres, but they face challenges such as maintaining retail competitiveness, the impact of greater personal mobility and providing for the less well-off or less able.⁶

This community plan is seeking to meet these challenges by putting in place a robust framework to improve Cirencester's local economy, enjoyment of heritage and by making it a better place to live.

Critical to the success of the plan will be to identify and clarify Cirencester's unique identity. This will form the basis of the economic development projects in the plan and will also give focus to, but also be derived from, our unique historical and cultural characteristics:

- the Roman and medieval history
- the extraordinarily beautiful Georgian market place
- the remaining medieval buildings
- Cecily Hill
- the two large green areas of estate and parkland surrounding and then meeting in the centre of the town at the Church tower
- The Parish Church which is an architectural landmark that has survived as the single precious tall building in the general roofscape
- the prominence of the ancient approach roads into the town and retained sight lines
- a discrete and unobtrusive industrial estate
- the absence of peripheral ribbon development on the many approach roads
- a diverse array of small individual shops.

Much of the success of the projects in the plan will depend upon selling Cirencester as a tourist destination, a place to shop that is more attractive than nearby competing retail and business centres and a place to choose to locate for business or family.

The plan is seeking to "future proof" Cirencester in the face of changing shopping and travel patterns, rising energy costs, reduced or changing levels of support from local government service providers and changing social expectations.

We have identified a number of general objectives as we seek to be more sustainable: avoid complacency; make Cirencester economically viable, socially responsible and environmentally sustainable; engender buy-in and innovation; and maintain our diversity of people, environmental features and businesses.

⁶ "Understanding market towns", Town and Country Planning, December 2007, 451-455.

Cirencester Local

Changing retail patterns and shopping behaviour poses a challenge to a medium sized market town like Cirencester. People no longer seem to have the time to shop in small local outlets and independent shops. As economic trends change and people spend more time at work, convenience shopping becomes more attractive.

Our consultations have shown that having a range of small shops, many of them independent, is seen as a real strength. We like having a town centre full of variety and surprise, just as we like having post offices and small shops in villages. But if people need to get all their shopping done in their few free minutes between juggling work, homes and families, they will inevitably choose to shop by a time-efficient method. This probably won't mean walking into the local shops in town buying a bit here or there. It will mean driving to a large shop and trying to do most of the shopping at one time. Alternatively, it might mean shopping late at night on the internet, after work is done, the children are in bed and the house tidied.

Small and independent shops cannot easily compete with these pressures. They offer limited stock and cannot realistically remain open into the evenings or overnight. Parking in town is expensive and sometimes difficult because there are not enough spaces. It is often more convenient and attractive to drop into one of our edge of town supermarkets where parking is plentiful and free.

So, we are faced with a dilemma. We want a wide range of small shops, but we want the convenience of large shops and the internet. If we choose to use large shops and the internet, how can we help keep our small shops thriving and available to us? There is a lesson in the recent proposed closures of the post offices in neighbouring villages and outlying parts of Cirencester. We saw large demonstrations and many letters in the local press protesting against the closures. If we don't use our shops, we shall lose them.

But there is another side to this too. Being sustainable is also about reducing our impact upon our environment. Transport costs associated with obtaining goods and services have a negative impact upon our town and also upon our household finances. If our local shops die, we will need to travel further when we shop or have goods delivered to our homes at higher costs.

Another aspect of our valuable small retail shops is that they often have a direct link to Cirencester. Our Charter, craft and farmers markets all sell wares that are locally sourced. Our consultations have shown that this is something else that we really value. And in terms of sustainability, the lowest carbon impact will often be made on goods that are produced and consumed locally.

One possible solution to this particular dilemma is to begin to actively sell Cirencester and its local goods and services to a wider market and to meet the challenge of changes in shopping behaviour by promoting our local shops and locally produced goods, but to try to do this in a way that offers maximum convenience to us as consumers.

The Cirencester Local project in the community plan seeks to do this. The purpose of this project is to identify locally produced goods and services and to bring them together under a single brand or logo. This will help consumers know when they are directly supporting local producers and suppliers. Furthermore, the project will seek to establish an internet "shop" for Cirencester Local goods to enable consumers to enjoy the best of both worlds: local and unique but sold in a manner

Our future Cirencester

that is convenient to all households. The internet shop also has the potential to allow people from Cirencester and the surrounding area to join together in purchasing clubs to cut costs by buying together in bulk. We plan to accredit the brand – that means that in order to display the brand, providers must adhere to values we agree to support.

The project would benefit the community by helping to raise funds to deliver some of the projects in the Plan and also to support local businesses. It would be a “social enterprise which is:

A business with primarily social objectives whose surpluses are principally reinvested for that purpose in the business or in the community, rather than being driven by the need to maximise profit for shareholders and owners.⁷

This is not an entirely new and untried approach to supporting local businesses. The “First Stop Local Shop” project in the Forest of Dean offers a similar programme though the website that has been established is different from what is proposed here. Early indications are that the programme has largely been successful.

