



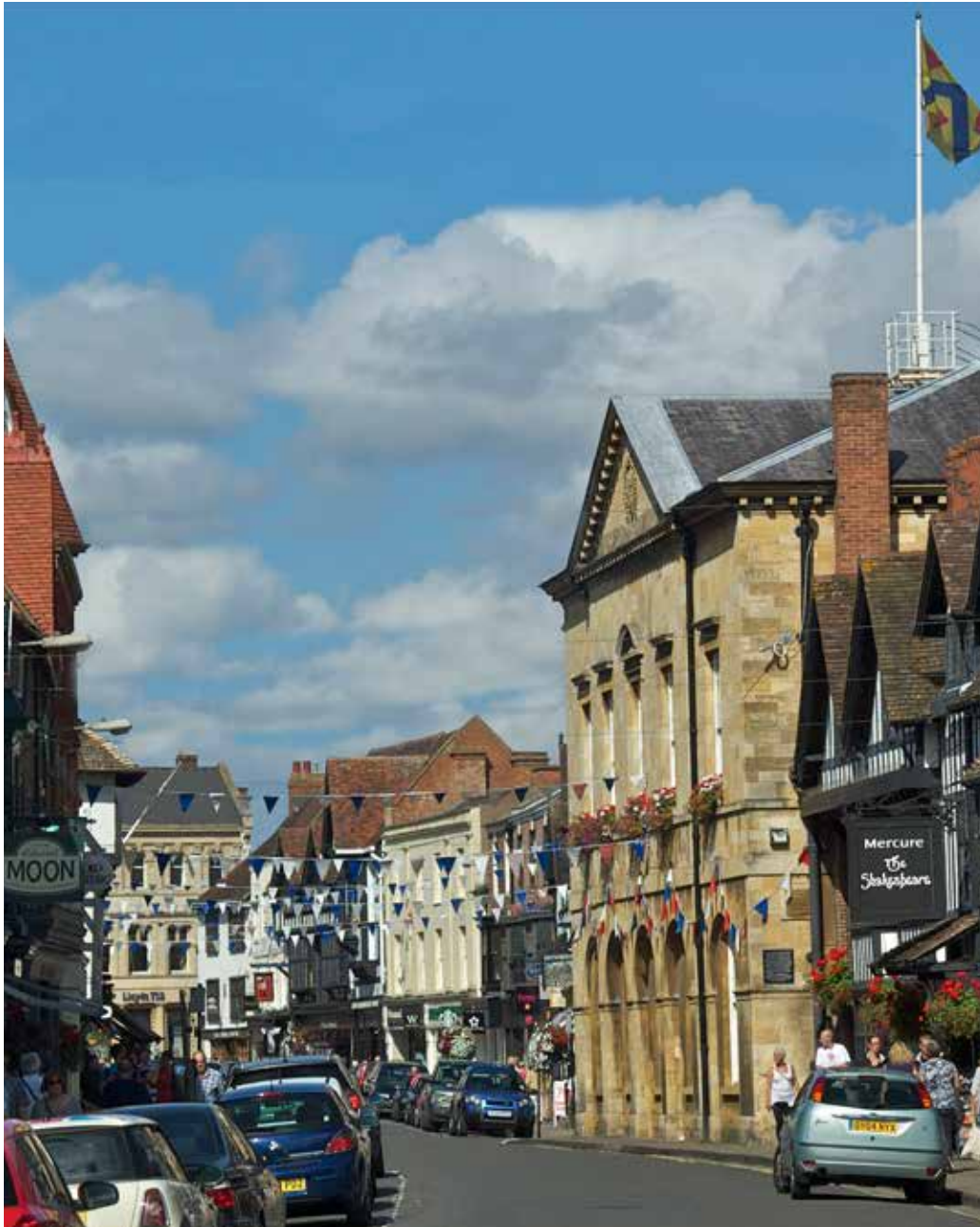
BRIDGING the GAP

Stratford-upon-Avon

Newsletter from Stratford-upon-Avon TOWN COUNCIL

ISSUE 23

A Vision for Stratford-upon-Avon



The Stratford-upon-Avon Neighbourhood Plan will be a blueprint for the future of the town, guiding planning strategy in the area for the next twenty years. It has been formed by research, evidence based study, professional consultation, and community discussion and feedback.

Whilst we cannot be certain about what pressures and changes Stratford will be faced with over the coming years, we can be confident that there will be housing growth, part of an irreversible national trend, and that the new housing will bring demand for jobs, schools and better transport links; all changes that will impact on the town.

Up until now, local planning issues have been determined by the District Council's Core Strategy – its guide to development in the district over future years; but this new level of Neighbourhood Planning gives more decision-making powers to local people; once formally adopted, the District Council must make the document part of its development plan.

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TOWN HALL

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Whilst the Neighbourhood Plan cannot dispute the District Council's Core Strategy and National Planning Policy on matters such as the scale of growth, it can dictate important issues; it can set out clearly where new homes, shops and offices are to be built, how buildings should be designed, and which areas it wants protecting or enhancing.

