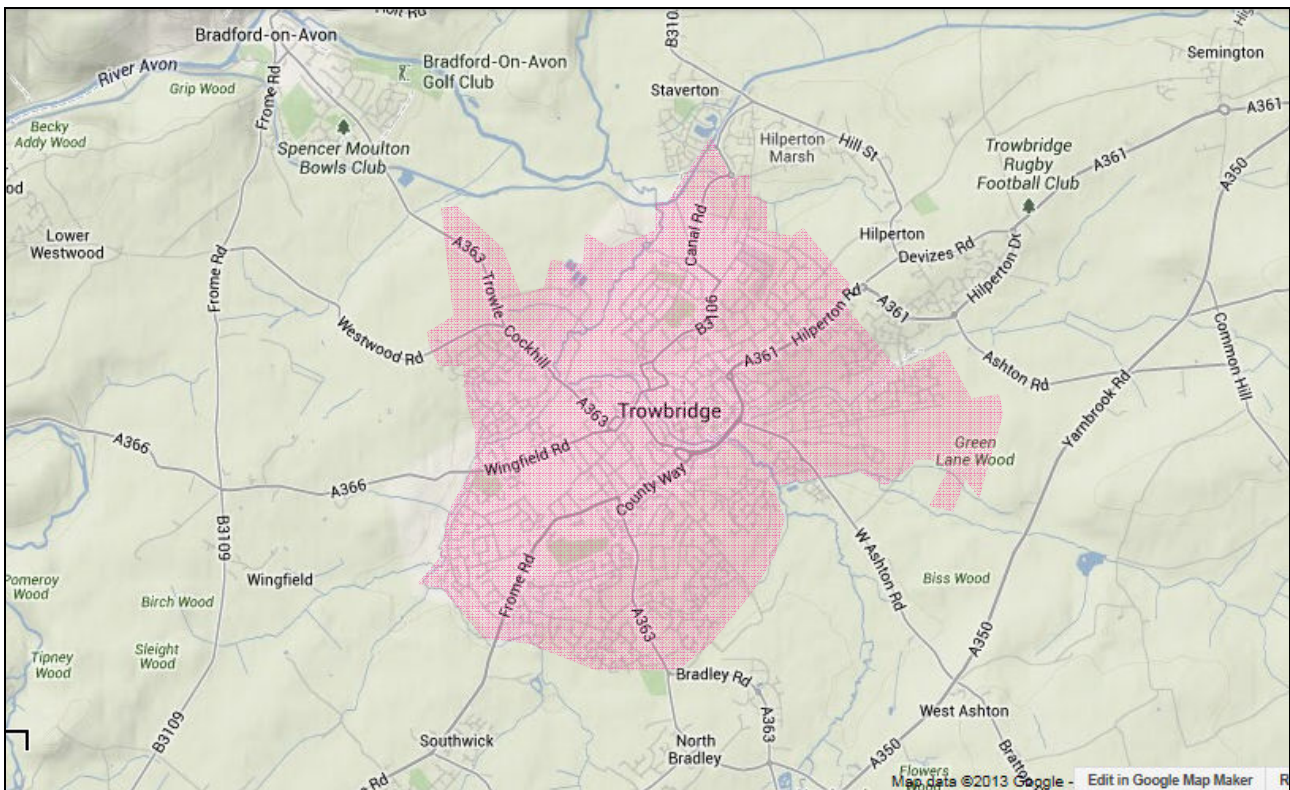


DRAFT Town Council Strategy 2013-2017



Introduction

2013 has been a year of completion and renewal as well as being Trowbridge's Year of Opportunity. Completion, in that it has seen the end of a six year term of office for the council and significant progress made on the aims included in the Council Strategy. Renewal, in that for the first time all local government elections have taken place at the same time, and the need to consider how the council and the town move forward, building upon the successes of recent years, encapsulated in a new revised Strategy for the period up to 2017.

The Town Council will need to play an increasingly important role in the partnership for delivery of services and change for the community, delivering **Place Management** for Trowbridge. The council needs to continue to demonstrate with confidence, to the community; strength, leadership and purpose. There is still a lot to do in and for Trowbridge, if the Town Council is not at the forefront, guiding the process of change, opportunities will be lost. Wiltshire Council appears to be much closer to recognising the need for **Place Management**, (see Wiltshire Council's Business Plan adopted at the Full Council meeting on 3rd September 2013) the transfer of assets and services to the Town Council and closer working with the Area Board will remain key to delivering continued success for Trowbridge.

