

**IMPLEMENTATION EXECUTIVE
7 APRIL 2009****THE VISION FOR CHIPPENHAM****Executive Summary**

The Implementation Executive (IE) on 29 October 2008 noted the progress of the Chippenham Vision Task and Finish Group in further developing the Vision.

Overall, the Vision's aim is:

For Chippenham to be a great place to live, work and visit

Under this banner the Vision identifies a range of key themes:

- *A town with self-confidence and pride*
- *Attractive, Active, Inclusive*
- *Affordable, Accessible and Alive*
- *On the move*
- *A Gateway to the South West*
- *Bags of choice, bags of style*
- *A centre for learning*
- *Green and Clean*

The Vision also identifies 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

The IE noted that more work was required. A list of identified priority actions where further study work and public consultation would be required is appended to the report (**Appendix 1**).

This report sets out the current status and the next steps for the key projects of the Vision, together with a proposal for managing the Chippenham Vision forward through a public/private partnership – described as a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV).

Given the magnitude of the projects under consideration, the report sets out a number of recommendations.

Proposal

That the Implementation Executive considers and agrees the following recommendations in respect of:

Vision for Chippenham (SPV)

- (a) Approve the establishment of a Vision SPV and its terms of reference.
- (b) Approve the membership of the Vision SPV Executive Board.
- (c) Delegate authority to the Director, Economy and Enterprise to agree minor changes in (a) and (b) above.
- (d) Delegate authority to the Director, Economy and Enterprise to establish, subject to terms of reference of the Vision SPV, officer groups for the major projects, to work to the direction of the Vision Executive Board.

Reason for Proposal

Since its inception, the Vision for Chippenham has been 'managed' by a public/private sector Steering Group. This Group has been successful in moving the Vision forward. However, there are a number of issues, most notably the Group's lack of Terms of Reference. These have resulted in it not being as effective as it might have been. There is a lack of certainty relating to the major projects and the role of the Vision Group in managing the Vision process forward. In recognising and responding to such concerns, Wiltshire County Council has sought to reassure partners that the Wiltshire Council will work with them to deliver the Vision. Therefore, the management and governance of the Vision has been the subject of a detailed review. The results of this form the basis of this report alongside an update of the major Vision projects.

With the transition to Wiltshire Council on the 1 April 2009, it is imperative that the Vision Group has a mandate from the Implementation Executive to continue its work.

In agreeing the establishment of the Vision SPV, Implementation Executive Members will need to understand the progress, next steps and issues related to the overall Vision and individual major projects.

ALISTAIR CUNNINGHAM

Service Director, Economy and Enterprise

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Purpose of Report

1. To:
 - (i) Inform the Implementation Executive of the current position of the Vision for Chippenham, together with related matters;
 - (ii) Recommend moving forward to the next stages of work.

Background

2. At the Implementation Executive meeting on 28 October 2009 Members considered a report describing aspects of the Vision for Chippenham and resolved:
 - (a) *To endorse the Vision for Chippenham and to support the work of the Chippenham Vision Task and Finish Group and the further study work recommended in Section 4 of the document.*

This report responds to that resolution.

The Vision for Chippenham

3. In January 2006, the Chippenham Chamber of Commerce initiated a project to develop a vision for the future of Chippenham, mindful of the approaching Regional Spatial Strategy (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.
4. 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 town's 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. Following a series of presentations, to community groups, town and district authority committees the report formed the basis of an evolving Vision for Chippenham.

5. As the Chippenham Vision project gained momentum it received support and advice of Members. Membership of the Steering Group grew to include stakeholders and policy makers who helped to manage the process and turn the Vision into reality. In July 2007 the project gained matched funds of £50k and management resources from the South West Regional Development Agency (SWRDA) and the Wiltshire Strategic Economic Partnership (WSEP).
6. 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 outlining action plans for the Vision for Chippenham. The priority projects identified as part of this process are listed in **Appendix 1**.
7. The 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 and 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 and Clean***: A regional centre for the Environment
8. For approximately two years the Vision has been 'managed' by a public/private sector Steering Group. This Group has been successful in taking the Vision forward. However, there are a number of issues, most notably its size and its lack of any real Terms of Reference, which have resulted in it not being as effective as it could have been. The management and governance of the Vision has, therefore, been the subject of a detailed review. The results of this, together with proposals for the future, are included in this report.