Community consultations identified a major concern of its residents: that whilst growth is inevitable, the essence of Stratford - an attractive market town with a rich heritage - should be retained. Having a Neighbourhood Plan designed by the residents - people who know and care about the town - means that growth and change can be more sympathetically accommodated. It will be a plan that sees Stratford's unique beauty and world-famous legacy continue to shine, as it meets the demands of modern living.

It's a challenge, but it's a challenge that with responsible planning and careful decisions will make Stratford-upon-Avon a place that we continue to love living in and working in; decisions that future generations will be proud we made. This sustainable development forms the basis of the Plan.

The main strategies for planned change are as follows...



1. Dealing with population growth: Housing and Employment

HOUSING:

We cannot change Stratford District Council's allocation of around 2,800 new houses needed for the area, but we can influence where they will be built and their density, and ensure that the right mix of housing is built with an emphasis on quality and excellence in design.

Where: We propose that maximum use of regenerated brown field sites, and the reuse of empty homes and buildings should have planning priority for new housing (H4, BE14, BE15, BE16) - this involves relocation of some businesses to a new Business Park to free up existing industrial and canal side areas. All new housing should be as far from the rural fringe as possible with good foot and cycle access to the town centre.

Mix: The first priority is to build the necessary mix of housing where there is already a network of services. Students, workers and young families need easy access to transport and schools (policies H1, H3 and section 12). Older residents need adaptable housing and a small number of bungalows (policies H8, BE6 and CLW3). Living accommodation in Stratford town centre itself would be encouraged, including the conversion of first floor premises (TC7).

Design: Stratford is unique and has a strong sense of identity, therefore the Plan includes policies for protecting the local character of new buildings (BE2 and H5), and promoting high standards of design (BE1 and BE3), and supports the formation of a Design Review Panel to check large-scale developments or particularly sensitive small-scale development (BE4). This will take into account design quality standards, crime prevention, sustainable drainage and supplementary planning guidance (BE4, BE5, BE6, BE7 and BE10).

EMPLOYMENT

Stratford-upon-Avon currently enjoys relatively high levels of employment, and this must be maintained as the town continues to grow. The focus on this Neighbourhood Development Plan is therefore on retaining existing employers in the town as well as attracting new ones (E1).

Suitable alternative sites are recommended for businesses relocating from the canal area, and there are proposals for attracting additional high quality employers by providing land for business use with good access: close to the A46 and Stratford Parkway station.

There is also support for promoting jobs within the Culture, Media and Tourism industries (E3), and proposals for Work/Live Units which remove the necessity for commuting (E4).





2. Supporting the whole community so that all members can fully enjoy the town

This covers a wealth of areas including Infrastructure – transport, schools and health – Community, Leisure and Wellbeing, and the Natural Environment – Stratford’s green spaces.

INFRASTRUCTURE:

Growth in the town’s housing stock will require further investment in infrastructure in terms of schools (expanding existing schools for a growing population), as well as funding new schools, health services (BE3, INF7 and INF8), and transport links.

TRANSPORT:

Traffic congestion is a major problem for Stratford. The plan proposes working on a comprehensive strategic plan to redistribute traffic including further examination of a possible relief road system and/or new bridges (INF1).

Other, more immediate traffic management systems will better control the flow of traffic around town: lower speed limits, improved junctions, traffic calming, provision for bus lay-overs etc. A new and imaginative traffic calming approach to the worsening problem of Birmingham Road. The strategic positioning of car parks will also reduce cross-town travel, as would providing access from Shipston Road to the Recreation Ground car park (INF1), and better promoting the existing Park and Ride facilities for longer term parking (INF2).

PUBLIC TRANSPORT:

Better traffic management must also include improvements to existing rail facilities and links with enhanced bus and coach facilities (INF5 and INF6).

Pedestrians and cyclists: Facilities must include improvements to cycling in the town centre (TC16), with dedicated pedestrian and cycle paths connected to key routes, funded by new development (INF3 and CLW7). There is need, too, of a replacement bridge at Lucy’s Mill (INF4).

COMMUNITY, LEISURE AND WELLBEING:

The recent expansion in housing has not been matched by the provision of leisure facilities and open spaces; Stratford-upon-Avon has an abundance of theatres, restaurants and cafes but the local community believes there is a lack of facilities for young people, families and older age groups. Open spaces, sport and recreation all underpin people’s quality of life, so it is essential that this Neighbourhood Development Plan ensures that we protect and increase our facilities as Stratford continues to grow.

The Plan contains a range of policies to improve community wellbeing: Better leisure facilities for different age groups, particularly for younger



people (CLW1 and CLW2), and the expansion or enhancement of the Leisure Centre (CLW9). Existing open spaces, green spaces and play areas will be protected (CLW4, CLW8 CLW10), and the provision of new spaces will be provided with new large-scale development (CLW5). New development would also need to meet the increased demands on health care for the area (CLW12), and prioritise walking and cycling opportunities (CLW7).