PROJECT NAME	
CIRENCESTER LOCAL	
PROJECT DESCRIPTION	
Create a product brand called “Cirencester Local” to be displayed on locally produced and sourced goods and services and provide support for local retailers and commercial services providers.	
BENEFITS	PARTNERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strengthen the local business community and encourage cooperative outcomes.• Help maintain the unique character of Cirencester’s retail and services providers.• Keep Cirencester competitive with other forms of retail and service provision and other towns/locations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chamber of Commerce• Blue Chip companies in the area• Town Council• District Council• Gloucestershire First• UK Trade and Industry• Member of Parliament• Civic Society

Safer Community

One of the features that make a town a nice place to live is how safe it feels to live there. Fear of crime and issues of personal safety are things that our consultations have highlighted. Though the statistics indicate that Cirencester is one of the safest places to live in the country, there are parts of

⁷ Winning the future....the way forward for the voice of South West social enterprise, RISE (Regional Infrastructure for Social Enterprise, 2006.

Our future Cirencester

the centre of town that have relatively high rates of crime⁸. What is more important, however, is how we feel.

Our consultations showed that older people feared crime, but that young children, teenagers and young people had concerns as well. Young people are more likely to be victims of crime. The Town Council will continue to work with its partners and groups that represent the interests of older people to understand their concerns about safety and isolation.

There is scope for the community to help itself with issues of crime and the perception of crime. The Cotswold Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CCDRP), part of the Local Strategic Partnership, has programmes in place to deal with crime and its perception. This project seeks to work with the CCDRP to put safer features into Cirencester. Gloucester County Council is keen to promote the introduction of Neighbourhood Partnerships that seek to involve the local community in issues that affect their neighbourhood, including crime and emergency planning.

PROJECT NAME	
SAFER COMMUNITY	
PROJECT DESCRIPTION	
Put into place measures that ensure the town feels safe for people of all ages, in all locations, and at all times of the day.	
BENEFITS	PARTNERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encourage an evening economy.• Encourage more people to walk and use cycles in town.• Make all parts of the town more attractive to children and older people.• Make the town generally a nicer place to live.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Town Council• Cotswold District Council• Gloucestershire Constabulary• Primary Care Trust• Police Authority• Fire and Rescue Service• Gloucestershire County Council Youth Service

Sustainable Transport

How we move through the town has a tremendous impact upon how we enjoy it. Our consultations showed that we feel tension between motorised traffic and people-powered modes like walking and cycling. Many of us would like to have “shared space” between cars, pedestrians and cyclists, not the dominance of one over another. Though we like the convenience of being able to come into town to shop or visit, we also want to have the opportunity to nip out on foot or to use our bicycles when we feel like it.

Cyclists comment that there are very few clearly marked cycle routes in town, and then, once they have negotiated the streets to get to the centre, there are very few bike racks.

⁸ MAIDeN, Indices of Multiple Deprivation.

Our future Cirencester

Pedestrians, in particular young children, comment that they do not always feel safe walking across streets and on pavements in Cirencester. Walking from places like Chesterton, Beeches and Stratton wards can sometimes be dangerous, particularly when crossing the ring road. Children feel frightened when they cross the roads or negotiate around parked cars.

As oil prices rise, we are finding that using our cars is costing us more. We also know about the carbon and polluting impacts of cars and we can see the evidence on some of our old buildings which are blackened and damaged.

Once again, we have a dilemma. We want the convenience of using our cars in town but many of us also want to be able to walk and cycle more freely and easily.

Parking charges and policies affect those of us who need to bring cars in the town. Current car parking charges are perceived to be high relative to other local authority areas and have recently become dearer. This is felt to have an impact on tourism and local businesses. Because most parking opportunities are time limited, people sometimes need to make choices between using the museum, having lunch in town or shopping. Current parking policies can discourage some shoppers and visitors from staying in the town centre for longer than three hours. Local people sometimes chose to shop elsewhere where parking is less costly. The current capacity is insufficient at peak times and is projected to get worse.

Cotswold District Council is responsible for enforcing parking, owns the majority of the car parks and sets the policies for those car parks.

Some of us want to get around independently, such as teenagers and others, but do not have access to a car. If those people cannot walk or cycle, they have few options available to them. There was a feeling in our consultations that the provision of public transport could be improved to make it more attractive to users.

The Sustainable Transport project seeks to work with statutory and private undertakers to better manage the way that cars, pedestrians and cyclists interact and move across Cirencester and the surrounding area. It also seeks to have a positive influence on the provision of public transportation.

PROJECT NAME	
SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT	
PROJECT DESCRIPTION	
Work with the Highways Authority, District Council and local transport providers to reduce the negative impacts of car traffic and constrained parking opportunities in Cirencester.	
BENEFITS	PARTNERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meet the threat to the town from car-based pollution and congestion.• Encourage a healthy lifestyle.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Town Council• Cotswold District Council• Gloucestershire County Council

Our future Cirencester

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make the town feel safer to vulnerable people including children.• Encourage more people to walk and use cycles in town.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cycling groups• Mobility groups
---	--

Sustainable Cirencester

Global warming, the availability of fuel and other resources are ever more topical issues that we face. Our consultations have shown that many people are concerned that we adopt greener practices as a town, and as individuals.

