

Neighbourhood Plan Continuity Committee

Date:	31 January 2017
Title:	Market Town Co-Ordinator Update
Contact Officer:	Becky Reid, Market Town Co-Ordinator

Purpose of Report

1. To provide an overview of work undertaken since last report 20 December 2016.

Update

2. Infrastructure

Parking & Road Signage

Car Parks: Following on from the parking surveys and provisional action plan created by Councillor Emery, a review of all parking signage has been completed. A report is currently being written with proposals about changes needed.

Town Gateway Signs: A detailed proposal about changes needed to our Town Gateway signs has been created by Councillor Bretherton.

A meeting will be called to discuss both of the above proposals further to agree next steps.

3. Communication

Town Awards

Great British High Street: Thame succeeded as a Runner up in the Great British High Street 'Best Small Market Town'. The certificate for this is now displayed in our Information Centre.

Improved digital Communication

A significant amount of work has been done to develop a proposal to amend TTC Website in order to integrate a business element. This came from a need identified by SODC, Thame Business Forum and 21stCT, to provide one website that provides a 'one-stop-shop' to promote Thame town centre: its businesses, services, attractions, etc. TTC Website already provides a lot of this information and so developing this further was determined as the best way to achieve this. £11,000 has been earmarked for this work previously. A meeting will be called to discuss the proposal and to agree next steps.

We were asked by SODC to consider being part of a 'Real Towns Pilot Programme'. Although this would attract funding from SODC and OxLEP, TTC would also be expected to fund £5k. The outcomes they were proposing included things Thame already has in place, we have asked for an amended proposal that better meets the needs of Thame.

4. Partnership Working

Town Centre Working Group

The first formal meeting of this group has been held and the Chair has now moved to the Market Town Co-Ordinator. Focus of this meeting was to review and agree the MTCO Action Plan. This was completed and submitted to this meeting for agreement under a separate agenda item. 21st Century Thame, Thame Centre First and Thame Markets were all invited to attend but were unable to make it. However their views have been sought and incorporated into the plan.

I have started attending the 21stCT steering group meetings, and will be attending their AGM.

5. Business Engagement and Support

Retail Survey

Annual reporting task to provide up-to-date retail statistics and high street trends has been completed. This information has previously been gathered by a walk around the town centre and to date this year's report has been completed in the same way. However we are also planning to supplement this survey with additional information about local businesses provided by MINT (a comprehensive database of company information). This information will be released by April 2017.

6. Tourism

No action taken.

7. Thame Markets

Market Entertainment

A calendar of 7 events, running throughout 2017, has been finalised. These aim to boost the profile of and increase footfall in the market. The first of these will be a Pancake themed activity running on Shrove Tuesday (28 February). We are seeking a community group to take part in this activity

Market Promotion

An initial plan has been created to increase marketing of the Market. This includes improvement to the information provided on our Website; better use of the Feather flags they already have, using TTC infrastructure that is already in place; improved use of Social Media; creating a feature in the wayfinding boards around town; consideration of sponsorship of roundabouts in order to promote the market and better use of town Gateway signs.

8. Working with SODC

Two meetings hosted by SODC for Market Town Coordinators have been attended.

- Market Town Coordinators meeting: sharing best practice between Market Town Coordinators across South and Vale. Representatives from Henley, Wallingford, Abingdon BID, and Wantage attended.
- South Market Towns meeting: With Councillor Simister and Suzanne Malcolm, Economic Development Manager from SODC. We were informed about the Business & Innovation Strategy that SODC are in the process of completing. Councillor Dyer asked for raw data to be sent to us. This was agreed but we are still waiting for it to be actioned. Councillor Simister was interested to know what issues businesses were facing in our towns and how they could support us better.

Action Required

To note the report