

Our Future Cirencester...

A Community Plan

WHAT CIRENCESTER WANTS...

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

With this document, we begin to tie together the loose ends that have been left hanging as these initiatives have progressed. This project, called “Our Future Cirencester” will result in the preparation of a Community Plan for Cirencester. It is based upon information and opinions gathered in 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 part.

The aim is 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 they simply become dormitory settlements where 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 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**
- **a good place to grow up**
- **an attractive and vibrant town to live in and visit**
- **a better place to do business**

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

HOW DID WE GET HERE?

Our current project can be traced back to debates that began in around 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 outlines the major projects that form part of this process.

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 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 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.

Our future Cirencester

2006 - 2008	Towards a Vision for Cirencester	Cotswold District Council brings 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 Agency (part of the Regional Development Agency) for a 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.
2008	Cirencester Conservation Area management plans	The District Council publishes further planning policies that deal specifically with conservation areas and listed buildings.
2008	Community Strategy: Our Future Cirencester	The Town Council uses the MCTA grant to produce a Community Plan. The aim of 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 Strategy: Implementation Phase	The Community Plan will be implemented.

The largest input 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 Vision project focussed on 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 developer contributions to improve the public realm in the town centre. The Town Council is a partner in these activities and will provide support where appropriate.

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

THEMES AND ACTION PLANNING

The 2007 Vision consultation exercise provides 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.

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Four Theme Groups have been established during the preparation of the Community Plan to consider the draft themes and to prepare an action plan for each.

An Action Plan is a brief document that summarises each project, assigns tasks, their priorities and a timetable for the work. It identifies partners to take the tasks forward, resource requirements and possible funding sources.

The Community Plan will form a strategy for the Town Council to use as the basis of 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.

THEME GROUPS

Each theme and action plan has been developed through the work of groups of local experts and interested people who have been invited to offer advice on the Community Plan. Theme Groups are being held during the weeks beginning 3 March, 17 March and 31 March.

The first meeting of each group reviewed the “long list” of projects which is set out in the following section. Participants advised which projects should be included in the Community Plan, what the objectives of individual projects should be and will considered how a successful outcome might be measured.

The second meeting will amplify the work of the first meeting and will give advice on how individual projects might be run.

A chapter of the community plan will be produced on the basis of the work from the first two meetings of each group. It will be discussed in the third and final meeting.

THE “LONG LIST” OF PROJECTS

A number of projects have been identified under each theme. Once consultation has been completed, this list is likely to be shorter and will be reviewed and modified as necessary.

1. Our future Cirencester will be a sustainable Market Town

CIRENCESTER LOCAL

To 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 service providers.

SAFER COMMUNITY

To 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.

BEFRIENDING SCHEME

To encourage local people, particularly the young, to volunteer in the Cotswold District Council Befriending Scheme in order to build inter-generational understanding and respect. Young people will be encouraged to participate by being offered “volunteer credits” or a “time bank” as an incentive.

SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

Work with the Highways Authority, District Council and local transport providers to reduce the negative impacts of car traffic in Cirencester.

SUSTAINABLE CIRENCESTER

To develop measures as a town that reduce our carbon footprint and help us prepare for rising energy costs.

2. Our Future Cirencester will be a good place to grow up

SCHOOLS AT THE HEART OF THE COMMUNITY

To engender stronger joint working between schools, Town and District 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

To create opportunities for sport and fitness designed with young people in mind.

FUN PLACES

To create places in Cirencester that is fun for children of all ages.

SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

To ensure that children have safe routes to school and around their neighbourhoods to enable them to be mobile and independent.

YOUNG VOLUNTEERS

To create opportunities to allow children and young people to become involved in their community and to help shape its future.

CIRENCESTER LIDO

To seek funding to upgrade and restore the Cirencester Lido so that it can continue to provide a recreational opportunity.

3. Our Future Cirencester will be an attractive and vibrant town to live in and visit

TOWN HERITAGE STRATEGY

To 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

To introduce new access and acoustic infrastructure to the site to improve public access and enable the Amphitheatre to be used again for regular public events.

CIRENCESTER FESTIVAL

To hold regular themed festivals in Cirencester, bringing together existing events and activities in a coordinated manner.

MARKET PLACE

To 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.

FOUNTAINS AND PUBLIC ART

To create more fountains and public art in the town centre.

SIGNAGE

To encourage clearer and more coherent signage in and around Cirencester.

PUBLIC SEATING

To introduce comfortable and attractive public seating where it is needed and desired by residents and visitors.

CITY BANK

To improve the functionality, amenity, safety, attractiveness, archaeology, environment and biodiversity of City Bank.

TREE PLANTING

To plant trees and other plants in the town centre and strategic out of town centre locations.

4. 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, probably by creating a new Town Centre Manager role.