

**IMPLEMENTATION EXECUTIVE**  
**29 OCTOBER 2008**

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**VISION FOR CHIPPENHAM**

**Executive Summary**

Chippenham is recognised as the largest historic market town in Wiltshire with a population of over 40,000. It is an important centre for employment in North Wiltshire, with its Community Area hosting 47% of total employment in the district (22,600 jobs), and the town alone accounting for 29% of North Wiltshire jobs (some 13,600). Studies indicate the town centre is also by far the most important comparison goods destination within the district, accounting for over half of all the retained expenditure

It is statistics like these that encouraged the local authorities to proactively lobby the South West Regional Development Agency (SWRDA) to recognise the importance of Chippenham not only to the county, but also to the South West region, successfully resulting in the designation of Chippenham as a Strategically Significant Town (SSTC) in the latest Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for up to the year 2026. As such, Chippenham is expected to receive a housing allocation of approximately 5,500 new dwellings, 6,200 new jobs in the Chippenham Travel to Work Area and provision for 42ha of employment land.

With these considerable growth projections comes an essential need to ensure that community and infrastructure developments are managed in a positive, sustainable and resilient way so that Chippenham and its villages are best placed to benefit from growth economically, socially and environmentally.

In January 2006, the Chippenham Chamber of Commerce initiated a project to develop a vision for the future of Chippenham, mindful of the approaching RSS and conscious of similar initiatives in Wiltshire's major towns and competitive retail and employment centres such as Swindon, Bath and Bristol, which already absorbed considerable spend and resources, harbouring the unwelcome prospect of Chippenham becoming a mere dormitory town.

The time was right, therefore, to motivate the townspeople and undertake a critical analysis of Chippenham that identified its existing problems and more importantly, the opportunities for improvement.

Through the Chamber of Commerce, and with partnership from Chippenham Town Council (CTC) and North Wiltshire District Council (NWDC), a Vision Steering Group was established and consultation events staged to present local stakeholders with a picture of the towns existing and future prospects, and gather feedback on the need for a Vision and what it should entail.

The results of these consultations were captured in an observation report by commissioned architects Sutton Griffin and, following a series of presentations to community groups, town and district authority committees, formed the basis of an evolving Vision for Chippenham.

As the Chippenham Vision project gained momentum it received support and advice of most notably Cllr Jane Scott, WCC Leader. Membership of the Steering Group now includes stakeholders and policy makers who help manage the process and turn the Vision into reality. In July 2007 the project gained matched funds of £50k and management resources from the SWRDA and the Wiltshire Strategic Economic Partnership (WSEP).

Since the committed involvement of SWRDA, WSEP, WCC, NWDC, CTC and other partners including Wiltshire College and the Chippenham Area Partnership, the Vision Steering Group has been proactive in commissioning the necessary evidence-based reports and developing a strategy and outline action plans for the Vision for Chippenham – the results of which are now presented in this document.

Within its pages we have identified Key Issues, Opportunities for Improvement and Priority Areas for Action, including:

- More available employment land and opportunities
- Improved traffic systems, transport links and parking
- An enhanced riverside for leisure and tourism
- Quality leisure and performance facilities
- Improved appearance of heritage buildings
- A range of quality retail, restaurants and hotels

Lots more work is required however, and we have identified priority actions where further study work and public consultation is soon needed, some of which can be completed within existing budget and some which will require further funding:

1. Prepare Development Brief for Bath Road/Bridge Centre site to attract quality retail led occupancy that offers improvements to the public realm, high quality design and integration with the existing town centre in accordance with the aspirations of this document
2. Update the Conservation Area Management Plan and produce a list of the most urgent projects
3. Update the Wood Lane and Riverside Development Brief to achieve a riverside leisure facility
4. Prepare a development brief for Station Hill to include the potential development sites around the station and linking to Wiltshire College Chippenham, the park and town centre
5. Produce an Urban Framework Plan and Programme
6. Prepare a Marketing & Communications Strategy & Plan for the Vision
7. Undertake a detailed Feasibility Study of a Hydro Scheme on the Avon
8. Produce an Analysis & Pilot Study Proposal for Traffic Flow Improvement

9. Undertake a Parking Survey of the town centre
10. Produce an Analysis of the Leisure Facility needs of the town
11. Engage with the Wiltshire Council Workplace Strategy

We are keen to achieve early and productive engagement with the appropriate Wiltshire Council Service Directors and Portfolio Holders to progress the above.

Our outline Vision is for Chippenham to be a great place to live, work and visit:

- “A town with self-confidence and pride”: An active riverside town for all ages, with its own excellent & accessible facilities
- “Attractive, Active, Inclusive”: A progressive town with heritage at its core
- “Affordable, Accessible, Alive”: An attractive location for businesses
- “On the move”: Freely accessible by car, cycle and on foot
- “A Gateway to the South West”: A thriving tourist destination
- “Bags of choice, bags of style”: A retail location of quality and choice for all ages
- “A centre for learning”: A home of excellent education facilities for business and the local community
- “Green & Clean”: A regional centre for the Environment

We very much hope this document presents a positive and practical case for achieving this, and gains the vital support necessary for the good work of many people in the Chippenham community and its local authorities to progress.

### **Proposals**

It is proposed that the Implementation Executive:

- a. Support the work of the Chippenham Vision Task and Finish Group as identified in the document "A Vision for Chippenham" and endorse the further study work recommended in section 4 of the document.
- b. To provide support and the resources to complete the work to review the Chippenham Conservation Area Management Plan and produce it as a Supplementary Planning Document by April 2009.

### **Reason For Proposals**

To enable the Vision for Chippenham to be progressed.

### **Author**

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