



# Stratford-upon-Avon *neighbourhood plan*

*Your Town, your Plan... it's time to write the future*

## Business & Tourism Working Party

Draft proposals from the Business Working Party

**STRATFORD-UPON-AVON  
NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2012 - 2013**

# WHAT WERE WE TRYING TO ACHIEVE?

- ✘ A vision from the Retail Community for the future of Stratford-upon-Avon's high street and out of town retailing over the next 20 years
- ✘ To recognise the positive things about Stratford, the problem areas and how improvements should be made for the future
- ✘ The Retail Community working together and having the opportunity of a say towards town planning



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# HOW DID WE GO ABOUT IT?

- ✘ A series of meetings starting with a joint meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2011
- ✘ This first meeting quickly determined that the group needed to be subdivided into Tourism, Town Centre Retail and Industry & general 'out of town' business
- ✘ The Town Centre Retail sub-group had further meetings on 25<sup>th</sup> November and 14<sup>th</sup> December 2011: names drawn up of businesses and individuals whose involvement would be welcomed
- ✘ A joint meeting was held on 10<sup>th</sup> January for general updates
- ✘ 2 further sub-group meetings took place on 5<sup>th</sup> January and 7<sup>th</sup> March
- ✘ SWOT analysis was undertaken at March meeting
- ✘ Further meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> April to determine priorities of group's findings



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# STRENGTHS HIGHLIGHTED BY SWOT ANALYSIS?

- ✘ Well-known town creates a strong brand
- ✘ Central UK location
- ✘ Compact town centre
- ✘ A wide variety of businesses with 60% of them being independent
- ✘ Strong in having affluent and loyal clients from the local catchment area



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# WEAKNESSES HIGHLIGHTED BY SWOT ANALYSIS

- ✘ Business rents and rates are too high
- ✘ Car-parking charges are too high and do not favour the retailers
- ✘ Too much vehicle traffic in the town centre
- ✘ No public transport interchange at Stratford-upon-Avon (Town) Railway Station
- ✘ The apparent lack of desire by planners to preserve the character of the town centre



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# THREATS HIGHLIGHTED BY SWOT ANALYSIS

- ✘ Threat to town centre by further development of the Maybird Centre, Tesco and Waitrose (Rosebird Centre) and other out of town development is Stratford's biggest threat
- ✘ Possibility of large anchor store withdrawing
- ✘ Shopping via the Internet
- ✘ Continuing polarisation of retail towards larger towns where there is a greater choice of shops
- ✘ Continuing downturn in consumer expenditure



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# OPPORTUNITIES HIGHLIGHTED BY SWOT ANALYSIS

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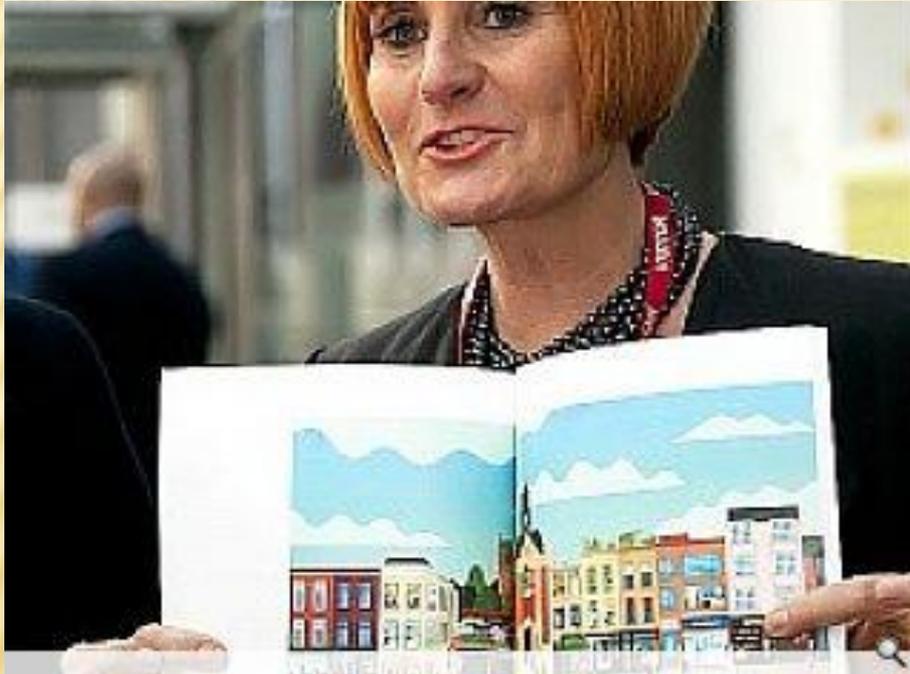
- ✘ More pedestrianisation or pedestrian priority
- ✘ Adapt car-parking policies to favour retail more
- ✘ Improve transport infrastructure
- ✘ Create better approaches and walking routes
- ✘ Better signage from motorway and to town centre car-parks



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# AND WHO ELSE IS SEEMINGLY ON OUR SIDE?



