

Draft Proposals from Working Party on Young People and Families

Feb 2012

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Conflicts of interest/Governance issues – none declared by group members

Introduction

This draft document is meant to be a work in progress. The people involved so far are detailed in the next paragraph. Our aim is to provide a document with ideas to improve and conserve Stratford for the benefit of young people and families now and for the future.

The next stage of this process will be to use the input of the other working parties, the steering group, and the local population's views generally, in order to improve the document.

Who has been involved?

The working party consists of "willing" volunteers. In addition to the WP members, interviews and opinion and advice were canvassed from others.

Method

Using the concept of swot analysis, a table with a variety of ideas for each swot category was done. This was then grouped according to topic, and group members came up with potential solutions to each topic problem. See appendix 1 for swot analysis and subsequent categories.

Aims

As detailed above, our aim is to see how the needs of young people and families living in Stratford can be assessed and solved.

Our swot analysis of Stratford's *strengths* came up with the main categories of heritage, education, green spaces such as The Rec, and the Welcome Hills; other leisure facilities such as the swimming pool, cafes, Cox's Yard, and the skate park.

The main *weaknesses* included town shopping for the young (local young people, but would also include tourists), with the "maybird problem"; transport – again for the young a big issue, pedestrianisation, safe cycle paths, threat to green spaces, limited leisure and sports activities for young, and very limited social life in evening for young people. Also underpinning a lot of these is increasing skewed age structure of the town.

The main *opportunities* were to develop and possibly link heritage, with educational opportunities, to improve tourist footfall. Also, to link in tourism with improved leisure facilities for young people and families.

The main *threats* were over-development and loss of town's character and heritage, due to developers and planners. Also (although nothing we can do about this) big budget cuts for transport, health and education, and social services, to young.

Main Topics from SWOT

Heritage
Leisure especially teen and young people's facilities
Green spaces
Travel
Education
Town centre + shopping
Housing

Overall SWOT topics with related links....including with core strategy

<u>Topic</u>	<u>Overlap in our WP</u>	<u>Overlap in other WPs</u>	<u>Overlap with Core Strategy</u>
Heritage	education teen	Tourism/business. Infrastructure, mature s.	Protection and enhancement of town's historic heritage.p125
Especially teen and young people's facilities	education	Tourism/business. Infrastructure, mature s.	Increase provision of play space as under provision against recommended standard.(p128) as are pitches/outdoor sport facilities.p198
Green spaces	teen	Tourism/business. Infrastructure, mature s.	Plan to increase in green spaces due to shortfall against recommended standard. p127
Travel	all	all	Bus-rail interchange at cattle market site .Implement historic spine and improve pedestrianisation. Improve cycle routes.on/off road. p129
Education	Heritage teen	All except mature s	"Provide for an increased supply of primary and secondary schools".p128
Town centre +shopping	Heritage teen	all	"Promote town centre first policy"p128
Housing	all	Housing. Infrastructure Mature s	increase number of suitable and affordable homes p128

Big Ideas:

1. Green Spaces

Weakness:

Permanent threat from developers to destroy green spaces by building on them

Analysis:

Permanent threat from developers to destroy green spaces by building on them for example, in the recent past on the racecourse and Welcombe hills and most recently on land around Ann Hathaway's Cottage.

In all surveys done, "green spaces" was amongst the highest positive feature of Stratford that residents, of all ages, wanted to preserve, including young people.

Aim/Solution:

To protect and extend green spaces for the current population and the future of Stratford.

Requirement for the Solution:

Ban all development on certain key sites –including the Welcombe hills, the Greenway, the Racecourse, and the Recreation Ground, Shottery fields, and land surrounding heritage sites such as Ann Hathaway's cottage.

In addition prevent development of any school playing fields, and current playgrounds.

Create new parks and playgrounds.

Incorporate and extend footpaths and cycle routes joining up with canal routes and river.