We have some disadvantages as a town located in a rural area because we must rely upon our private cars more than city dwellers that have more frequent public transport available to them. On the other hand, we have some real opportunities to exploit locally generated fuel sources, such as biofuels and micro-generation, and we have access to locally sourced firewood.

We also need to cut down on the amount of waste we produce and to build re-use and recycling into our daily patterns where it contributes to our using resources wisely. We need to make small changes like using fewer carrier bags when we shop.

The Regional Economic Strategy (RES) encourages development to be sustainable in the context of economic growth by promoting:

- Sustainable consumption
- Climate change and energy awareness
- Natural resource protection and environmental enhancement⁹

The Sustainable Cirencester project will seek to encourage all residents to make informed choices about how they use resources and to help them conserve and recycle more if they wish. If we learn to make changes now, we will be in a better position in the near future when fuel and other resources become scarcer and more expensive to obtain.

PROJECT NAME	
SUSTAINABLE CIRENCESTER	
PROJECT DESCRIPTION	
Develop measures as a town that uses resources wisely, reduces our carbon footprint, help to prepare for rising energy costs and share advice.	
BENEFITS	PARTNERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduce the risk of homes suffering from fuel poverty.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Severn Wye Energy Agency• Town Council

⁹ 2006-2007 version, 10ff, 30ff.

Our future Cirencester

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Good publicity for Cirencester.• Position ourselves for a low carbon economy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• District Council• Energy Suppliers
--	---

OUR FUTURE CIRENCESTER WILL BE A GOOD PLACE TO GROW UP

Our children are our future Cirencester. Our consultations have shown that young people want more from their town, and that they do not always feel that their needs are taken into consideration when important decisions are made about new services.

The one thing that young people mentioned again and again was that there was not enough for them to do outside school hours. An urban setting offers a wealth of activities to young people, but in a medium-sized market town like Cirencester, there is less choice.

And, as the young people said themselves, when kids get bored, they are more likely to make mischief.

This theme deals specifically with the issues surrounding young people, and seeks to make Cirencester a good place in which to grow up. The objective is to let children and young people have fun before they turn into adults and have less time to play. If they do, they are more likely to become healthy and active adults who have a positive feeling about their town.

In this part of the Community Plan, we must promote five outcomes for children in all our projects¹⁰:

- Be healthy
- Stay safe
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic well-being

Schools at the Heart of the Community

We are very fortunate to have a wide range of excellent and high performing schools and colleges in town. This is one of the reasons why families choose to live here.

Schools located at the heart of the community are well placed to take up the challenge of making Every Child Matters, a key plank of the Government's agenda, a reality for children, young people and communities.

The strategy seeks to offer:

- A varied range of activities including study support, sport and music clubs, combined with childcare in primary schools
- Parenting and family support
- Swift and easy access to targeted and specialist services
- Community access to facilities including adult and family learning, ICT and sports grounds

Schools are working closely with parents, children and others to shape these activities around the needs of their community and may choose to provide extra services in response to demand. The

¹⁰ Gloucestershire Children and Young People's Plan, 2006-2009

Our future Cirencester

school cluster around Cirencester extends to outlying villages that feed into Deer Park and Kingshill and is the second largest cluster in Gloucestershire.

The Cotswold Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership have noted that there is only limited provision of services and facilities available for local young people, but when they are provided, they are well-used. There has been difficulty in recruiting adults to supervise young people's activities, lack of transport between activities, and difficulty of accessing information on activities which are available.¹¹

The best way of overcoming these gaps is to take a strategic view of how provision is made. The Extended Services Cluster Partnership will be perfectly positioned to fulfill this role.

The purpose of the project is to put this national agenda into practice locally. It seeks to encourage schools to work with other stakeholders to provide a pool of activities and support for young people and their families, and to work together to fill gaps in provision.

PROJECT NAME	
SCHOOLS AT THE HEART OF THE COMMUNITY	
PROJECT DESCRIPTION	
Engender stronger joint working between schools, Town and District and County Councils, the private sector and the Community to provide more and better activities and programmes for young people and their families and to make these activities more accessible and inclusive. To improve communication about what is available.	
BENEFITS	PARTNERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Better knowledge of availability of activities and programmes.• Schools recognised as a focal point for the Community.• More effective use of resources and buildings.• Better coordination of provision.• Joint/shared learning about provision of activities and programmes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Town Council• District Council• County Council, SHAPE Coordinator (Extended Services)• Youth Service• Active Gloucestershire• Voluntary Sector• Private Sector• PCT (Primary Care Trust)• Churn Project

Sport and Physical Activity

Young people, particularly teenagers at Deer Park and Kingshill schools, told us during our consultation that they wanted more opportunities for sport and fitness outside school hours.

Respondents said that they wanted more opportunities to play five a side, or to join a Parkour free running club. They wanted to be able to use a gym or go dancing.

¹¹ Cotswold Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy 2005-2008.

Our future Cirencester

Though there is a new leisure centre in Cirencester, it is not always perceived to be a mainstream facility for young people: public swimming and gym times are limited. The Cirencester Open Air Swimming Pool is well used but it is not open all year round. The schools offer some facilities, but they are not always open. There is a new skate park at Kingshill, but it is not ideal. Some of the local churches and other groups run popular and successful programmes, but they are often oversubscribed and so cannot fully meet demand.