“I don’t want to live in a Britain that doesn’t care about community. And I believe that our high streets are a really important part of pulling people together in a way that a supermarket or shopping mall, however convenient, however entertaining and however slick, just never can”



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# SOME RECOMMENDATIONS FROM MARY PORTAS

Get town centres running like businesses: how? By strengthening the management of high streets through new 'Town Teams' and developing The Business Improvement District model.

Get the basics right to allow businesses to flourish: how? By looking at how the Business Rate system could better support small businesses and independent retailers and by encouraging affordable town centre car-parking and looking at further opportunities to remove red tape on the high street

Level the playing field: how? By ensuring a 'strong town centre first' approach in planning and encouraging large retailers to show their support for high streets

Define landlords' roles and responsibilities: how? By looking at disincentives for landlords leaving properties vacant and empowering local authorities to step in when landlords are negligent

Give communities a greater say: how? By greater inclusion of the high street in Neighbourhood Planning and encouraging innovative community uses of empty high street spaces



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# OUR TOP PRIORITIES NOW

**There has to be a need to preserve the character, architecture and ambience of the core town centre area.**

We must ensure that the Neighbourhood Plan contains a full and clear set of guidelines for a defined core town centre area which, whilst not discouraging businesses from investing in the town, insists on the quality of the streetscape being retained and improved. The guidelines should be prepared in consultation with representative bodies like StratForward (BID) and the town centre businesses who truly wish to be involved



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# OUR TOP PRIORITIES NOW

**There must be a need to define the core retail element of the central area of the town**

Although mentioned in the SDC Core Strategy document, the Neighbourhood Plan should clearly define a core retail element of the town Centre area, which should be protected and preserved e.g. Sheep Street. The core Retail area should be prepared again in consultation with representative bodies like StratForward (BID) and town centre businesses who genuinely wish to be involved.



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# OUR TOP PRIORITIES NOW

## **Transport infrastructure has to be improved**

The Neighbourhood Plan must encourage the development of an improved coach parking facility in the town centre. Logic dictates that this should be on the land adjacent to the town centre railway station so that Stratford has a single public transportation hub.

All efforts should be made to encourage a more frequent rail service to main destinations like Birmingham and London, especially to tie in with the new Stratford Parkway Railway Station

The Neighbourhood Plan should be used to encourage a revised, coherent and de-cluttered system of vehicle signage for both car-parking and for delivery vehicles



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# OUR TOP PRIORITIES NOW

## **Key pedestrian linkages to be improved**

The Neighbourhood Plan must be used to encourage developments to improve pedestrian linkages between the town centre and

- 1) Stratford (Town) Railway Station
- 2) The Maybird Centre
- 3) The new Visitor Information Centre

The NP should support pedestrian priority along the Historic Spine route between Shakespeare's Birthplace and Holy Trinity Church

The NP should encourage developments to reconfigure the layout especially of Bridge Street in order to significantly increase the available pedestrian space, whilst possibly retaining vehicle access and parking



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# OUR TOP PRIORITIES NOW

## **Possible levels of residential use in the town centre area to be increased**

The Neighbourhood Plan should possibly encourage more appropriate apartment creation in the town centre.

“The entire area between the former Cattle Market (including the current Western Road area bordering both sides of the canal) and including the area at the junction of Birmingham Road and Arden Street should be proposed as a high-quality development site, which would incorporate houses, apartments and public space and would create high-quality pedestrian links between the development, the town centre and the Maybird Centre. The current business uses of this area could be displaced into the currently vacant business space within the Birmingham Road and Timothy’s Bridge Road areas”



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# OUR TOP PRIORITIES NOW

## **The importance of improved car-parking in the town centre**

The car parks in Stratford-upon-Avon town centre need to offer more spaces and at more competitive charges to encourage longer stays: this is essential if the Neighbourhood Plan has a vision to attract more visitors

The car parks need to be better maintained, decorated and landscaped to match the beauty of the town: current car parks are perceived to be poor from both a practical and aesthetic perspective

The management of car-parking needs to be improved as it currently does not favour the retailers at all

If Stratford-upon-Avon is perceived to be a location where there are parking issues i.e. lack of spaces and high charges, then this will deter visitors from nearby cities such as Coventry and Birmingham



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# MY PERSONAL VISION

“All of us involved in Stratford-upon-Avon should be proud both to either live or work here or if we are really lucky, to do both! Most towns or cities would be prepared to give up many things just to have had a certain former resident named William Shakespeare: we have inherited this gift for free!

We are merely tenants in this town and what we are trying to achieve in the completion of this Neighbourhood Plan is in reality a tiny contribution on our part towards making Stratford-upon-Avon a better place for future generations, whether they work, live or visit here. With so many of us genuinely prepared to assist in this process, this is further proof that we do wish to play our part in maintaining what we currently have and to help make improvements for the future.

Whether we work or live in the town, whether we have been here for many years or are fairly new to the area, our joint efforts in working together will hopefully reap its benefits when the residents of this town vote in favour of adopting our Neighbourhood Plan”.



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