Create "fitness circuit trails/parcours"

Create "teen playgrounds" –there is a lot more provision for young children. Would benefit town and population, and tourism, to have facilities also for older children eg Ragley Hall's Adventure playground.

Create green wooded area with pathways around Stratford's boundary linking

- to town centre

- to greenway cycle route,
- to riverside and towpaths

? as a **Diamond Jubilee Project** .

Funding-

- link in with Woodland Trust charity diamond jubilee tree-planting, or
- Town Fundraising
- local philanthropic businessmen

Benefits.

1. **Improve physical health of local population**
2. **Improve mental health of local population**
3. **Improve appearance of Stratford hence benefit tourism**
4. **Protect and preserve Stratford for future generations**
5. **No-brainer for the referendum**

2.Town Centre and Shopping

Analysis:

Town centre is under threat from expansion of maybird, and other more attractive shopping destinations such as Leamington Spa, and Solihull (John Lewis); and more pervasively from internet shopping. Also internet shopping is forecast to take an increasing proportion of retail activity. Car parking can be a further disadvantage to town centres. To maintain vibrancy and attractiveness, the town centre will have to offer more. (see recent report from Mary Portas).

Aim:

Protect, and enhance Stratford's Town Centre for its residents and visitors.

Solution

Encourage 'up-market' shops and cinema

Make Stratford a "destination" shopping centre

Reduce council taxes on high street properties

Reduced rents which are not something that can be determined by local politics.

Ensure pedestrianisation improves the situation.

Reduce car parking charges (especially for long-term day-trippers) and restrictions, and improve car parks

Explore "mixed use" options. (recreational and commercial in the same space.) (see leisure, and below)

Encourage families and teenage shoppers.

Ensure mix of shops and town centre facilities for **all ages** – this will improve the facilities for residents and tourists alike. Teenagers are big shoppers, and families with young children have a high turnover of clothes....

User - friendly baby changing facilities (particularly for parents/carers with more than one child and good toilets.

Covered facilities indoor market/shopping/meeting place

Add other facilities ?play barn ? bowling

Restaurants/eating places/leisure activities for children and young people could have swipe cards that can be topped up online by parents.

Increase evening on-street parking in all areas, including (increased) pedestrianised areas, to improve evening town centre use.

Improve train –travellers/visitors approach to/from town centre to train station – is foul!

Create access path to Schools and College from station

Improve accessibility...

- Ensure pedestrianisation improves the situation.
- Cycle routes in/out of centre
- Cycle parking areas
- Reduce parking restrictions,
- Improve car parks quality...
- Improve car parking rates for OFF peak users
- Encourage park and ride use

Town At Night....

Weakness:

- Very little for young teenagers to do in and around the town in the evenings/weekends.
- Too few food outlets/affordable aimed at younger people.
- Not enough live music festivals/venues .
- Some locals attitude to young people in town at night.

Aim

Improve night life for residents and visitors alike.

Plan

- Encourage evening **mixed use** town centre ie restaurants, pubs, dancing, bowling, cinemas
- Improve other leisure activities for young for evenings
- 'Safe area' for teens to hang-out
- Extend leisure centre to add bowling and teen area
- Improve public transport in evenings
- Increase evening on-street parking in all areas, including (increased) pedestrianised areas.
- Encourage Cox's Yard to consider more/continued entertainment or socializing opportunities.

- Use “Rusty Shed” for alternative music gigs and live comedy shows and other young people’s events.
- Encourage local theatres to have themed evenings/clubs - comedy/music
- Extend discos/dancing venues – including out of town...
- Safe transport into town and home after pub/club closures to reduce antisocial behaviour.
- Highlight the low crime rate in Stratford upon Avon to the residents.
- Look at other venues that could host young bands/entertainment
- Encourage Late closing times for coffee shops and other areas that are alcohol free – so younger people have somewhere to hangout.

