

# Evesham Town Plan Review 2024

## Introduction

The original Town Plan was created in 2015. Since that time several major changes have occurred. We have suffered the COVID virus and all the consequences of that, Wychavon District Council has produced a Town Prospectus for Evesham and we have become even more aware of the climate and nature crisis. There has been a lot more house building recently in the town.

There are other things that have not changed such as the traffic problems.

Evesham Town Council also needed to review how far we have got with the aims of the 2015 Plan.

The Town Plan Committee first looked at the Plan to assess what we felt had been achieved. During the autumn of last year an open event was held in the Town Hall for residents and Community Group representatives to see what has been achieved, what remains to be done and advise the Committee on what they feel needs to be added to the plan. The Committee would like to thank all who contributed their ideas and advice.

Since that time the Committee has been working on collating all of that information and putting together a new plan for the town based on it.

It is worth pointing out that for more clarity we have included sections on which organisation is likely to be mainly responsible for the changes we suggest. This is because Evesham Town Council does not have power to affect all of the changes the Town wants. We need the support of groups such as Wychavon District Council, Worcestershire County Council and local organisations with specific knowledge of specialist areas.

We now have the pleasure to present our new revised Plan with priorities for the next few years.

## Aims of the Plan

These have remained unchanged from those in the original Town Plan of 2015, as they are as relevant today as they were eight years ago.

While any town plan is community-led, the leadership and support of elected representatives can contribute significantly to the credibility and impact of a plan by demonstrating the local council's commitment to championing the interests and the vision of the community.

The Town Plan is an evolving document that will change and adapt over time to reflect the changing needs of our community and the socio-economic developments that will influence those needs.

The aims of the plan are to:

- Provide a framework within which the town's priorities can be addressed under the guidance and coordination of a body involving the Town Council.
- Identify those projects and actions that will make the biggest impact on the town's future prosperity and well-being.
- Gain the support of businesses, service providers and residents in working towards all the plan goals.
- Provide a vehicle for periodic public consultation.

The headline desired outcomes distilled from the consultations and the actions outlined in the plan are as follows:

**Headline desired outcomes:**

1. A town to be proud of with a strong identity
2. A prosperous town that offers the things that people want
3. A town that promotes healthy communities and supports people's needs
4. A town that strives to improve its environmental impact, sustainability and appearance
5. A town that facilitates ease of access by all
6. A cohesive community that engages with people of all ages in the operation of the town.

Action to achieve the identified priority areas is the responsibility of all of the levels of local government; Evesham Town Council, Worcestershire County Council and Wychavon District Council. All three councils will need to work with community organisations and businesses to achieve the actions.

Priority areas for action have evolved from those of the original Town Plan, where these are still relevant and from the input from the public consultation undertaken in 2022.

The structure of the Review report is based on that of the original Town Plan document.

## Priority Areas for Action

### Arts, Leisure and Sports

#### ***The vision***

*A town offering a wide variety of cultural, sports, leisure and social opportunities for its residents and visitors.*

#### **Community facilities**

Survey all existing community facilities to optimise their use.

The survey will be carried out by a Working Group under the auspices of Evesham Town Council. Facilities with scope for more or different community uses will be identified and action taken to seek to improve the uses.

Support and promote Wallace House as a space for arts, activities and exhibitions

Evesham Town Council will work with Wallace House Trust through its representation on the Trust. The Town Council will rely on regular updates from the Trust to be able to identify scope for more support and a link will be included on the Town Council's webpage to that of Wallace House.

#### **Events**

Encourage and promote evening events all year round to attract people into the town

The Vale and Spa website and publications will be encouraged to deliver this action. A link to the Vale and Spa website will be included on the Town Council's website.

Support the provision of a high-quality visitor centre about the Battle of Evesham

Support the work of the Battle of Evesham Charity to achieve a visitor centre on the Evesham Battlefield.

Promote events to the community by better use of notice boards, social media

The Town Council will improve its use of notice boards and social media for the promotion of events. The Council's Facebook page will be used and other social media outlets will be developed.

Run a photograph competition and an art competition

A Working Group will be set up under the auspices of the Town Council to run both competitions to assess the success of this action. The competitions will be designed for all ages and to focus on the town. Competitions could be repeated if they prove to be popular.

