

South Oxfordshire market towns action plans 2011-12

INTRODUCTION

This document updates the South Oxfordshire market towns action plans agreed by cabinet annually since 2009. The council's economic development team has had discussions with each of the town partnerships and town councils to identify projects that will deliver significant economic benefits for the towns, fit with the vision for both the district and the towns and can realistically be delivered in 2011/12. This update endorses the visions for the three towns outlined in the 'distinctiveness' reports commissioned by the council in 2009, whilst recognising that all three towns perform an important function for the residents and businesses in South Oxfordshire and, therefore, must support the delivery of our overall strategies. It is crucial to recognise that although the market town agenda is vested with the council's economic development service, successful delivery of the plan is dependent on a commitment from the relevant council services as well as partners in the towns, especially the town councils.

The council has a strategic objective to support economic growth and a corporate priority to support the creation of vibrant market towns.

What's in the plans?

The updated plans identify the specific actions that South Oxfordshire District Council is committed to delivering in 2011/12. The choice of actions was guided by:

- recommendations from the Miller 'distinctiveness' reports
- projects from the 2010/11 action plan that were not completed during that financial year, but are still deemed by the partnerships to be both relevant and desirable - we have essentially rolled these projects forward, including projects that were allocated funding from the SEEDA small rural towns programme in 2010
- the ability of the council to positively affect the delivery of the proposed action
- the financial resources potentially available to implement the project and in particular the potential for attracting external funding
- in-depth discussion with local partners and public consultation.

Although the plans identify the actions where the council will lead, it is committed to delivering the plan in partnership with:

- each of the town partnerships, namely: Henley Partnership, 21st Century Thame and the Wallingford Partnership
- the town councils of Henley, Thame and Wallingford

- Oxfordshire County Council
- specific interest groups with relevant expertise, such as Wallingford in Business, Sustainable Wallingford, Wallingford Museum, Oxfordshire Food Group, Henley in Transition, Henley River and Rowing Museum, the Chilterns Conservation Board and the National Trust.

All actions will support the council's vision for its markets towns and will contribute towards at least one of four key objectives:

- increasing the quality and spend in retail, tourism and hospitality (**retail and tourism**)
- developing arts, culture and events (**culture and events**)
- investing in transport links, infrastructure and facilities including business support (**infrastructure**)
- increasing awareness of each town as a destination (**marketing**).

The role of the market town co-ordinator in each town

Each town will continue to benefit from the support of a part-time market town co-ordinator. Market town co-ordinators are expected to lead on a number of projects in each of the towns and will also:

- support the town business partnership to engage with the businesses in the town and encourage them to take part in local initiatives as well as work more closely together for their mutual benefits
- assist the delivery of local initiatives directly contributing to increased footfall or awareness about what the town has to offer
- collecting events information and promoting the towns, the council's tourism website, the council's communication team, the local media and any other relevant PR channels
- offer practical help to ensure that the town capitalises on the opportunities offered by London 2012.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTIONS - ALL TOWNS

Ref	Objectives	Action	Lead	Resources	Timescale
	Retail and tourism	a. Include all local food suppliers in the destination management system database	ED (all)	From existing resources	On-going
		b. Publicise local food initiatives through the tourism marketing services	ED (MTCs)	From existing resources	On-going
		c. Undertake a visitor survey to understand what changes have occurred since July 2009 and to understand the role of the visitor economy in each market town	ED	£5,000 revenue	2011 Q2
		d. Encourage the use of branding and marketing tools for each of the towns	ED (MTCs)	From existing resources	Ongoing
		e. Undertake retail vacancy survey in all towns	ED (MTCs)	From existing resources	2011 Q3
	Infrastructure	f. Host at least one themed networking event to encourage business involvement in the towns and share best-practice	ED	£2,000 revenue	2011 Q4
		g. Develop town - based economic fact sheets for inclusion in inward investment pack	ED (MTCs)	From existing resources	2011 Q4
		h. Continue dialogue to support local food producers and if suitable project is identified, develop a LEADER application	ED	From existing resources	Ongoing
		i. Be an active partner in consultations initiated by OCC	ED/ Health and Housing/ Planning	From existing resources	Ongoing
		j. Help shape Oxfordshire LEP's view of the importance of market towns	ED	From existing resources	Ongoing

	Culture and events	<p>k. Publicise events through all communication channels including the tourism marketing service, council newsletters, press releases, visitsouthoxfordshire.co.uk website etc</p> <p>l. Ensure that all events are on the destination management system</p>	ED / MTCs	From existing resources	Ongoing
			ED / MTCs	From existing resources	Ongoing
	Marketing	<p>m. Continue support of Midsomer Murder portal to promote South Oxfordshire links with Midsomer Murders</p> <p>n. Organise a tourism networking event to explore possibilities and encourage joint-working and encourage visitors to stay longer</p> <p>o. Join town promotion up with other relevant area promotions</p> <p>p. Ensure greater use of visitsouthoxfordshire.co.uk (including mobile version) through on-going promotion and regular content management</p> <p>q. Support specific locally led initiatives aimed at promoting the towns in the run-up to 2012 Olympics</p>			