Benefits:

- Organised social environments for safe, fun activities.
- Improved financial benefits to cafes, restaurants etc
- Improve tourism profile ie improve general attraction for stay-over tourists and daytrippers (for example to school groups, families, DINKYs and “girls weekends away” etc.)
- Reduces bored teens getting into trouble!

3. Leisure Facilities for Young People and Families

Problems:

Expensive and limited facilities at the local leisure centre for teenagers.

Lack of leisure activities for teens and older primary school kids

Transport problems for the young.

Issues with antisocial behavior at nightclub’s closing time.

Aim:

To improve leisure activities for the young

Plan:

See town centre /shopping

See green spaces

See transport

AND

- Mixed use town centre
- **Extend leisure centre** to add bowling and teen-safe-area
- Playground for older children/young teens eg like Ragley Hall
- Fitness parcours
- Extend leisure centre to add a playbarn for young children.

- Municipal free tennis courts
- Basketball courts
- Football areas
- Use extra car park areas in evenings as eg basketball areas.....eg on Rec, or near civic hall by adding netting and hoops.
- Playgrounds

- Encourage Cox's Yard
- Use "Rusty Shed" for alternative music gigs and live comedy shows and other young people's events.
- Encourage more festivals such as Fringe/River Festival.

Benefits

Improved health for teenagers at an important physical developmental stage.

Reduction in obesity in early adult years.

Occupies youth in safe environment for developing interests and socializing

Improvement in facilities for tourists, especially if staying in Stratford.

4.Travel

Aims:

- Improve transport around town
- Environmentally responsible transport

CYCLE ROUTES

Weakness

- Currently town's roads very unsafe for cyclists
- Cycle routes not fit for purpose
- Poor or no cycle routes making cycling to and from school hazardous.
- Poor access to Greenway Cycle Route from south side of town.
- Intermittent cycle route to cross back and forth over the River Avon.
- Dangerous cycle routes that have been painted on existing highways making cyclists very vulnerable.
- Cycle routes that are totally unsuitable for youngsters.

Solution

Nb is Small, flat town ideal for walkers and cyclists

- Widen pavements for sharing with walkers and mobility scooters
- Highlight cycle share sections of the pavements e.g. with chrome studs as seen in other European cities/towns
- Make safe cycle routes to the Schools and to the Greenway.
- Cut traffic speed to 20mph in town centre and approach roads
- All new developments, regardless of size should incorporate cycle lanes.
- the main routes to schools and town centre should be a priority.

Benefits

- Safer cycling.
- Less traffic jams
- Less pollution
- Improved physical health of local population
- Improved mental health of local population (both assuming no bike accidents!)
- Less parking needed if people walk and cycle to and from work.

Pedestrianisation:

Problems

- Busy pavements
- A lot of narrow pavements
- Multiple users
including elderly, toddlers, double buggies, and now increasing numbers of wide mobility scooters, and in some areas bicycles.....
- Traffic pollution causing respiratory problems
- Increased risk RTAs with squashed earlier categories

Plan

- Pedestrianise centre of Stratford
- Dual purpose/timings of pedestrianisation ie **flexible pedestrianisation**
- Widen pavements
- Remove street clutter incl railings
- X-pedestrian crossing at big junctions either end of Greenhill St
- Slow car speeds in central areas to max 20mph
- Consider evening parking in pedestrianised zones to encourage evening visitors

Potential Pedestrianisation Plan

Potential Thoughts on Pedestrianisation...



Other tourist town's examples of pedestrianisation

- The streets of Tenby's walled town are pedestrianised during each summer.
- "Vehicle restrictions will apply from 11.00am to 5.00pm on each day of
- the pedestrianisation period, Saturday July 17th, until Sunday September 5th."

Expert views...

- **A mix of roads that are closed to traffic for certain times in the day can work well. A mix of different retail outlets is also essential.**
- "It's important that there are different activities after 6pm - you need art galleries alongside bars, restaurants and shops. You need a reason for people to be on the streets," said Ben Plowden, director of the Pedestrians' Association.