The Group will seek to involve local organisations that have a track record of organising such competitions.

Promote the availability of St Lawrence's for exhibitions/concerts/events.

The Town Council will support the efforts of the Churches Conservation Trust to extend the use of the building by the community.

Run a comedy festival for a weekend.

Running a festival will be delegated to an experienced operator.

**Eating**

Promote local produce for local people

The Town Council will work with local producers, which could include allotment holders and private individuals, to provide improved opportunities for the sale of produce in the town. The availability of local, seasonal produce will be advertised using social media.

**Sports and recreation**

Support organised sports

The Town Council will encourage and support local organised sports, working with teams and management groups, together with promotional and funding organisations e.g Sports Council.

Support recreational activities

The Town Council will encourage the use of open spaces in and around the town for formal and informal recreation. It will work with management groups to support organised activities such as the weekly Parkrun and the annual 10K run.

## **Community Support**

### ***The vision***

*A formal and informal network of services that can identify, care for and support the physical, emotional and psychological needs of the community and contribute to the creation of strong community cohesion.*

### **Services**

#### Work with local organisations to improve rural transport links

The Town Council attends regular meetings of the Vale Bus and Rail Group to represent the needs of the town. This issue is also covered in the Transport section.

#### Support the Wellbeing Centre.

A Wellbeing Centre opened in the Riverside Centre. The Town Council will encourage the centre to provide a wide range of services for all of the community and will support it in the event that it has to relocate when the Riverside Centre is redeveloped.

#### Introduce 'Help Your Neighbour' schemes

The Town Council will promote these schemes and will seek to work to deliver more schemes around town, involving local organisations such as the Evesham Volunteer Centre to assist in the provision.

Publicise the safe spaces initiative that has started to operate in the town centre. Support will be given to expansion of this service.

### **Hospital services**

#### Support the continuation and expansion of the Community Hospital services

The Town Council will deliver this action as and when the opportunity arises.

### **Communication**

#### Improve communications by the Town Council using social media to inform and engage with the community

The Town Council will produce newsletters at regular intervals; news items will include information on available grants for local organisations.

#### Develop closer partnerships with schools and community groups

Councillors already and will be encouraged to engage with local groups and organisations to promote the work of the Town Council. The Town Council already endeavour to engage with schools.

## **Amenities**

Support the anti-litter volunteer groups to tackle local 'grot' spots.

Funding will be provided to the groups, as necessary. The Town Council will encourage more volunteers to engage with the groups and will support the work of the Avon Navigation Trust in cleaning the river environment.

Publicise the anti-litter strategy and the regulations of the Environment Act as they apply to litter.

The Town Council will use its website for this publicity and will work with the Vale of Evesham Civic Society to develop an information leaflet on the regulations of the Environment Act. The adopted anti-litter strategy is included in Appendix 1.

Promote 'Adopt a Street'.

A link will be set up on the Town Council's website to the Wychavon District Council's form for signing up to adopt a street.

Improve litter and dog waste bin provision

The Town Council will undertake a periodic survey of the provision in the town, to enable the identification of gaps in the provision or the need for repairs and replacements. The information will be provided to Wychavon District Council for appropriate action.

## **Accessibility**

Whenever and wherever possible, the Town Council will work to promote the implementation of the recommendations of the Accessibility Assessment report, carried out in the town centre area.

## **Environment**

### ***The vision***

*A greener, more energy-efficient and self-sufficient Evesham.*

### **Appearance**

#### Encourage creative solutions to neglected sites

All neglected sites in the town will be identified, together with their ownership. The Town Council will work with owners and other relevant bodies to seek solutions for beneficial use. Such uses may involve the establishment of new quiet areas for sitting outside.

#### Support the approach and proposals of the Wychavon District Council's Shop Front Guide

The Shop Front Guide will be promoted via publicity outlets such as the Council's website and social media, to raise awareness of its provisions. Funds to help owners improve their shop fronts will be sought and projects supported that upgrade the run down and inappropriate shop fronts in the town centre Conservation Area.

### **Public spaces/location**

#### Create new connections between the parks and the town centre

The developers of the redevelopment of the Riverside Shopping Centre are encouraged to ensure better links between Abbey Park and the town centre.

