

Stroud Town Centre Neighbourhood Development Plan Shaping the heart of Stroud

Report of Business seminar held on Friday 16th January 2015 at the Imperial Hotel Stroud

Present

Leonora Rozee OBE independent Chair of Shaping the heart of Stroud Steering Group chaired the seminar.

Dr Nicholas Falk founder of URBED and local resident with considerable experience and expertise in regeneration of small town centres and a long standing interest in the future of Stroud Town Centre.

Professor Hugh Barton member of Shaping the heart of Stroud Steering Group led a discussion

John Bloxsom Shaping the heart of Stroud Administrator

There was a wide range of invited representatives of town centre businesses and activities present - list of attendees is attached.

Purpose

To consider the economic future of the town centre and how this might be influenced by the Neighbourhood Development Plan

Process

Dr Nicholas Falk gave a 20 minute presentation designed to stimulate discussion and debate. Highlighted issues such as:

- The need for more and wealthier people living in and near the town centre as key to encouraging better shopping opportunities;
- The need for Stroud town centre to define its USP (unique selling point);
- The legibility and navigation of Stroud Town centre
- Communication and promotion of what happens in Stroud town centre
- Access to Stratford Park
- The poor quality of the entrances to Stroud town centre
- The potential for internet shopping to offer outlets the opportunity to trade on a local, national and international level
- The need for more useful and understandable bus routes

Copies of Dr Falk's slides are available from the project administrator John Bloxsom and also appear on the 'links and resources' page on the website www.shapingtheheartstroud.org

A Q&A session led to a lively debate about what the USP of Stroud Town Centre was or should be with the following words and phrases used to describe it:

- where craft and tradition meet innovation
- the armpit of the Cotswolds
- edgy
- black sheep of the Cotswolds

There was some concern expressed about the risk of going for too much change that we should be building on what we do well now – e.g. Farmer's market; a diverse and very active cultural life; interesting retail uses e.g. heritage clothing; attract innovative industries such as Ecotricity - recognising that the town centre has such good communications it is a place where people can easily get away from.

Hugh Barton encouraged the attendees to form small groups and identify 2 things that might go into the Plan

Discussion Outcome

Suggestions:

- provide up to date information on parking to help people find where to park
- provide clear signage from car parks to shops and to other facilities in the town
- increase amount of short term “pop and shop” parking
- ‘pay on exit’ parking charges
- improve the quality of the public realm
- build housing over car parks
- improved information about bus services
- create workspace for incubation units for creative industries
- attract higher quality shopping
- promote what Stroud town centre offers more effectively
- identify what is needed to bring people into the town – e.g. conference facilities/hotel?
- Creating gateways rather than barriers

Suggested straplines:

“The creative heart of the Cotswolds”

“ Be proud of Stroud”

“Stroud - not what you expect”

Eclectic Stroud”

Next steps

The information gathered will inform the work of the Thematic Groups in gathering evidence and developing options for delivering on the aspirations expressed in the visioning process undertaken in November.

19.1.15

**Business Seminar 16 January 2015
Confirmed Attendees**

Name	Business
Andrew Bateman	Bateman's Sports
Peter Bateman	Bateman's Sports
Rebecca Black	Strangeness and Charm Vintage
Professor Hugh Barton	Neighbourhood Development Plan
Councillor Kevin Cranston	Stroud Town Council
Ian Crawley	Gloucestershire Land for People
Mike Davies	Davies Landscape Architects
Ray Ellaby	Merrywalks Management
Patrick Franks	Streetlands
Lakshman Gallage	Imperial Hotel
Michael Gamble	Michael Gamble Funeral Directors
Gerb Gerbands	Fresh-n-local: Stroud Farmers' Market
Andrew Grigg	Musicdynamics
Dr Nicholas Falk	URBED
Councillor Steve Hurrell	Stroud Town Council
Jill Jones	South Gloucestershire & Stroud College
Martin Large	Hawthorn Press
Councillor Sarah Lunnon	Gloucestershire County Council
Paul McLaughlin	Subscription Rooms
Patrick Mansfield	Local resident
Graham Massey	Wilkinson's
David Michael	Coflats
John Mills	Mills Cafe and Kitchen Shop
Fiona Mills Carlyon	Moonflower and Moonflower Two
Keith Morgan	Old Convent
Councillor Amanda Moriarty	Stroud Town Council
Mani Norland	In-Light Ltd/School of Homeopathy
Andrew Poole	Stroud Policing Area
Jenny Powell	Stagecoach
Leonora Rozee	Neighbourhood Development Plan
Kevin Sharp	Stagecoach
Jack Telling	Cotswold Canal Trust
Peter Waller	Old Convent
Andrew Watton	Montgomery Watton
Barry Wyatt	Stroud District Council