Parents and carers of children with special needs have commented that there is no specific provision for children with disabilities in Cirencester, and when these children use the equipment and opportunities generally available, they are not always suitable. This indicates that more work needs to be done to ensure that all activities and opportunities are inclusive of all groups and their needs.

This project seeks to broaden opportunities for young people to participate in organised sport clubs and activities. It will not try to re-invent the wheel or to compete with provision that is already there – it seeks to improve on what is already in place and to create new opportunities where they are needed.

PROJECT NAME	
SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY	
PROJECT DESCRIPTION	
Create opportunities for sport, fitness and activities designed with young people in mind.	
BENEFITS	PARTNERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduce obesity levels.• Promote healthy lifestyle.• Increase self-confidence and feels good.• Reduce levels of anti-social behaviour.• Break down barriers between schools to help children feel part of a single community.• Provide opportunities to increase inclusion of all children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cirencester Extended Services cluster partnership• Active Gloucestershire• CSPAN (Cotswold Community Sport and Physical Activity Network)

Fun Places

Young people said they wanted more places to go outside school where they could play, meet and socialise. Sometimes parents and adults can come along too!

There are only four play areas in Cirencester: at the Abbey Grounds, St Michael's Park, Stratton and Beeches. Most of them do not provide for the needs of all children or all abilities. Abbey Grounds play area is shortly to be upgraded and modernised. Provision outside the central area is more limited.

There is no permanent play provision for Chesterton, though almost 900 children under the age of 14 live there. There are also around 900 children in Beeches who have limited play equipment within walking distance of their homes.

Our future Cirencester

There is another element to consider in this gap in provision. Not only is there not enough play space available, what is provided is not necessarily appropriate for all age groups. Sometimes, the equipment provided for young children is taken over by teenagers. When this happens, the young children often feel intimidated and leave.

Children of all ages, from Primary to secondary schools, all said that they wanted more, and more appropriate, fun places.

Primary aged children said they wanted more play equipment like monkey bars, swings, slides and even a zoo! Older children from Kingshill and Deerpark said they wanted a skateboard park, graffiti wall, basketball court, cricket, paint balling, a trim trail and bowling.

Teenagers also said they wanted clean and safe places to meet one another. There are some well attended youth activities such as the internet cafe that has now been running successfully for a few years and other activities, but our respondents wanted more.

If teenagers don't have any attractive, safe and interesting places to go, they will be forced to congregate on streets, in parks, or in shops. That is not satisfactory for them, and can be unsatisfactory for others as well.

Teenagers also wanted more activities such as concerts, events and discos available to them. A mother of a teenager who grew up in Cirencester reminisced that when she was young, she used to go swimming in the old leisure centre pool all summer long or go roller skating. There are few opportunities left for young people, and sometimes, they are too expensive to be affordable for them.

Teenagers are happy to organise events for themselves – they know better than anybody what would be attractive. But they have to be given some help by adults and by organisations. They need venues and locations, help in fundraising, and sometimes, permission to undertake specific activities.

This project seeks to have all stakeholders, including children, work together to provide a full range of fun places that are suited to the needs of all children.

PROJECT NAME	
FUN PLACES	
PROJECT DESCRIPTION	
Create places in Cirencester that are fun for children of all ages.	
BENEFITS	PARTNERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase self-confidence and feels good.• Reduce levels of anti-social behaviour.• Break down barriers between schools to help children feel part of a single community.• Provide opportunities to increase inclusion of all children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cirencester Extended Services cluster partnership• Privately owned venues

Safe Routes to School

Sustainability is a key objective of this plan. Avoiding unnecessary road journeys will avoid pollution and energy consumption, and will also promote healthy living if people choose to walk and cycle instead of driving their cars.

Using our cars less will mean that many of us will need to change our behaviour. If a person doesn't drive yet, it is best to learn that lesson before they start.

The education authority in Gloucestershire encourages all children to walk or cycle to school and to avoid the use of cars. Most children in Cirencester live within walking distance of their schools, but that does not necessarily mean that they live within a safe walking distance.

In order to encourage children and families to choose their feet rather than their cars, they must have safe routes to school. This must also include children with disabilities.

Gloucestershire County Council promotes the preparation of School Travel Plans for all schools. A Travel Plan is a document that looks at current driving choices and recommends means to improve the attractiveness of avoiding the use of cars in the journeys to and from schools.

This project seeks to review existing travel plan for all of Cirencester's schools and to bring them up to date. Importantly, it seeks to have all the travel plans to be complementary and consistent so that there is a single approach to school travel planning across Cirencester. If more activities become available, it will be even more important that children can travel to and from them safely.

PROJECT NAME	
SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL	
PROJECT DESCRIPTION	
Ensure that children have safe routes to school and around their neighbourhoods to enable them to be mobile and independent.	
BENEFITS	PARTNERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduce car usage, and thus car-related pollution and congestion and energy usage.• Reduce obesity and promote healthy lifestyle.• Help children and parents learn about travel behaviour and choices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cirencester Extended Services cluster partnership• Highways Authority• Sustrans

Cirencester Youth Town Council

One way of providing a better range of activities for young people is to encourage them to become more involved in their communities as volunteers. This does not mean that they should all be asked to do activities that feel like community service, where they don't directly benefit, though in some cases, this might be very satisfying and should form part of the options.