Total for all towns: £7,000 (revenue)

Henley

Ref	Objectives	Action	Lead	Resources	Timescale
	Retail and tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Support Henley Partnership Tourism Group's 'hospitality award' b. Promote George Orwell Centre (in old Chapel in Cemetery) as a base for the George Orwell Society (Henley) c. Queen Elizabeth jubilee celebrations d. Maximise the benefit from hosting the Challenge Triathlon event in September 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ED (MTC) THP/HTC/TEAM HTC Leisure / ED 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> From existing resources £250 (SODC) revenue; in-kind repairs by HTC £250 (SODC) revenue; £250 (HTC) From existing resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2011 Q3 2011 Q4 2011 Q4 2011 Q3
	Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> e. To consult upon, develop and deliver a new business event for Henley (and surrounds) - #Henleybiz - and provide continued and ongoing web / social media support f. Establish dialogue with and engage with businesses g. Maintain the commercial pages of the Henley Partnership website h. To work with the Henley Partnership to implement the most appropriate model of partnership working for the future i. Undertake signage review and deliver signage projects j. To work with the Henley 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MTC MTC MTC ED ED/Health & Housing/ Henley Town Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> £3,000 (SODC) revenue; £750 (THP); £750 (HTC); £1,000 (Others) Existing resources Existing resources Existing resources £12,000 capital 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2011 Q4 ongoing ongoing ongoing 2012

Ref	Objectives	Action	Lead	Resources	Timescale
		Standard to promote key successes in the town	ED/MTC	Existing resources	ongoing
	Culture and events	k. Produce a contact leaflet for arts group in Henley	Henley Partnership Arts Group / Henley Partnership	Existing resources	2011 Q2
		l. Produce festivals leaflet		Existing resources	2011 Q1
	Marketing	m. Produce updated promotional banners	THP	Existing resources	2011 Q1
		n. Produce Henley travel itineraries to encourage visitors to stay longer	MTC	£1,000 (SODC) revenue	2011 Q4
		o. Work with Henley Olympics planning group	ED	Existing resources	2011 Q4

Henley – total revenue (£5,000 from SODC); total capital (£12,000)

Thame

Ref	Objectives	Action	Lead	Resources	Timescale
	Retail and tourism	a. Launch the loyalty card scheme and support it on an on-going basis	MTC / ED	From existing budgets	2011 Q2
		b. Set-up and administer shop front improvement grant scheme	ED / 21 st CT	From existing budgets	2011 Q4
		c. Develop web portal with e-commerce function	21 st CT	From existing budgets	2011 Q4
		d. Install new information boards with updated shopping guide	MTC	From existing budgets	2011 Q4
	Infrastructure	e. Develop Thame First to be the business voice for Thame	21 st Century Thame	From existing budgets	Ongoing
	Culture and events	f. Investigate options for a community equipment pool (gazebos, tables, PA systems, etc)	21 st Century Thame	From existing budgets	2011 Q3
		g. Support Thame Food Festival to become a commercial venture, drawing upon the business plan produced by Miller Research	MTC	£5,000	2011 Q3
	Marketing	h. Put events on the visitsouthoxfordshire.co.uk website	ED/MTC	Ongoing	Ongoing
		i. To work with the Thame Gazette to promote the key successes in the town	ED/MTC	Ongoing	Ongoing

Thame total: £5,000 (revenue)

Wallingford

Ref	Objectives	Action	Lead	Resources	Timescale
	Retail and tourism	<p>a. Support Wallingford Partnership to ensure its ongoing sustainability.</p> <p>b. Help WiB recruit new members and organise regular business events in the town.</p> <p>c. Support at least one collective action from Wallingford's businesses to help promote the business offer in the town</p>	<p>ED / MTC</p> <p>ED / MTC</p> <p>ED/ MTC</p>	<p>From existing resources</p> <p>From existing resources</p> <p>£1,500 revenue</p>	<p>2011 Q4</p> <p>ongoing</p> <p>2011 Q4</p>
	Culture and events	<p>d. Support Wallingford Food Festival</p> <p>e. Support Wallingford in linking into the Olympic celebration or Jubilee celebrations.</p>	<p>ED/ MTC</p> <p>ED/ MTC</p>	<p>From existing resources</p> <p>£250 revenue</p>	<p>2011 Q1</p> <p>2011 Q4</p>
	Infrastructure	<p>f. Complete signage project</p> <p>g. PR campaign to promote use of council offices car park by visitors to the town, especially at week-ends</p>	<p>WPL / ED / MTC</p> <p>MTC</p>	<p>From existing resources</p> <p>From existing resources</p>	<p>2011 Q2</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
	Marketing	<p>h. identify opportunities where businesses in the town can use the branding and encourage them to use it</p> <p>i. Publicise events through all communication channels including the tourism marketing service, council newsletters, press releases, etc</p> <p>j. To work with the Wallingford Herald to promote the key successes in the town</p>	<p>MTC</p> <p>MTC / ED</p> <p>MTC / ED</p>	<p>From existing resources</p> <p>From existing resources</p> <p>From existing resources</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

Wallingford total: £1,750 (revenue)