1. Town Development

The cinema, hotel and restaurants at St Stephen's Place will open in Autumn 2013. The Bowyer's site now has planning permission and it is likely that the new indoor active leisure element of the campus will be delivered on a town centre site. In addition the refurbishment of County Hall has brought a new library and more people working in the town centre. New housing is progressing on the former bottling plant as well as at Broad Street and York Buildings.

In the period up to 2017 the council will need to consider its response to the developing campus plans, in particular how the campus links in to existing facilities, such as the Library, Civic Centre and other potential facilities, such as a new Museum location and the Town Hall, creating a **Cultural Quarter** centred on the Park. The **Campus** development may need to focus on those elements not already adequately provided for, such as indoor active leisure, recognising that other facilities are already provided for in the town centre. In addition the council will need to ensure that the key **Town Centre Accessibility** aims identified in the **Masterplan** can be delivered and further developed, including:

- Pedestrian and cycle routes from the villages and suburbs into town
- Direct pedestrian access from County Hall to St Stephens Place, through a new bridge across the river and to the Shires with improved routes along both sides of the river
- Implementation of the Conigre/Upper Broad Street/Hill Street two-way scheme.
- Further development of this scheme with reversal of one-way on Manvers Street and Pedestrian prioritisation of Wicker Hill/Lower Fore Street.
- Pedestrian prioritisation of Market Street and Silver Street with concentration of bus stops in Castle Street.
- Improved way-finding in the town centre with map and directional totems.
- Improved public realm in Fore Street, Market Street and Wicker Hill.

Much of this will need to be linked to the **Infrastructure Delivery Plan** and funded through **Community Infrastructure Levy** and in conjunction with the establishment of a **Business Improvement District** (BID), which the Town Council will need to fully support and work in partnership with. The BID could take responsibility for some of the activities currently undertaken by the Council and could be the vehicle to seek transfer of car-parks from Wiltshire Council.

1.1 TOWN CENTRE.

Trowbridge Town Council will seek the continuation and development of the full range of services and facilities in the town centre, linking together the key locations within the town centre and promoting the town in conjunction with other local groups:

- a. The key locations are; The Retail Core (including Fore St, Market St, Castle Place and The Shires), The Railway Station, County Hall and The Cultural Quarter (including the St Stephen's Place leisure development, the Civic Centre and the Town Park). Pedestrian way-finding and access between them needs to be improved, supported by the Masterplan, including significant improvements to signage, a new pedestrian bridge between Court Street and Bythesea Road and significant improvements at the Railway Station;*
- b. Delivery of two-way traffic on Hill Street, Upper Broad Street and Conigre with the reversal of one-way on Manvers Street will allow the Fore Street/Wicker Hill area to be pedestrian priority and development of opportunities to remove buses from Silver Street/Market Street to allow pedestrian priority and to make Castle Street the main bus stopping point;*
- c. Delivery of appropriate development on the former Bowyer's factory site, the former Peter Black site and on the County Hall East site, which integrate well with the town centre and improve pedestrian flows and accessibility with other key locations identified above;*
- d. Improved indoor active leisure facilities, through the delivery of a Wiltshire Council Campus project, including a replacement gym, new swimming and leisure pools and a sports hall, in a town centre location;*
- e. Ensuring the Town Centre remains easily accessible for the residents of the town, neighbouring villages and for those travelling further, including improved walking and cycling routes from other parts of the town and local villages, high quality public transport and excellent car-parking;*
- f. The development of Business Improvement District for the town centre.*

The Core Strategy enquiry in public has concluded. The Council has been supportive, the only significant issues related to the location of a new secondary school and delivery of the Masterplan.

The arguments against growth, put forward by groups such as 'Campaign for a Better Trowbridge' were based primarily on the need to demonstrate that brownfield sites in the town centre are developed first. These are now underway. Planning applications for the Ashton Park urban extension as identified in the Core Strategy will come forward later this year. The great majority of the new development will take place in our neighbouring parishes and the town council will need to work closely with them and with Wiltshire Council to secure quality sustainable development. Clearly, matters relating to the **Community Infrastructure Levy** and the **Infrastructure Delivery Plan** will need to be considered.