Our future Cirencester

What it means is that young people should begin to learn to help themselves, and help others in the process.

Young people who learn how to organise themselves and activities will have a head start when they become adult and need to be able to shape events around them.

This project seeks to develop a group of young people from Cirencester to form a Youth Town Council to advise the extended services cluster and the Town Council on what needs to be provided for young people. They will also be able to work together to identify and provide activities. The programme should enable young participants to be active and effective citizens who can help make Cirencester better by working in the community to help all sectors, including older people.

PROJECT NAME	
CIRENCESTER YOUTH TOWN COUNCIL	
PROJECT DESCRIPTION	
Create opportunities to allow children and young people to become involved in their community and to help shape its future, building on the existing network of School Councils.	
BENEFITS	PARTNERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Service provision is designed and provided by the users.• Young people learn self-sufficiency and civic skills.• Encourage community cohesion.• Provide a sense of empowerment in the participants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Town Council• District Council• Cirencester Extended Services cluster partnership

Cirencester Open Air Swimming Pool

The Cirencester Open Air Swimming Pool provides one of the few opportunities for young people to undertake unstructured activities in Cirencester in the summer.

It is the second oldest Lido in the Country and is much loved. However, it is regularly in need of funding to maintain it in an acceptable condition so that it can remain open.

This project will work with the Open Air Swimming Pool to try to obtain funding for improvements.

PROJECT NAME
CIRENCESTER OPEN AIR SWIMMING POOL
PROJECT DESCRIPTION
Seek funding to upgrade and restore the Cirencester Open Air Swimming Pool so that it

can continue to provide a recreational opportunity.	
BENEFITS	PARTNERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduce obesity and promote a healthy lifestyle.• Provide an informal and affordable activity for young people.• Restoration of the second oldest Lido in the country.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cirencester Open Air Swimming Pool• Town Council

OUR FUTURE CIRENCESTER WILL BE AN ATTRACTIVE TOWN TO LIVE IN, VISIT, AND WHERE WE CAN ENJOY VIBRANT CULTURE

Cirencester has a lot to offer on the cultural front: local bands and baroque music; fine art and cutting edge crafts; medieval and Roman architecture and historical features; wonderful parks and a range of independent shops located in mews developments. A town with vibrant culture is a pleasure to live in and to visit.

Tourism is a growth sector of the South West Region's economy. It accounts for around 10% of GDP and employs around 30,000 people.¹² Tourism is seen as a key employment sector in Gloucestershire and is likely to grow.¹³ It makes sense, therefore, that the Community Plan seeks to help Cirencester make the most of this opportunity. And by making Cirencester more attractive to tourists, it will also become better for residents.

This theme in the community plan seeks to make the most of what we have got for residents and visitors.

Heritage Strategy

After our people, our heritage is probably our biggest asset. Cirencester is blessed with many markers of its long and interesting history. Unlike many towns in the UK, there are a great number of visible features and architecture that have survived many centuries. We have roman structures in the amphitheatre and the old town walls; mediaeval buildings, markers, road patterns, Georgian and Victorian architecture, and buildings provided by a range of benefactors.

By and large, we also have a good understanding of these historical artefacts. We are lucky to have the world class Corinium Museum in our town centre, and an active Civic Society that has helped put into place special way-marked walks. Further walks are planned that will have a range of innovative interpretive methods to help us understand our heritage better. Cotswold District Council has just published Conservation Area Management Plans for Cirencester for consultation.

¹² Towards 2015: Shaping Tomorrow's Tourism, South West England, South West Tourism and South West Regional Development Agency, 2005.

¹³ The Gloucestershire Economic Strategy 2003-2014, Gloucestershire First.

Our future Cirencester

But our consultations have shown that this is not enough. Respondents have made it clear that understanding and engaging with their heritage is important to them. People know that heritage features are all around them, but they are not sure that they understand or appreciate what they see. They comment that the Roman history is under the town but that there is nothing for them to look at but the town walls. The town's rich history as the centre of the national wool trade is difficult for the visitor to appreciate. Some major historical events involving the Tudors and the Civil War took place in Cirencester, but residents and visitors alike have difficulty understanding how or why.

Cirencester's heritage is what makes it unique. If Cirencester is to market itself as a tourist destination, a place to visit and enjoy, and a place to choose as a home or as a location for business, we need to make the most of what we have.

This project seeks to review Cirencester's historical legacy and develop a strategy that will help us make the most of the opportunities that it gives us. Heritage can be used to support tourism, local businesses, education, cultural activities, and "livability". As one theme group participant put it, "The Corinium Museum gives us the theory, this project will let us do the field work". The outputs from the strategy will seek to help residents and visitors understand and participate in Cirencester's heritage as they move through the town, giving them a spatial understanding of heritage.