#### Reflect the quality of the parks within the town centre

Within the town centre to work with the County Council to replant lost highway trees; to encourage property owners to provide planters/hanging baskets or landscape planting and the Town Council will consider the provision further planters and baskets.

#### Nurture the green spaces – large and small – in and around the town

Work with local community groups, the District Council and others to help to keep the green spaces well maintained and where possible improved.

#### Replace lost trees in the public highway

Work with the County Council to replace lost trees and extend tree planting along the highways in the town, using appropriate species.

### **Heritage**

#### Encourage the continuation of viable orchards.

The action identified in the section on Arts, Leisure and Sports – Eating, should assist local orchard owners to maintain the town’s tradition of growing orchard fruit.

#### Encourage maintenance of old orchards and fruit species

Work with the Vale Heritage Landscape Trust to take on old orchards that become commercially unviable and to maintain these and orchards already under its control and to promote the preservation and enhancement of wildflower meadows.

#### Celebrate the growing history and traditions in and around the town

Promote the asparagus festival in the town, in support of the District Council’s promotion work.

Consider establishing a local demonstration area based on the town’s market garden heritage, working with a local landowner where necessary.

### **Sustainability**

#### Implement the Greening Evesham Framework, built on achieving:

- A cleaner, healthier place for people to live and bring up families.
- Low carbon sources of energy /transport, goods and services.
- Lowering emissions of carbon and other air pollutants, and reducing all energy usage.
- Sourcing a high proportion of our food and non-renewable resources from the local area.
- Maintaining the natural ecological balance.
- Taking steps to minimize the harm we do to the environment including the carbon footprints we leave behind.
- Reducing our use of Earth' s limited resources.
- Living life, as an individual as well as a community, in a way that is friendly to the natural environmental and is sustainable for the earth.
- The implementation of the biodiversity action plan.
- Improved sustainability of new and existing housing by influencing the decisions of Wychavon District Council and developers, making information available on support schemes and organisations e.g. Act on Energy
- Implementation of charging points.

The Town Council has adopted this Framework and will continue to work with appropriate organisations to bring about improvements. It will be kept under review so that it includes all new, relevant initiatives. Publicity and lobbying will be two important means of getting the messages across.

A copy of the Greening Evesham Framework is included in Appendix 2.



## **Health and well-being**

### ***The vision***

*The provision of high quality, easily accessible medical and health services and an environment in which people are informed and encouraged to keep healthy and fit.*

## **Health and emergency services**

### Support for the Community Hospital

This is dealt with in the services section on Community Support

### Improving support services for people in their homes.

This is dealt with in the services section on Community Support

## **General public health**

### Better publicity and promotion of local exercise and activity groups.

This is dealt with in the communication section of Community Support

### Promotion of outdoor events like walking and cycling.

This is dealt with in the communication section of Community Support

## **Public behaviour and safety**

### Appropriate lighting of paths and public areas

When the District Council or County Council is intending to change or extend lighting on paths and in public areas, the Town Council will seek to ensure that the most appropriate lighting is chosen. The Town Council will consider requests for additional lighting in public areas and pass these to the District or County Councils for assessment.

### Lobbying for enforcement of drinking restrictions in the parks and streets

Whenever reports are received of members of the public flouting the current restrictions, the Town Council will bring these to the attention of the police for follow up action.

### Establish improved liaison between community and police

The Town Council will seek to re-instate regular reporting by the police on the incidence of public order offences; this might be by way of a police officer attending a town council

meeting or by way of a written report submitted for consideration at a council meeting. An annual meeting with a senior police officer will be requested.

### Safe spaces initiative

Support for this initiative is covered in the chapter on Community Support.

## **Housing**

### ***The vision***

*A town that provides a range of appropriately designed, attractive, environmentally sound housing for people at every stage of their lives, set in quality spaces with easy access to the town centre.*

New housing is the responsibility of the Wychavon District Council Planning Department, through its work on a Local Plan for South Worcestershire, which allocates sites for development. The District Council also makes decisions on applications for new housing and for changes to existing housing. In this context, the Council will be encouraged to take proper account of the comments made by Evesham Town Council, as representatives of the local community.