It would NOT be appropriate to consider undertaking a **Neighbourhood Plan** for the whole town, but this should be kept under review. One exception could be the potential exception site to the South of Green Lane, beyond the current development at Castle Mead and bounded to the East by Green Lane Woods. The Town Council will need to

consider if the town can continue to grow sustainably beyond the proposals contained in the current Core Strategy. Any further growth beyond the built up area of the town would be either outside a sustainable travel distance of 2km from the town centre or in the Green Belt, but such issues are unlikely to require consideration early in this four year Strategy period.

1.2 FUTURE GROWTH.

Trowbridge Town Council will continue to support growth in areas closest to the town centre, recognising that significant areas of green-field development have now been allocated to accommodate 300 or more homes per year, to the East and South East.

The delivery of other elements of the strategy as development gain (allotments, sports pitches, a new cemetery, children's play facilities, etc), need to be linked to these developments through the Community Infrastructure Levy and Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

The Town Council should only support the development of a Neighbourhood Plan for the greater Trowbridge area in conjunction with neighbouring parishes and Wiltshire Council or for specific locations within the town if there are clear benefits.

2. Direct Services

We have now resolved the final account for the Civic Centre Project and the Civic Centre is performing well. Our new booking software which has now been implemented is further enhance our offer. With regard to utilisation and service, the Civic Centre is very well used by any standards and reports from customers are very positive about satisfaction levels. We have also made significant progress with our marketing through the new **Web-site and Social Media**, ticket-source and database.

We will need to look more closely at our **Entertainment Events Programme** to ensure that we maximise promotional opportunities through programming well in advance, further improving the links to the Information Centre and our other communications channels. In addition we will need to develop our links with the leisure developments next door and in particular **Partnership** opportunities with Premier Inns to provide a comprehensive conference package. We will also need to ensure we continue to provide first class **Customer Service**.

2.1 CIVIC CENTRE

Following a success full first two years of operation Trowbridge Town Council will further develop the Civic Centre, in particular focussing on; high quality customer service, partnerships with our key customers and complementary service providers and offering a range of entertainment events for the whole community, including links with the park.

The Information Centre is now a well-established part of the Civic Centre, with the further links between Civic Centre, Customer Services, marketing and promotion, web-site maintenance and the TIC. The Council should continue to develop the service for the benefit of the whole community and visitors. Seamless and comprehensive quality service should be the overriding objectives.

2.2 INFORMATION SERVICES

Trowbridge Town Council will develop our information services, coordinated by the Information Centre, into a comprehensive service which provides the full range of information, event and travel ticket and visitor related services to residents as well as tourist through the Centre, Web-site, regular print media and social media platforms.

Trowbridge provides some first class **Events** and activities in the town, many supported by the Town Council. This support should continue and developed alongside the Business Improvement District. 2014 will be an important year for the Armed Forces event in conjunction with the centenary of the start of the First World War.

2.3 COMMUNITY & EVENTS

Trowbridge Town Council will continue to support community groups in their activities in the town. We will also support groups wishing to organise events for the community, such as the weekly market, Armed Forces Day and Carnival and our own events in the town centre and the park.

The work with Trowbridge In Bloom has been excellent, with a gold award in 2011 and 2012. The Council has now taken over the **Park** and is seeking to take over **Allotments** and will incorporate these into our neighbourhood services and service contracts. Our support for **Trowbridge In Bloom** should continue, potentially supported through the Business Improvement District. We will need to formalise the position of the Bowls Club and the refreshment Kiosk.

2.4 NEIGHBOURHOOD

Trowbridge Town Council will continue to support the provision of neighbourhood and recreational facilities, including community centres, play areas and sport grounds. The Town Council will continue to support the range of Trowbridge in Bloom activities which support the town and businesses and improve the environment. The Town Council will continue to work with Wiltshire Council to improve neighbourhoods, street-scene and the environment. The Town Council will make further improvements to the Park, ensuring it remains a key attribute for the town, whilst establishing formal relationships with our park partners.

3. Museum & Tourism

We have made significant progress, but there is still a great deal to achieve in order to deliver a **relocated and expanded Museum**. We are progressing the transfer of the property and have engaged a consultant to work on the project and in particular fundraising. We will need to consider a short term extension at the existing location and identify the appropriate timescale for completion of the project. The Museum project should also be seen as a significant contribution to the development of a **Cultural Quarter** around the Park and what this delivers for the town as a whole. This will be a significant project for the council over the Strategy period.