Public Transport

Little we can do but

“Wish list” :

- Later evening buses running
- More routes and frequency
- Including surrounding villages
- Later trains
- Improved rail links with Birmingham and London – v slow.
- Improved coach- rail links
- Need coach station at railway

5. Education

Weakness

Lack of local school places
Future funding issues

Analysis:

With the number of new houses already built, local schools have become oversubscribed. This has resulted in children having to travel miles to get to their schools and in some cases siblings being separated causing difficulties to the parents. Most of the local primary schools in Stratford have already expanded to the maximum to meet the growing needs of the local community.

The High School could in the near future be oversubscribed causing children from the area having to travel away to attend high school.

Solution

Can a new school be built to deal with the growing school population.
Link in with heritage and education (see below).

Requirement for the Solution:

Possibility of local schools being extended to cope with ever growing numbers caused by new developments.

Look at possibility of new school being built.

6.Heritage/Tourism

Overlap with leisure activities, green spaces and education.

Analysis:

The world-wide appeal of Stratford upon Avon is unrealised, (and unappreciated by many residents. Note the visit by the Chinese premier on his special request...).

Town derives a lot of its prosperity, beauty, interest, and facilities from being a tourist destination.

Economy problems – British and other European tourists less likely to take holidays; or if do - for short duration. As European tourists also in financial difficulties – need to promote to Asian tourists, especially Chinese and Indian – who already have a good knowledge and interest in Shakespeare.

Aim:

- Ensure Stratford upon Avon becomes a high-profile tourist destination enjoyed by its visitors and residents alike.
- Ensure Stratford is protected and enhanced by this Plan.

Requirement for the Solution:

- Need to improve world (esp Chinese and Indian) tourism for longer duration stay.
- Encourage day trippers
- Encourage couples as weekend short-break at luxury end market
- Encourage families as weekend short-break (cheaper end of market)
- A robust Town strategy for tourism and heritage
- A clear focus for tourism driven by a portfolio holder with responsibility solely for tourism in the District Council, at present the portfolio is business and tourism.
- Proper professional and competent support for strategy development
- A sense of urgency
- Clear integration with the tourism strategy of adjoining areas
- Leverage a wider range of leisure activities of the heritage and tourism base to appeal to a broader cross-section of people
- Improve **transport** links especially rail and coach
- In future can link with coach/train?? to high speed rail link to Birmingham.
- For now could operate Johnson's buses to link with Warwick parkway for London weekend package tourists.

- Promote **theatre** for older children with educational input and other town teen's facilities for family's short-breaks and school residential trips.
- Link in with **schools** and RSC for educational/residential visits for out of area /overseas schools/students in school holidays.
- Link in as above and with summer language courses for overseas students/people-with Shakespeare/RSC input.
- Promote cycling holidays
- Promote boating holidays – see Avon Ring; narrow boat holidays; canoeing; rowing(very active Stratford Rowing Club)
- Promote Cotswold Link
- Promote Birmingham Link

Benefits

- Protect and enhance Stratford's heritage
- Increase town's prosperity, despite economic problems.
- Help school funding.
- Help RSC and Birthplace funding
- Improve leisure facilities for local people

. Housing

Problems:

Need for more affordable family accommodation .

Ensure not only residential homes and retirement flats built.

Risk of Eastbourne Effect

Currently we are importing in the "very elderly" from outside Stratford District into nursing and care homes which will impact on the District's health and social care provision for current residents now and in the future.

Aim:

Need to build affordable 3 bedroom family accommodation

Encourage down-sizing in elderly to free-up family accommodation.

Discourage xs nursing homes being built – instead of accommodation for young people and families.

Encourage rental flats for young adults.

Future Problems

- Potential lack of transparency over possible vested interests involved in process.
- Funding
- Political

Hopes

We are very fortunate to live in Stratford upon Avon

We need to pass it on preserved and enhanced for our children's generation.

Helen Crook

23.3.12