The project seeks to go beyond physical heritage and will also cover oral history. Cirencester's community has been very stable and the town is full of people who have lived here all their lives. Not only do they have an important story to tell future generations, they have a beautiful way of telling it. As global media has a growing influence over our language, this project will help preserve the local accent for a time when fewer and fewer people use it. The oral history project will augment the museum's holdings to provide a social/anthropological resource. It will consider the "living history" of Cirencester.

Our consultations showed that we would enjoy more public art in the town centre. Young children showed a very strong preference for fountains to play and splash about in. Fountains that shoot streams of water from the ground really caught their imaginations and many children told of holidays in other towns and countries where they played in water. Water moves, changes and reflects. Used effectively, it can make a space pleasurable and memorable.

We also need to make the most of our outstanding parks and gardens such as Abby Grounds, St. Michael's Park and other land in public ownership.

There are a few barren spaces in town that have heavy pedestrian movements but where there is little that is visually stimulating or emotionally engaging such as Brewery Court and the Market Place. The new Brewery Arts can have a role in working with the Town Council and the community in identifying appropriate public art and fountains to make Cirencester an attractive town to live in and visit. There is no obvious funding source for this, apart for developer contributions, and it may be necessary to raise funds to realise this project, perhaps through a trust.

Signage and way-marking in the town centre is haphazard and inconsistent. Visitors and some residents are not aware of the wealth of historical and public features around them. Signs that show how to move around the town for motorists, cyclists and pedestrians are also not always clear or

Our future Cirencester

attractive. Some signs remain after their original purpose has ceased and so are redundant, contributing to a cluttered environment. Planning control of advertising in the town centre is not strong and it may be desirable to have advertising and sign policy that reflects Cirencester's unique character.

Public seating and other urban infrastructure in the public realm is also not always attractive or consistently designed. The Supplementary Planning Document sets out standards, but more work needs to be done to understand how overall provision should be made.

Many towns have been transformed by tree and flower planting. Other towns in the area are active participants in towns in bloom competitions. Cirencester has few attractive trees or plants in the town centre and perhaps this should also be looked at as an area for improvement.

PROJECT NAME	
HERITAGE STRATEGY	
PROJECT DESCRIPTION	
Undertake a review of all aspects of Cirencester's heritage and existing strategic documents and to develop a strategy and action plan to enable better interpretation and participation by all sectors of the local population and visitors to Cirencester.	
BENEFITS	PARTNERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a blueprint of how to maximise our heritage in terms of participation, protection and enhancement, promotion, enjoyment and understanding. • Help local people have a better spatial understanding of their local heritage. • Add social/anthropological "living history" to our understanding of Cirencester and preserve our more recent history for future generations. • Provide assistance for people of more limited mobility. • Improve the attractiveness and functionality of current public infrastructure provision. • Reduce street clutter and improve the overall appearance of the town. • Improve navigation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cirencester Town Council • Civic Society • Cirencester Archaeological and Historical Society • Bingham Library Trust • Corinium Museum • Action Cirencester • Cotswold District Council • Gloucestershire County Council • English Heritage • English Historic Towns Forum • Centre for Architecture and the Built Environment • Royal patrons • Bathurst Estate

Amphitheatre

Cirencester's roman amphitheatre is one of the largest roman structures in the UK. The site encompasses 18 Centuries of history. For the Romans of Cirencester, it was the local entertainment hot spot, an out of centre retail venue, and a place to enjoy "wine, women and song". Around 8,000 people could be seated within it – almost the entire town's population. The route to the amphitheatre was the main road out of town – all the best graves were located on this route. On their way to the amphitheatre, people would stop and pay a visit to the family tomb and it was a mark of social status to be on this route in one's afterlife.¹⁴

It has remained important in later centuries as a quarry and recreation area.

Now, the main use of the amphitheatre is for passive recreation and dog walking. It is difficult to find and is cut off from the main town by the ring road. There are practically no places for visitors to park. The former route into the site from Lewis Lane and Querns Lane has been blocked by later building and the ring road. There is virtually no interpretation on the site because of vandalism.

Our consultations show that we think of this as our greatest wasted resource.

This project seeks to bring the amphitheatre back into use as a place to visit and enjoy, and also as a venue for events.

To make this happen, much work will need to be done: better signage will be required around and on the site, issue of severance must be overcome, noise from the ring road and from events must be managed, and the site needs to be cleaned up and improved.

PROJECT NAME	
AMPHITHEATRE	
PROJECT DESCRIPTION	
Introduce new access and acoustic infrastructure to the site to improve public access to/from the town centre, and enable the Amphitheatre to be used again for regular public events.	
BENEFITS	PARTNERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attract visitors to Cirencester.• Make the most of a unique asset.• Add to the cultural diversity of the town by creating a new venue.• Improve pedestrian permeability by overcoming a major barrier between the town centre and Chesterton.• Assist English Heritage to make more of this "problem" site.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Town Council• District Council• County Council• Cirencester Hospital• English Heritage• Bathurst Estate• Civic Society

¹⁴ English Heritage

Cirencester Festival

Many towns have recently made a name for themselves nationally and internationally by hosting regular themed festivals. Cheltenham buzzes during its music festivals, Haye on Wye hosts widely publicised book festivals, Ludlow specialises in outstanding food. These towns use their festivals as effective marketing tools to draw trade for local businesses and to create their public image. Public festivals are also beneficial to local people and help them mix with one another and have a good time.

