

# **Ivybridge Town Plan**

## **Background**

The Ivybridge Town Team (ITT) was set up in 2012 to bring together representatives of the three relevant councils, town, district and county, the local MP, and people from the voluntary and business sectors of Ivybridge.

The mission was to come up with a deliverable plan for the centre of Ivybridge.

ITT has sought to build upon the sterling efforts of its predecessor body, the expertise of its membership and to make full use of the various reports and plans that had been produced over the years setting out some excellent ideas for the future of the town.

In addition, with the help of the South Hams District Council (SHDC), the ITT commissioned an independent Retail and Leisure Study by Peter Brett Associates (the Study) and much reliance upon the findings on the Study has been made in bringing forward this plan.

We are mindful of the findings in the Study about the nature of life for most of Ivybridge residents, namely that they tend to work elsewhere meaning that evenings and weekends are the times when we should maximise our engagement with them. We have sought to work with Ivybridge as it is and not as we would wish it to be.

## **Scope of Plan**

This plan is not intended to replace any other statutory plans that will be produced, although it is hoped that its findings and recommendations will dovetail neatly into any Neighbourhood Plan to be initiated by the Town Council working with SHDC in accordance with District Local Plan principles

The main thrust of this plan is deliverability. We look to focus on things which we believe are achievable over the next 5 to 10 years

The plan is not a static document or a final statement, but rather a rolling plan with a variety of action points along the way. We expect it to develop as events unfold during the plan period. We recognise that open

market principles (ie the individual choices of people) will be the key driver of change, but we are seeking to give some shape and framework to that dynamic. Although many of the actions will fall to be delivered by the three councils, we hope that the town team will remain in place to help co-ordinate delivery.

## **Our proposals**

1. The Study has shown support for the existing range of independent retailers in the town. Our first proposal therefore is to do all we can to support existing retailers. We propose to collect the e-mail addresses of every town centre business in Ivybridge early in 2014 and conduct a personalised web based survey seeking their ideas of what we can do to help them achieve greater economic rewards for themselves and the community, culminating with a meeting between us and the businesses to thrash out a separate set of action points.
2. The Study also demonstrated that unlike some of our neighbouring towns Ivybridge lacks a distinctive retail theme that helps attract buyers and browsers to the town. We recommend that we therefore seek to identify a new retail sector and through advertising and financial incentives seek to attract new retailers in this sector specifically to set up in Ivybridge. We will consult on which sector to target. One early suggestion that has emerged is the idea of Ivybridge as a centre for health and healthy related activities, including sports. There is nothing like this in the Plymouth travel to work area. But we are open to other ideas.
3. We recognise the importance of the Leisure Centre to the life and well-being of the town. We support the Leisure Centre staying on its existing site and being improved and upgraded as effectively as resources permit. We are very supportive of proposals that have recently emerged of a 26 bed -hotel, possibly a boutique sports hotel being built on the lido part of the leisure centre. These exciting proposals also contain restaurants on the ground floor with views over the river Erme. This option is being further explored.

4. We also wish to see more events promoted in the town to increase footfall especially during the evenings and weekends. More regular events such as the International market and more substantial farmer's markets are two ideas, but we will be seeking more ideas, including those outside the retail sector. We recognise the success of the Watermark team in promoting events that bring people into the town and we seek to build upon this success. We recognise that all of this has resource implications, especially for the town council and we will need to address this.
  
5. We want to make Ivybridge the go to destination at Christmas for local families from the surrounding area. A Santa's Grotto in Glanville's Mill, significantly improved lights, more late night shopping and free car parking for the run up to Christmas are all part of what might be achievable. The town centre and Glanville's Mill lend themselves to a festive atmosphere and we will look to maximise this.
  
6. The town is dominated by a very large and successful college and we will be seeking to explore ways with the college to encourage more integration and a closer working relationship between town and school. Ivybridge has a lot of young people and we will look to find ways of listening to them more and meeting their needs. We will explore the possibility of an informal meeting centre somewhere centrally based within the town.
  
7. We would like to see improved access to Dartmoor from the town and discussions with adjoining landowners and the Dartmoor National Park and others are ongoing. Highlighting the natural environment and links to Dartmoor, we hope to make clearer the routes and future opportunities for walking and leisure for both locals and visitors.
  
8. We would like to see better use of strategic land in the centre of town, linked to a possible development on the existing police station site. We recognise that police presence in Ivybridge could be based on a smaller site. We will explore the sharing of the

under-utilised youth centre by scout group and/or guides, with the possible redevelopment of the site on which the scout hut currently sits.

9. We are mindful that Stowford Mill will (hopefully) be redeveloped over the plan period and we are resolved to work with the developers in seeking to find a synergy between its proposals and this plan. We support the mixed use plan developed by SHDC for this important site.

10. We would like to see the town rebranded under a new logo and slogan that encapsulates the essence of Ivybridge. This rebranding will seek to incorporate every aspect of Ivybridge life including cultural and social, retail and commercial and will encourage people to think of our town as the place to: live work shop and play. We recognise that more work needs to be done on this and that once we agree on the right wording that resources need to be found to market the town in a new way once the plan, as amended, is adopted.

## **Next Steps**

We now plan to consult the wider population of Ivybridge and various stakeholders on this plan over the coming months.

Ivybridge Town Team

December 2013