

What is a Strategic Vision?

Well for this Town Council it will be an attempt to define the future for Ilminster for the next 10 15 20 years Click

Why do we need a Strategic Vision and why now? A number of reasons

As businessmen and women, you are well aware of the benefits to be gained by forward thinking and planning and this past year has shown just what can happen in a town where there is no recognised strategic plan and where and when other people are in control.

The District Council have been and are working on a new strategic document, a Local Development Framework, which will ultimately replace the present Local Plan. It will comprise a series of documents that will shape what happens in South Somerset for the foreseeable future. Within that Framework are Development Plan Documents, which, at the moment, will include a Town Centre Area Action Plan for Yeovil, Chard and Crewkerne. We have been told that eventually, in a few years, there will be Action plans for all the towns. However, a lot can happen in a few years so the Town Council decided that they would attempt to draw up a plan of their own using the protocols used by the District Planners.

With the possibility of a unitary authority replacing both the District and County Councils it seemed even more important that a strategic document for the town be produced - a document that would help us influence other stakeholders when it comes to deciding what happens in our town Click

So how do we begin?

Part of the process involves consultation with the general public and also with the businesses, organisations and other bodies that have an involvement in the town.

Before that could happen it was decided to produce some visionary ideas about what could be done, - ideas that would get people talking and thinking. So a number of subjects were chosen such land use, industry, recreation etc and then the Town Council was divided into sub groups, each group being given a subject for debate. A series of meetings were held over a number of months and the Council engaged in a process of 'Blue Sky' thinking, one I am sure many of you are familiar with. The

results of that 'blue sky' thinking are before you tonight, in, it must be said, very broad-brush strokes. Some of it might seem controversial, some just plain common sense. We may have missed something that you consider vital. So what we need you to do is look at what has been suggested and comment. [Click](#)

Map

In its 'blue sky' thinking, the Town Council looked at the whole town. As you can see there are certain areas on the map that have been colour coded. These indicate the areas and subjects we felt would perhaps be a little contentious and were likely to require more debate. The Boards behind you are dedicated to the various subjects and identified by the colour coding. But first, a brief overview. [Click](#)

Industry/Commercial/Retail

Horlicks Site will need to be developed

We need to ensure it is done in a manner the benefits and compliments existing businesses in the community but at the same time helps Ilminster to grow - without your existence Ilminster is in danger of becoming a dormitory town.

The Town Centre would benefit from the addition of more small businesses and for that to happen provision must be made to meet their needs

Housing

Government policies undoubtedly mean more housing

While we accept this, we would like to see it developed in the right locations. We want it to be of good quality but this does not mean exclusive - just that every house buyer should be able to buy a property that is of good quality and in an area that is not over developed. And most importantly, we would like to see the infrastructure keep pace with the increase in population. [Click](#)

Education

We would like to see a move to a two-tier system because we believe that it will not only benefit the children and the parents but also the town

Community Facilities

The paucity of community facilities has to be addressed and work has already begun in that area, albeit at a very early stage [Click](#)

Town Centre

A project of enhancement is proposed. District is encouraging Market Towns to look to tourism as a means of bringing vitality back to the town centre and the enhancement we have in mind will emphasise the attractiveness of Somerset market towns.

It maybe that our town needs to find an identity – in December 2006, Wellington launched itself as a 'food town' and as a result has already had food related businesses, both large and small, moving into the area [Click](#)

Transportation

There are obviously a number challenges in this particular area but a couple 'blue sky' ideas that are inextricably linked and that have made people sit up is the creation of a eastern relief road and the possible pedestrianisation of the town centre

More car parks are and will obviously be required together with pedestrian walkways and cycle routes. In the town centre a traffic management scheme will have to be devised to allow for the delivery of goods to the retail outlets and businesses [Click](#)

Recreation areas

We would like, while working in partnership with the Ilminster sporting community, to reassess the arrangement of the facilities on the Recreation Ground.

We would like to acquire land to the north of Herne Hill to create a buffer zone between the hill and any future development that might take place. [Click](#)

What is the way forward?

As I said earlier there will be a number of consultations with the public, the organisations and stakeholders

After the consultation period is over and the information gathered has been assessed, the Town Council will set about producing a draft strategic

document that will not only reflect the majority views gathered during the consultation process but that will link with the various policy documents produced by District and County. This Strategic Document will then be put before a full Town Council meeting for adoption just before the summer

What next?

The final part of this process will be having the document accepted by the South Somerset District Council and the Somerset County Council. Can we guarantee that they will accept it? No we cannot. BUT if we sit here and do nothing we will never know what might have been. *Click*

At our public consultations we provide the public with stickers and post it notes to enable them to say what they think. However, as the focus this evening is on the business community what I would like to do now is divide you up into groups – I was thinking

Industry/manufacturing

Retail

Services - such as accountants, solicitors, communications.

You will see that we have flipcharts positioned round the room and if you would like take your chair and find the appropriate flip chart. Once the group has settled the Councillor at that chart will lead you in a discussion that we hope will highlight your particular requirements

When that element of the evening has been completed you are welcome to look at the other subjects displayed and use the stickers/post it notes that are available to make your views known