3.1 MUSEUM EXPANSION.

Trowbridge Town Council will seek to complete the project to expand the Museum, telling the story of the development and influence of the woollen cloth trade in the West of England, on a site at Courtfield House, as a further contribution to the regeneration of Trowbridge, developing a Cultural Quarter, an investment in culture and tourism for the town.

We have an excellent partnership with Visit Wiltshire and have assisted with the production of *VISIT Trowbridge* and *SHOP Trowbridge* leaflets. It is clear that with all of the changes now taking place the opportunities are great, but that a clear **Town Brand** identity needs to be developed so that all organisations can build upon the confidence under a single umbrella, communicating the positive message to residents, visitors and investors. This will need to be developed in partnership with others and will be key to delivering the Business Improvement District. It will need bring together a number of different groups under a single umbrella. Early work has indicated that **Discover Trowbridge** and **Trowbridge Success** are the key elements of the branding message.

3.2 TOURISM AND PROMOTION OF TROWBRIDGE.

Trowbridge Town Council will lead to deliver a re-branding for the promotion of the town as a whole including tourism, to ensure a positive view of Trowbridge is evident this will need to be done in partnership with Wiltshire Council, Visit Wiltshire, Trowbridge Chamber of Commerce, Trowbridge Community Area Future, the Town Team and the Trowbridge Initiative.

We continue to support arts and cultural events including the Trowbridge Arts Festival and the Cloth Road Artists. We should also support a significant series of **Magna Carta** 800th anniversary activities for 2015 in addition to these regular events. The Museum will also take a more active role in other community events such as the Play Festival and Veterans weekend.

3.3 CULTURAL EVENTS.

Trowbridge Town Council will continue to work in partnership with others to support cultural activities and events, in particular work with BA14 and the Trowbridge Arts Festival. In addition the Town Council will support events and activities related to the Magna Carta 800th anniversary as one of the Baron Towns. The Museum will also take a more active role in other community events in the park such as Veterans weekend and the Play Festival.

4. Leisure Services

This department has produced some excellent results both in regard to financial sustainability and satisfaction over the past year. We continue to develop innovative activities and events and scrutinise viability. Our annual **Play and Sport Event** in the Park was once again a great success and a fitting legacy following Olympic Year. We will need to carefully match resources to increasing demand expected from schools following confirmation of the additional funding for sports they will receive from September, whilst ensuring we do not overstretch our capacity. Our continuing work with **Schools and the Community** will need to be balanced and sustainable.

4.1 ACTIVE TROWBRIDGE.

Trowbridge Town Council will continue the paid for regular sports coaching scheme with schools and holiday activities as well as the free community summer road-show, seeking ways to ensure sustainability of operation and funding. We will organise an annual Play and Sport Event in the Park, making the most of the Olympic Legacy and partnerships with other sports organisations.

The YAG is the established group for consultation with young people and we work with them to deliver improvements to facilities. The next few years are likely to see significant changes in the delivery of **Youth Services** in Wiltshire and we will need to consider to what extent we should be involved in the delivery of the services in the Trowbridge Community Area, working with partners including **Collaborative Schools**.

4.2 YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES.

Trowbridge Town Council will continue to develop its relationship with those representing Young People through the Youth Advisory Group (YAG) and with Wiltshire Council's Development Service for Young People, supporting each other's activities and seeking to secure an appropriate level of local input into future service provision. If necessary the Town Council will be involved with other partners, including Collaborative Schools to develop additional services and facilities for young people in response to the commissioning of the service by Wiltshire Council.

We have purchased of 5 acres to provide land to develop new **Sports Pitches**, funded by Section 106 planning funding and we will need to consider the best way to progress the development of this in conjunction with sports clubs during this period. We will need to consider if further land should be sought in that area to supplement our purchase and the Rugby Club to develop a multi-sport facility. I have outlined the need to scrutinise the campus proposals above and cover matters relating to other pitch facilities below. We also need to consider if the Town Council has a role to play in the management of the **Campus** indoor active leisure facilities when established.