We host a number of events in Cirencester: early music, the Advent Festival and arts to name only a few. We also have regular concerts, plays, and public events. But none of these are coordinated with each other across the town, or throughout the year. By and large, there is no regional or national marketing in place to help increase participation.

Cirencester-wide festivals have been held in the past. They have been largely successful but also a great deal of work for the volunteer organisers. They have died out as a practice, and perhaps it is because of the difficulty in putting together a successful event in people's spare time and the cost of getting things started.

This project seeks to revive and invigorate the practice of hosting regular themed festivals in Cirencester. In addition, it seeks to use festivals to help "brand" Cirencester to attract visitors as another plank in an overall marketing strategy. Most importantly, it seeks to help make Cirencester a more pleasant place to visit, to live and grow up.

PROJECT NAME	
CIRENCESTER FESTIVAL	
PROJECT DESCRIPTION	
Hold a regular themed festival in Cirencester, bringing together existing events and activities in a coordinated manner.	
BENEFITS	PARTNERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support the local economy by attracting visitors to Cirencester.• Help raise the profile of Cirencester regionally and nationally.• Provide activities for local people.• Promote community cohesion.• Help enforce the Parish Church's position	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Town Council• District Council• Royal Agricultural College• Wilts and Glocs Standard• Chamber of Commerce• Radio Gloucestershire• Funders

<p>as central to the town.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cirencester Early Music Festival • Bathurst Estate • Private Venues • Churches • Arts Council • Brewery Arts
--------------------------------	---

Market Place

The Market Place is the heart of Cirencester. It is the natural focal point for the town and the place where markets and civic events are staged. Cirencester is lucky to have a charter market and a farmers market located in this space. The Market Place is also the setting for the Parish Church, our “jewel in the crown” which is currently undergoing a multi-million pound refurbishment.

There have been discussions and plans within the local community for many years, involving all tiers of local government, with the aim of refurbishing the market place by improving its attractiveness as a setting for the Church and the markets, and as the centre of the town. These proposals have invariably also considered issues of traffic management, urban design, and public space. Discussions have been taking place since the 1970s but to date, nothing has been achieved.

The current refurbishment of the Parish Church is bringing the issue to the fore once again. The Town Council has indicated that it will act as the lead authority in considering improvements to the market place.

PROJECT NAME	
MARKET PLACE	
PROJECT DESCRIPTION	
<p>Improve paving, urban environment, seating, and pedestrian access to the Market Place by introducing a pedestrianisation or shared space scheme with traffic calming and traffic management.</p>	
BENEFITS	PARTNERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Market Place is the tradition centre of the town and it is in need of improvement. • Provide a more attractive setting for the newly refurbished Parish Church . • The Charter and Farmers markets will have a more attractive and suitable space to enable them to improve and expand. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Council • Parish Church • District Council • Highways Authority

Our future Cirencester

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the functionality of the Market Place. • Residents and visitors will benefit from improved pedestrian safety. 	
--	--

City Bank

City Bank is an almost forgotten corner of Central Cirencester that offers a tranquil and informal recreational opportunity. It has many interesting features such as remnants of the Roman wall, the River Churn and many lovely views.

Much of City Bank is overgrown and poorly managed and there are problems of litter and vandalism. Key routes through the site serving Cirencester Infants and Junior Schools and the Beeches appear unsafe and threatening.

The land is in multiple ownerships and this makes management difficult. To date, the site has not been high on anybody's list of priorities.

Cotswold District Council has produced a management plan to restore City Bank in the Supplementary Planning Document.

This project supports the management plan and its implementation.

PROJECT NAME	
CITY BANK	
PROJECT DESCRIPTION	
Improve the functionality, amenity, safety, attractiveness, archaeology, environment and biodiversity of City Bank.	
BENEFITS	PARTNERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a quite breathing space in Cirencester with a different character and experience of other local parks. • Provide better interpretation of the Roman Wall. • Make more of an under-used resource. • Enhance management and maintenance. • Improve public safety. • Enhance permeability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Council • District Council • County Council • Other landowners

OUR FUTURE CIRENCESTER WILL BE A BETTER PLACE TO DO BUSINESS

Town Centre Management

One of the strongest messages we received during our consultation came from local business people. They wanted the town centre to be actively managed to provide a supportive environment for them to trade in.

The Cirencester Chamber of Commerce is very active but it is run by volunteers whose primary focus must be their own businesses. The Chamber has worked hard to provide Cirencester with events such as the Advent Market at Christmas, a website for local businesses and a range of networking events and opportunities.

But the Chamber would like support, for instance in organising civic events, which are not directly beneficial to them, tourism and the marketing of the town generally, dealing with local government service providers and dealing with litter and the public realm.

It may be desirable and possible for Cirencester to become a Business Improvement District which is a means of marshalling local resources to tap into wider economic development opportunities. A considerable amount of work will need to be done to consider the viability of this option.

