

Shaping the heart of Stroud
Stroud Town Centre Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP)
Meeting with Dale Vince, Ecotricity
Monday 11.00-12.00 Monday 20th April 2015

Present:

Dale Vince and Trevor Saunders from Ecotricity
Leonora Rozee and Hugh Barton from Stroud Town Centre NDP Steering Group.

Purpose and progress of NDP

LR outlined what the Neighbourhood Development Plan will be and how it is being prepared. ie:

- A Statutory Development Plan for Stroud Town Centre (see attached Map) being prepared by Stroud Town Council under the Localism Act 2011 which gave powers to Parish and Town Councils to prepare plans relating to the future planning of their areas.
- The plan is being prepared by a Steering Group (SG) set up by Stroud Town Council chaired independently by Leonora Rozee. The SG has about 12 members who represent a range of interests in the town centre. Hugh Barton is a member of the SG.
- The Plan was stimulated by the Cheapside Opportunities Report prepared by Hugh Barton and others for the Town Council.
- Three major public consultation events have been held in the town centre to identify issues (September 2014); consider a vision and objectives (November 2014); and consider options (March 2014).
- The Plan is at the stage of producing policies and actions for the Town Council to consider this summer. Once approved it will be subject to public consultation this autumn and submission to the District Council by no later than end of 2015. It will be independently examined and then subject to a referendum. Once approved it will form part of the Development Plan and sit alongside the District's Local Plan against which all planning decisions are made. The Plan ought to be in place by Spring 2016.
- The Plan has a timescale of 20 years.

Key issues

Ecotricity is the main employer in the town centre with about 500 staff in 3 buildings currently and a further 250 due to be accommodated in the former tax office off Merrywalks which has been acquired by the company. The level of staff generates a high footfall for the town and offers a stimulus for the regeneration of the centre eg Curios Lounge, a new and busy café/bar on King Street, probably came because of the number of people looking for lunch in town.

DV identified the following key issues for the company:

- **Parking:** The company has acquired land opposite Lion House for parking but this will only accommodate a further 50 or so spaces in addition to the parking provided at Lion House. Staff are encouraged

to car share but as more staff are taken on parking becomes a bigger issue.

- **Pedestrian safety:** there is an urgent need to improve pedestrian crossings in the Wallbridge area. Discussions have been held with GCC and SDC and David Austen Assocs have produced a scheme which Ecotricity is willing to fund. TS will provide a copy of the scheme.
- **Pedestrianisation:** DV favours increased pedestrianisation in the town centre and better control over loading vehicles. He supports shared surfaces.
- **Railway station forecourt:** Ecotricity have produced schemes for upgrading the station forecourt with increased bike parking and would support the approach of the NDP to create an inviting square with limited parking.
- **Wallbridge:** DV is keen to see the plans he has for Wallbridge brought into effect. The scheme prepared by David Austen (which was consulted upon by the NDP in November 2014) has been amended to reflect the brick and railings of the old brewery bridge. LR noted that the views expressed to the NDP team were that people wanted more green and that the original proposals were too stark. There was also a question over who would use it as a plaza. DV felt it would be an attractive place for staff to lunch noting that a lot of people use the picnic benches opposite his office. More green could be provided without materially impacting on the basic concept of the scheme. LR suggested Ecotricity might want to carry out some consultation on the Austen proposals.
- **Potential expansion sites:** Within the NDP area HB identified as possible sites for future expansion as:
 - Cheapside car park by building over the parking (keeping parking)
 - The Police Station site if the police decide to relocate
 - Fromebridge industrial site as part of a redevelopment or intensification
 - Land off Merrywalks by the railway arches

Potential NDP proposals:

It was agreed that the following things which are in the pipeline and which Ecotricity have agreed to fund or part fund could be included in the Plan as 'quick wins':

- Wallbridge 'plaza'
- Pedestrian crossings as defined in David Austen scheme (preference for zebra not pelican crossings)

Other things which Ecotricity support and might provide funding for are:

- Creating the railway station square
- Improving the pedestrian experience of using Rowcroft railway bridge

Actions TS to provide the NDP team with the David Austen plans for Wallbridge and the pedestrian crossings and any plans for the railway station square. NDP contact is John Bloxson (Plan part time administrator) email info@shapingtheheartstroud.org tel: 07920 656581.