4.3 DEVELOPMENT OF NEW SPORTS FACILITIES.

Trowbridge Town Council will support and if necessary be actively involved in:

- a. The development of a Campus by Wiltshire Council in the town centre, offering a range of leisure facilities including swimming, as well as facilities for young people.***
- b. Enhancements to existing facilities such as the provision of changing rooms at Stallards Recreation Ground.***
- c. A multi-sports outdoor pitch facility in partnership with sports clubs and developer contributions.***

5. Policy & Resources

Significant progress has been made during the year with both the Park and allotments, with a revenue package which both the Town Council and Wiltshire Councils found acceptable and gives certainty in the future. The ownership of the Park by the Town Council puts the town council in a very good position to develop this significant asset for the town in a prime town centre location as part of the town's Cultural Quarter. Consideration should be given to the transfer of **Stallards Recreation Ground** including the Innox Road changing facilities once they are completed and also **Seymour Recreation Ground**. This would mean that all of the football pitches were controlled by the town council. In addition the other children's play areas, **Biss Meadows** and **Paxcroft Brook** amenity areas should be considered for transfer. The transfer of car-parks to the Town Council should be considered in conjunction with the establishment of a Business Improvement District (BID).

5.1 DELEGATION OF ASSETS AND SERVICES FROM WILTSHIRE COUNCIL.

Trowbridge Town Council will take a more proactive approach to asset and service transfer from Wiltshire Council, with priority given to the completion of the transfer of the allotments and consideration of the transfer of Stallards Recreation Ground and Seymour Recreation Ground as well as other open space and children's play areas. Transfer will only be taken forward if negotiations result in appropriate levels of resources being available.

The development of place management in partnership with others and potentially with the BID and any new organisation which fits under the new brand adopted by the town will be important. This could extend to Trowbridge being a **Community Budget** pilot under the DCLG **Our Place** initiative, where all public funding is identified and decisions about funding priorities are taken by the community.

5.2 COMMUNITY BUDGET.

Trowbridge Town Council will seek to work with government and Wiltshire Council to develop a Community Budget initiative for the town.

Investors In People (IIP) reaccreditation is scheduled for September 2013 and will need to be reconsidered in 2016.

5.3 INVESTORS IN PEOPLE.

Trowbridge Town Council will seek IIP reaccreditation in 2013 and in 2016.

The Council has adopted the **General Power of Competence** and should continue to do so during the Strategy period.

5.4 GENERAL POWER OF COMPETENCE.

Trowbridge Town Council will continue to adopt the General Power of Competence.

In addition it is appropriate to continue to press for a **Community Governance Review** to ensure the new development is included within a revised boundary for the town, rather than with the villages from which it will be detached, as well as resolving anomalies on the town boundary where development has already taken place.

5.5 COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

Trowbridge Town Council will continue to seek a Community Governance Reviews to ensure that the town boundary most appropriately reflects the built up area of the town, including proposed development.

With regard to the uncertainties around funding and in particular the impact of the Localisation of Council Tax Benefit, we will need to work closely with Wiltshire Council to achieve an equitable solution for 2014 and future years without the uncertainty of further unpredictable changes. Councillors will need to consider this well in advance, as soon as WC are able to advise accordingly.

Hopefully the rate of housing growth on a number of sites around the town will compensate to some extent. The lower end of the estimates from the 1200 homes currently under construction indicates revenue at current Council Tax levels of £90,000 per annum. A favourable result from any Community Governance Review could realise an immediate £25,000 per annum and with proposed development a further £200,000 per annum minimum.

Our General Reserve has come under pressure in recent years and we will need to consider increasing General Reserves over the next four years to a level closer to 6 months expenditure. This will need to be done in addition to the cost pressures associated with our additional responsibilities such as the Park as well as our future projects such as the Museum.

5.6 FINANCE

Trowbridge Town Council's long term plans will continue to be based upon no increase in the Town Council's portion of the Council Tax greater than the level of inflation.

We will seek to bring the levels of General Reserves back up to a figure in the range of 3 to 6 months of expenditure.

6. Summary

Place Management should be the overall aim for the council in the next four years. Our partnership with Wiltshire Council, in particular close working with the Area Board will be key to achieving this. We will need to develop new structures to bring together other influential sectors within the community, whilst delivering improvements, new services and

new projects, building upon the transformation and demonstrable success which is Trowbridge.

6. PLACE MANAGEMENT

The Town Council should replace the Vision, Mission Statement & Aims with the following:

'Delivering Place Management, helping others to Discover Trowbridge, Working with the Community and achieving Trowbridge Success'