

Wotton-under-Edge

COMMUNITY PLAN



This brochure gives you an outline of the Community action plan. If you wish to read the full plan, see the back page of this brochure.

● **Why have a plan?**

Wotton-under-Edge is in a prosperous area of the country, close to and benefiting from cities such as Bristol and Gloucester. It is far enough away to have kept its identity so far. This however faces us with a dilemma. How do we remain a strong supplier of local services, keep our identity and avoid becoming a satellite town? This is a dilemma faced by many other similar market towns and the Countryside Agency has developed a Healthcheck process to help deal with this. This process helps towns like Wotton-under-Edge to identify their strengths and weaknesses and so provide the evidence upon which to build the Wotton-under-Edge Community action plan. This plan identifies the actions needed to achieve a vision for Wotton-under-Edge which, in brief, is to be a vibrant, healthy and sustainable town.



● **Where does it cover?**

The plan covers Wotton-under-Edge and that surrounding area which looks to Wotton-under-Edge as a provider of local services. This area stretches from Hawkesbury Upton in the south to North Nibley in the north and from Rangeworthy in the west to Kingscote in the east.



● **What is the Wotton-under-Edge Regeneration Partnership?**

The partnership represents all those who have an interest in Wotton-under-Edge and its future. A wide range of organisations are part of the partnership and all are welcome to be involved. It is important that the plan is the consensus view of the community.



● **What do we want to achieve?**

To have a plan it is essential to know what that plan aims to achieve. This aim is encapsulated in the ‘vision’ which has seven themes covering the environmental, economic, social and transport needs of the town. The vision is ambitious, some elements will be difficult to achieve. The partnership has felt however that it is important for Wotton-under-Edge to aim high.



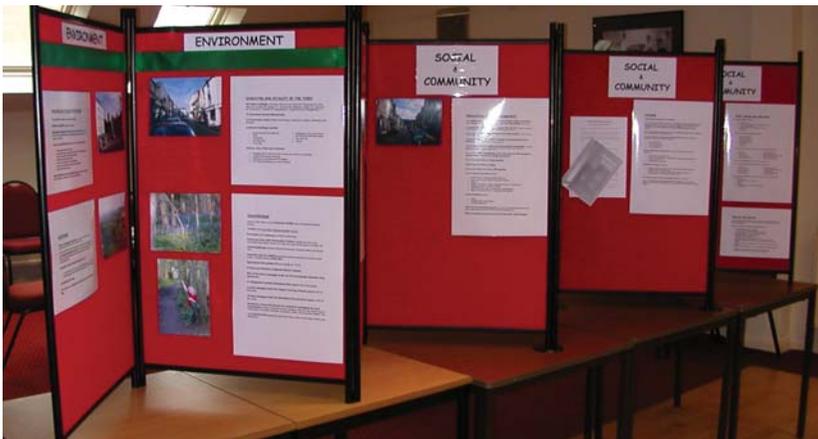
● When will we do it by?

This is a long term plan. The vision articulates what we would like Wotton-under-Edge to be 10 to 20 years hence. Some of the actions can be achieved quickly. It is important that we do achieve some quick wins in order to maintain enthusiasm and momentum. Many of the problems are however intractable and long standing. Achievement of the vision in these cases will only come about through sustained effort over many years.



● How will we do it?

The action plans in the full document identify the things we need to do, who is responsible for doing them and by when. Wherever possible a cost estimate is given. The plan also sets out how we will measure success and how we will report to the community how the plan is progressing. This brochure gives a brief outline of those actions.



THE MAIN THEMES OF THE VISION

● Theme 1

Wotton-under-Edge will make full use of its high quality historic centre and its outstanding surrounding countryside. The town will be clean and green, an attractive place to live, work and visit. It will continue to be a lively, working, changing town. Change will be managed to maximise



the environmental potential. The appearance of the town and its gateways will be enhanced and more public spaces created.

● Theme 2

Wotton-under-Edge will continue to be a town with significant commercial activity and local employment. The town will be a service centre for the surrounding area and will also provide specialist services for a wider region. Constraints to economic activity will be resolved. The growth of Wotton-under-Edge's built environment will be constrained by the existing boundaries. Wotton-under-Edge will provide food retailing, professional, commercial and community services which meet the needs of the community. In addition, the specialist goods and services will bring in work and customers from a wide area.



Theme 3

More facilities will be provided for visitors, including good quality accommodation and places to eat. It will be easy for visitors to travel to Wotton-under-Edge. Tourism growth will however, be balanced against local needs.