### **Growth**

Empty premises and upper floors should be used for new homes

The Town Council will work with local property agents to seek to achieve a co-ordinated approach between adjacent property owners to effect the appropriate building modifications to allow housing use on upper floors and to bring empty properties into housing use.

### **Design**

Encouragement to be given to the adherence to Wychavon's Design Code for the town

When planning applications for new or changed properties are commented on by the Town Council's Planning Committee, these comments will be based on seeking compliance with the Design Code for the town.

## **Local economy**

### ***The vision***

*A thriving local economy through increased inward investment, job creation, improved accessibility and growth.*

### Encourage new and existing local small businesses

Work with WDC to provide a wide range of incentives for existing businesses to develop and for new businesses to be attracted to the town.

Lobby WDC to provide suitable accommodation for small and very small businesses to set up in the town e.g workshops, storage space.

### Retain and improve the Charter Market

The Charter Market Working Group will work with the market operator to discuss ways to improve and extend the market offering.

### Develop the 'Tourism' proposals to make Evesham a destination of choice

Work on the aims and objectives of the Evesham Town Centre Prospectus through continued representation of the Town Council on the Evesham Place Board.

### Develop a local loyalty card scheme

Investigate any local schemes and those schemes working in other towns to find out what sort of scheme is effective and then to work to set up loyalty cards for local businesses.

### Involve businesses in sharing the vision for Evesham Town Centre, as set out in the Prospectus

Ensure that local businesses are involved in or represented at the Evesham Place Board.

Promote to the town's businesses the aims and objectives of the Prospectus and how these can help existing businesses to thrive.

### Support the Prospectus proposals, to encourage investment in the Town Centre

Work on the aims and objectives of the Evesham Town Centre Prospectus through continued representation of the Town Council on the Evesham Place Board.

## **Tourism**

### ***The vision***

*Evesham as a tourist destination of choice for all visitors to the Cotswolds and the wider area.*

## **Marketing**

### Ensure that events are marketed to a wide audience, including use of social media

The work of the Tourist Information Centre will be expanded to extend its reach through the use of social media.

### Promote Evesham's attractions and water-based activities to boaters and others

The work of the Avon Navigation Trust will be supported, through promotion of events.

The work of local volunteers will be supported, to monitor the water quality of the river and to lobby for better and greater action by Severn-Trent Water Authority and the Environment Agency to reduce pollution incidents.

## **Heritage**

### Support the creation of a Battle of Evesham visitor centre

The Battle of Evesham Charity will be encouraged to bring forward plans for a visitor centre for community consultation and support will be given to the implementation of agreed plans.

### Expand the provision of guided tours of heritage attractions

The Vale and Spa department within WDC will be encouraged to assist with the co-ordination of and expansion of its programme of tours of the town's heritage by working with the Vale of Evesham Civic Society, Vale of Evesham Historic Society, the Vale Heritage Landscape Trust and other interested groups.

### Improve and raise the profile of the Almonry

The Town Council is responsible for the ongoing work by the Almonry Manager, to ensure the essential structural repairs to the building are carried out as soon as financial support is available. Following repairs, the museum displays will be updated, giving the opportunity for wider publicity of the significance of the Grade 1 Listed Building and its collections.

## **Events**

### Develop Evesham's offering as a centre for events

The opportunity provided by the redevelopment of the Riverside Centre and the Public Hall will restore the capacity of the town to hold a wider range of events than has been possible in the absence of the Public Hall.

### Develop agritourism

Work with the Vale Heritage Landscape Trust and local producers to develop initiatives to inform residents and visitors about the agricultural heritage of the Vale and about the modern methods of producing our fruit and vegetables. For example, a trail could be developed and publicised or a number of open days run.

## **Amenities**

### Create better links between Evesham Country Park/The Valley and Evesham town centre

Current suggestions for a park and ride system for the town will be supported.

A cycling and walking link, as being promoted as part of the Arrow and Avon Greenway Project, now known as the Two Shires Project, will be supported.

Boat trips between the Valley and the town will be advertised using the Town Council's social media and noticeboards.

### Seek to reduce anti-social behaviour in the town centre, parks and open space

This action is covered in the Health and Wellbeing section.