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT:

Availability of green space was ranked one of the most important things residents like about Stratford-upon-Avon; the Plan includes measures to safeguard and enhance the town’s natural environment and reduce pollution:

- To designate Local Nature Reserves in Warwick Road Lands and Bridgetown Woodland and Meadow. Further policies cover biodiversity in the River Avon corridor including restrictions on development in the flood plain (NE1 and NE2). The preparation of a Neighbourhood Area Biodiversity Action Plan is recommended (NE4).
- To prepare a list of pockets of existing green space to be

designated as ‘local green space’ giving them statutory protection. This list includes Rowley Fields, Shottery Fields and the Recreation Ground (CLW4).

- Allotments will be protected and any proposed development on allotments must make alternative provision. New houses will have minimum garden sizes to allow growing space (CLW10), and there will be a requirement for trees and hedges in new developments (NE3).
- A ‘green necklace’ is proposed around Stratford-upon-Avon, incorporating footpaths and cycle routes. To achieve this all major developments on the edge of town must demonstrate how green open spaces connect to future adjacent development. Community woodland will also be promoted (CLW6).
- Renewable and low carbon energy schemes are to be encouraged (CLW13 and CLW14).





OWN HALL

3. Re-invigorating the Town Centre

Stratford-upon-Avon is an extremely popular destination with an enviable commercial mix of rich history, beautiful setting and modern amenities, and works well for both tourists and residents. It has enjoyed a prosperous and successful past but there are signs that modern shopping trends - internet shopping, the loss of large high street traders to out of town developments – are beginning to have an effect on Stratford’s economic health. Creating an even better place to visit and shop is crucial for maintaining the footfall through the town; the Neighbourhood Development Plan has a series of proposals to enhance the visitor/shopper experience in order to strengthen Stratford’s current economic vitality:

- The creation of a Town Centre Strategic Partnership to provide focused management and promotion of Town Centre improvements (TC1).
- The redevelopment of Town Square should be combined with an upgrading and promotion of Rother Market area to make an attractive thoroughfare from High Street (TC4 and TC5).
- Better ambience and access for all key entrances to the town; a step-by-step plan to create an Environmental Improvement Area, which would include the Rother Triangle, Greenhill Street and an area flanked by Birmingham Road, Arden Street and Windsor Street (TC8 TC9 and TC10) and improvements to the route from the Town Centre to the Maybird Centre (TC17).



- Improving pedestrian access and movement within the town centre including widening footways and improving the ambience of Bridge St, a redesign of the Bridge St roundabout and Wood St crossing. An experimental closure of High Street to vehicles but only at off-peak times. (TC13).
- Improving car parking facilities – making them more convenient for shoppers, as well as helping to reduce congestion (TC14 and TC15).

HERITAGE, CULTURE AND TOURISM:

Stratford-upon-Avon is a world famous cultural destination; visitors come to enjoy its heritage, its river, the amenities of the town and the wider Shakespeare experience. There is a continuing need for reasonable growth and modernisation of visitor



facilities for the town to remain competitive and to enhance the visitor experience.

The Neighbourhood Development Plan identifies the area around the Birthplace in Henley Street, between Meer Street and Windsor Street, as an ideal site to evolve into an attractive Cultural Quarter with museum and educational/exhibition facilities (TC11). To support the Cultural Quarter, the Environmental Improvement Area bounded by Birmingham Road, Arden Street and Windsor Street would be ideal for hotel, higher education and office use (TC10).

The main route through the town – High Street, Chapel Street and Church Street to Holy Trinity church – is one of the most important historic walks in the country, containing all of Stratford’s Grade I and most



of the Grade II listed buildings in the town. A scheme has already been developed to encourage the harmonious refurbishment of shop fronts along this Historic Spine to complement its finest buildings. The NDP proposes to extend this scheme to the whole of the Town Centre (TC2 and TC3) and proposes controls over signage elsewhere (BE9). It also includes proposals for preserving listed buildings, conservation areas, historic parks, gardens and sites of special scientific interest (BE11, BE12 and BE13).



In preparing these recommendations, everyone who has worked on the Neighbourhood Plan has had one guiding principle: this is not just any

old Plan, it is a Plan for us, for our children, and for the town we love.

A unique place to visit and a great place to live.





TOWN HALL

PRE-SUBMISSION CONSULTATION: 21 May - 3 July 2015

The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has produced a Pre-Submission Consultation Draft of the Neighbourhood Development Plan on behalf of Stratford-upon-Avon Town Council.

The steering group is made up of more than 40 volunteers including residents and representatives of local organisations.

This is your opportunity to tell us if we have got it right.

Please give us your comments and remarks during the statutory consultation period which ends on Friday 3rd July 2015.

You can provide feedback online by going to
www.ourstratford.org.uk

Or read the full printed version at the Library in Henley Street, the Town Hall in Sheep Street, or at the District Council offices in Church Street

The Pre-Submission draft has been distributed electronically to Statutory Consultees (in accordance with a list provided by Stratford on Avon District Council) and to many local business and organisations.

The Neighbourhood Development Plan is for Stratford upon Avon Town Council area, and after this consultation we will consider your comments and remarks before submitting a final draft to the District Council for examination.

*The Stratford-upon-Avon
Neighbourhood Development Plan is facilitated by
Stratford-upon-Avon Town Council.*

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