Theme 4

Wotton-under-Edge will have a range of housing to meet the needs of the community, including affordable housing.



Theme 5

The low crime levels in Wotton-under-Edge and surrounding areas will be maintained and improved. People will feel safe in the community.



● Theme 6

Wotton-under-Edge will continue to benefit from a high level of community activity in all sections of the community. This will be enhanced by the provision of adequate outdoor sports and play facilities. Communications will be good between all local interest groups.



● Theme 7

Public and community transport will meet the needs of those not owning a car; people from surrounding villages using services in Wotton-under-Edge, those attending hospitals and students attending out of town colleges. There will be public transport options for commuters. Adequate provision will be made for car users, both those living in the town and those visiting. Traffic and parking will be managed to minimise congestion, particularly on through routes.



● Chairman's Statement

The Forward Plan for Wotton under Edge and the surrounding area is the culmination of consultation and detailed information gathering. We now have a living document divided into action plans with time scales and costings. Some of the actions have already been achieved, like the Electric Picture House Cinema and Under the Edge Arts Group and these are continuing to develop. Other actions such as Youth Liaison are on-going, with improvements being made and grants being sought, to enhance provision for young people. We now have an active Chamber of Trade where there was none, organising events and communicating with shops and businesses.

Momentum has to be maintained and as events happen, other projects will replace what has already been achieved.

I am aware that some of the big issues will take time and money to resolve. We need confidence to create success and take a dynamic approach to resolving problems.

The Regeneration Partnership will continue to involve the community, promote the Action plan to all stakeholders, publicise the unique town of Wotton-under-Edge and enhance its environment.

June Cordwell

Chairman, Wotton-under-Edge Town Regeneration Partnership.



● Parking action plan

Lack of adequate parking provision is a constraint to Wotton-under-Edge achieving most of the vision themes. Solving this problem is therefore seen as the single biggest contribution to the vision overall. There are three strands to this plan;

First, maximise the appropriate use of the existing car parks to make it easier to park.

Second, modify those policies which exacerbate the problem.

Third, assess the need and feasibility of providing additional off street parking.

To maximise the use of the existing car parks effectively they may need to be controlled and policed. Charging is one way to achieve this but the charges would have to be low to avoid deterring shoppers and visitors. The aim is to consider these proposals.



Current planning policy restricts parking provision for new developments and makes a bad situation worse. The partnership will work to achieve a reversal of this policy.

While we know and have evidence to show that there is a parking problem in Wotton, we don't know the scale of the problem or the cost and practicability of solving it. The actions therefore involve an initial investigation into the need and a search for potential new locations, their cost and practicability. It is only after this has been done that we will identify specific projects and seek support and funding.



Economic

This action plan deals primarily with the need to encourage new business to retain and improve the economic vitality of the town. Food retailing is the main attraction for shoppers and this underpins other retail activity. The perception that Wotton is a good place to shop needs improvement and actions to achieve this are detailed in the plan.

The formation of a Chamber of Trade was seen as a major element of the plan. It is pleasing to see that this has already been achieved in advance of publication of the plan.



Environment

Three strands of activity are identified in this action plan.

- Improvement in street cleaning
- Creation of open spaces
- Enhancing the appearance of the town

Wotton already has an excellent environment which is only spoilt by a few untidy areas. Actions are identified to improve maintenance and help tackle untidy places. Specific actions aim at creating small public gardens or courtyards and enhancing the townscape.



● Transport

Public transport is identified in the healthcheck as poor. It is not however envisaged that public transport will be able to meet all local needs in the foreseeable future. The action plans therefore target specific areas of need. These include support to voluntary services and car clubs, increasing the use of the ‘Hopper’, extending ‘Village link’ buses to Wotton and pursuing an improvement in timetabling with the bus companies.



Social

The four strands of this plan are;

- Affordable housing
- Perception of crime
- Community activities
- Communications

Actions aim to improve the very low level of affordable housing in Wotton.



The actual level of crime in Wotton is low but there is a perception that it is high. Actions to deal with this include:

Support and encourage community policing.

The creation of linkages between the many groups in the town working with Youth and improve provision for this group.

One of the strengths of Wotton is the very high level of community involvement. Wotton people have always been active in enhancing the town and three current voluntary projects are examples of this activity. The Sports Foundation, the Electric Cinema Company and Under the Edge Arts. The plan aims to support and encourage these and future projects.

Finally the plan itself is seen as the vehicle for enhancing communications between the people of Wotton and the surrounding area and the various local authorities serving the area.



Full plan available to view at the One Stop Shop or the Wotton-under-Edge Town Council Offices at the Civic Centre.

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