There is a great deal of support for the retail sector available from organisations such as the Retail Skills Network, UK Trade and Industry, Gloucestershire First, Parklife, Business Link and others. To date, they have not been brought into Cirencester in any focussed and coordinated manner.

This project seeks to offer that support. Other towns have benefitted hugely by employing a town centre manager who can serve local needs, but also can market the town nationally and internationally, implement environmental improvements, and fight the corner of local businesses in the complex world of economic development priorities.

PROJECT NAME
TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT

PROJECT DESCRIPTION	
Introduce a formal mechanism for managing the town centre and Love Lane industrial estate.	
BENEFITS	PARTNERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• TC management can help make more local businesses thrive.• Community benefits will flow from thriving local businesses.• Make more of the geographical location of Cirencester which is a point of easy access to many parts of the Country.• Greater cohesion between local businesses.• Will help keep Cirencester retail sector competitive against competing towns, out of town centres, and the internet.• Can help coordinate events that are currently managed by volunteers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Town Council• Business Community• Chamber of Commerce• Gloucestershire First• Destination Management Organisation• Business Link• Parklife

Our future Cirencester

Safe Routes to Schools		Grey	Grey		Grey	Grey	Grey	Black			Grey				
Cirencester Youth Council					Grey				Black				Grey		
Cirencester Open Air Swimming Pool					Grey	Grey	Grey			Black	Grey				
Heritage Strategy	Grey	Grey	Grey					Grey		Grey	Black	Grey		Grey	
Amphi-theatre		Grey									Grey	Black	Grey		Grey
Cirencester Festival	Grey				Grey				Grey			Grey	Black		
Market Place		Grey												Black	
City Bank		Grey										Grey			Black
Town Centre Management	Grey		Grey									Grey			Black

WHERE WE GO FROM HERE...

Cirencester Town Council recognises the importance of working together in order to be able to deliver the projects within the Community Plan and acknowledges the work of the MCTI Steering Group partnership which has enabled us to get to this vital stage.

It takes seriously its role as the lead authority for the 'people and place' of Cirencester and is currently working towards Quality Status, welcoming the extension of the power of well being to the Town/Parish sector enabling direct delivery of social, economic and environmental initiatives.

Everything within this Plan should be achievable over time and the Town Council is in the process of developing a framework which will serve to oversee, and provide, an effective foundation for working in partnership towards delivering the projects within the Action Plan.

REFERENCES AND SOURCES

Accessibility Strategy April 2003 – 2006, Gloucestershire County Council

Business Plan Part 1: The Cotswolds (draft) 2005, Cotswolds and Forest Of Dean Destination Management Organisation

Carbon Trust Website

Cirencester Town Centre Traffic and Movement Study, Hyder Consulting, June 2007

Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan, Cotswolds AONB Partnership

Cotswold Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy 2005 – 2008, Cotswold District Council

Cotswold Community Strategy 2004, Cotswold District Council

Cotswold District Local Plan 2001 – 2011 (adopted April 2006), Cotswold District Council

Community Strategy Action Plan 2006 – 2007, Cotswold Local Strategic Partnership

Delivery Framework 2006 – 2009 Regional Economic Strategy for South West England, South West Regional Development Agency

Draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West 2006 – 2026, South West Regional Assembly

Every Child Matters Gloucestershire Strategic Partnership Programme 2006-2009

First stop local shop, Forest of Dean and Gloucestershire Rural Renaissance

Gloucestershire's Children and Young People's Plan, 2006-2009, Gloucestershire County Council

Gloucestershire Economic Strategy 2003 – 2014, Gloucestershire First

Health Improvement Programme for Gloucestershire, 2001 – 2004, Gloucestershire NHS

Market Place – the annual review of Gloucestershire Market Towns Forum 2005-2006, GMTF

Natural Partners: arts in the protected landscape, Arts Council England

Never a dull moment: Cheltenham's Cultural Strategy 2002 – 2006, Cheltenham Borough Council

Our agenda for the arts in the south west 2006-2008, Arts Council England

Our Future, Our Choice: Cheltenham's Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-2011, Cheltenham Strategic Partnership

Regional Economic Strategy for South West England 2006 – 2015, South West Regional Development Agency

Regional Renewable Energy Strategy for the South West of England 2003 – 2010, no author

Rural Economic Strategy for Gloucestershire 2007-2015 (Revised 2006), Gloucestershire First

Rural White Paper

State of the District 2006, Cotswold District Council

Strategic Framework 2008/9 – 2010/11 (Draft), Gloucestershire NHS Primary Care Trust

Strategy for 14-19 Learning 2003 – 2004, Gloucestershire LEA and LSC Gloucestershire

Strategy for Sustainable Farming and Food, Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, 2002

The Smaller Towns Report: Delivering retail-led renaissance in towns and smaller cities: 2004, BCSC

Towards 2015: Shaping tomorrow's Tourism, South West England, 2005

"Understanding market towns", Hart, Trevor and Neil Powe, Town and Country Planning, December 2007, 451-455.

What's GOSW Doing? 2006-2007, Government Office for the South West

Winning the future...the way forward for the voice of South West social enterprise, rise (the voice for South West social enterprise/Regional Infrastructure for Social Enterprise), 2006