Delivery of the Vision

9. It has been agreed that the most effective means of continuing the work of the , the Vision Steering Group would be for a special purpose vehicle (SPV) for the Vision, i.e. to replace the Steering Group from 1 April 2009. It was agreed that the creation of a more structured and formal SPV would be beneficial for the future delivery of the Vision programme. The advantages of an SPV are that it is:
- A body that is independent of the local authority
 - Led by an independent Chair from the private sector
 - Able to facilitate engagement with the business community and residents
 - Able to be established quickly
 - Supported by all of the public sector bodies involved
 - Flexible, so that possible future changes can be easily accommodated and that it has a relatively robust financial structure
10. The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) has recently published a comprehensive guide to choosing a partnership vehicle. The guide suggests that there are two fundamentally different types of partnership: an **Advisory Partnership** and an **Executive Partnership**.
- Advisory Partnership:** A vehicle in which each partner discusses and agrees what they each can do under their own steam as separate contributions towards partnership objectives.
- Executive Partnership:** A vehicle which can make its own decisions about how best to secure the purposes of the partnership, and act on them.
11. It has been agreed that at this stage in its development, there is no overriding need for an Executive Partnership, although this would be subject to review on a regular basis. It is, therefore, proposed to establish a new SPV as an Advisory Partnership to oversee the delivery of the Vision from April 2009. This Group will have specific responsibility for particular elements of project management, communications, community involvement, and strategy development and implementation.
12. The Chair of the SPV has a crucial role to play in ensuring that the Group is successful in delivering the Vision. The Vision Group consider that the required level of expertise, ability and knowledge will be found only in someone that has worked at a very senior level within the private sector. The Chair will have overall responsibility for the operation of the SPV. He or she will also have an important role to play in liaising with the new Wiltshire Council, CTC, North Wiltshire Economic Partnership, SWRDA and with other bodies to ensure their wide and high level active support for the Vision programme.
13. The SPV Executive Board members have a collective responsibility to ensure that the Local Delivery Vehicle (LDV) works to its Terms of Reference and that it meets its responsibilities. As such, the members will collectively need to have a wide range of skills and experience including financial management, procurement, marketing, and the management of major projects. The proposed Terms of Reference for this new Group and details of its membership are set out at **Appendix 2**.

14. Wiltshire Council will act as the accountable body for the partnership, holding funds on behalf of the partnership and distributing them in accordance with the partnership's wishes and appointing staff/contractors. Liability for actions undertaken on behalf of the partnership will be that of Wiltshire Council, but only if these actions are formally agreed by Wiltshire Council. All partners will accept liability for their actions. The partnership will be entered in the Wiltshire Council's Partnership register.

Environmental Impact of the Proposal

15. Environmental impact assessments will be carried out as part of the technical assessments of all Vision projects. From these assessments, mitigation measures will be developed as required.

Equality and Diversity Impact of the Proposal

16. The overall Vision purpose is one of improving the quality of life within the town through the improvement of the public realm and creation of open and green spaces. Accessibility within and to the town will be improved, and additional affordable town centre accommodation will be provided through the major schemes. Accessibility will be a key determining factor in the design of major schemes and Equality Impact Assessments will be undertaken.

Risk Assessment

17. The majority of recommendations are in relation to continuing the development of the major projects and the overall management of the Vision, with reports returning to Implementation Executive or the Wiltshire Council's Cabinet when decisions are required.
18. The risk associated with the establishment of the Vision SPV has been mitigated through creating an advisory partnership with the Council being required to consent to any actions taken on its behalf.
19. Not to progress this work would constitute a major reputational risk for the new Wiltshire Council in North Wiltshire, especially in respect of the Authority's standing with the business community.

Financial Implications

20. Revenue costs associated with the creation of the Vision SPV are within the current revenue budget of the Economic and Enterprise Service.

Legal Implications

21. The proposed SPV is an Advisory Group. It will make recommendations to either IE or Wiltshire Council Cabinet for decision. The Terms of Reference of the Group set out responsibilities of individual Partners. There are, therefore, no legal implications at this stage. However, should the Group take on additional executive responsibilities, this situation will be reviewed.

Options Considered

22. This report is one of a series relating to the ongoing development of the Vision for Chippenham. In developing the recommendations placed before Members, the following options were considered:
- (i) Recommend moving forward the project management and committing to the ongoing development of the Vision projects, but withholding decisions until such time as the appropriate information on which to base decisions is available.

Supported: Rationale is explicit within the report.
 - (ii) Recommend the IE commit financial resources to the Vision projects outside of the proposed budget agreed and without an understanding of the financial value of assets aligned to the Vision.

Rejected: Not considered prudent.

Conclusion

23. Implementation Executive has affirmed and reaffirmed its support for the Vision for Chippenham. However, it is recognised that the Vision is a long term aspiration and that the majority of projects require considerable lead in time prior to delivery. In supporting the establishment of the Vision SPV and the continued development of the major Vision projects, the Implementation Executive is committing to the delivery phase of the Vision and will, in due course, need to consider each individual project as and when financial, legal and technical considerations require Member decisions.

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March 2009

The following unpublished documents have been relied on in the preparation of this report:

Chippenham Retail and Commercial Health Check Draft Report

Appendices

1. Implementation Candidate Projects
2. Special Purpose Vehicle: Terms of Reference and membership of the Executive Board