### Improve the public realm in the town centre

This action is covered in the Town Centre section

## **Town Centre**

### ***The vision***

*A prosperous and attractive town centre that is a destination of choice.*

### Support the redevelopment of the Riverside Shopping Centre

Lobby Wychavon District Council to continue to press for grant funding to support the redevelopment of the Centre and thus release the funding for the restoration of the Public Hall.

### Encourage the design and implementation of a Park and Ride shuttle bus service into and around town

Current suggestions for a park and ride system for the town will be supported.

### Improve signage for walkers from the town centre to the villages

The work of the Evesham Welcomes Walkers group will be supported.

### Encourage the improvement of the appearance of properties within the town centre conservation area.

Representation on the Evesham Place Board by the Town Council will support the delivery of this action; the improvement of the appearance of properties has been adopted as one of the primary actions by the Board as a result of lobbying by the Vale of Evesham Civic Society and the Town Council.

## **Transport**

### ***The vision***

*A more accessible town for all through improved traffic systems, integrated transport services and a safer environment for pedestrians and cyclists.*

### **Parking**

Encourage Worcestershire County Council/Wychavon District Council to undertake a car parking survey to inform a review of the parking strategy for provision and charging

The WCC and WDC will be lobbied to allow local interest groups and the Town Council to be consulted on a survey and its findings.

### **Traffic**

Encourage Worcestershire County Council to implement a 20mph zone in the town, to make active travel safer.

Work with Active Travel Evesham to promote a 20mph zone(s) to the County's Active Travel Stakeholder Group and thus to the County Council.

Encourage Worcestershire County Council to review the pedestrian crossings on High Street/Vine Street, to improve both traffic and pedestrian flow.

Lobby the County Council to undertake further reviews of the traffic/pedestrian flows in the town centre.

### **Active Travel**

Promote a new bridge across the River Avon between Bengeworth and Common Road, for all walkers, cyclists, scooters.

Work with Active Travel Evesham to promote the carrying out of a feasibility study of a provision of a crossing for non-vehicular traffic on the east side of the town.

Establish a network of well signed cycle routes and footpaths, linking the town to the countryside, including safe crossings over the A46 to The Valley, at The Parks and at Knowle Hill.

A cycling and walking link, as being promoted as part of the Two Shires Project, will be supported.

Lobby the Highways Agency to prepare schemes for safe crossing points over the A46 to service the footpath network that links the town with the villages to the east.



Establish safe cycle routes to schools and Evesham College and work with the schools to promote active travel.

Work with Active Travel Evesham to set up a working group with school representatives to develop initiatives to encourage cycling.

### **Public Transport**

Encourage Worcestershire County Council to improve public transport, including a link to Cheltenham.

The Vale Public Transport Group includes a representative of the Town Council. The group is lobbying to improve public transport for Evesham.

Work with Worcestershire County Council/Wychavon District Council to develop an integrated transport hub with integrated ticketing arrangements

The Vale Public Transport Group includes a representative of the Town Council. The group is lobbying for better ticketing arrangements to assist travellers using or dependent upon public transport.

Work with Worcestershire County Council to improve timetable information.

The Vale Bus and Rail Group includes a representative of the Town Council. The group is lobbying for improved timetable information to assist travellers using or dependent upon public transport.

Provision of bicycle hire at the station

Lobby to deliver a scheme for bicycle hire to serve visitors arriving at the town by train.

## **Young people**

### ***The vision***

*A town that provides for the needs and aspirations of its young people.*

### Lobby for the Riverside redevelopment to include social spaces and facilities for families and young people

Details of the redevelopment scheme will be considered during the public consultation process; these will be checked to ensure good provision of social spaces and facilities for families and young people.

### Encourage and support more activities for young people

Young people of the town will be consulted to find out what activities are needed in the town.

### Work with school's student councils on the future of the town

Encourage the student councils to invite town councillors to a meeting, once a year, to find out views of the students on how the town should be improved or changed in the future.

### Encourage young people to attend town council meetings

Once a year, a town council meeting agenda will be tailored to the interests of the young people. This meeting will be publicised in schools to encourage attendance and discussion, to inform the work of the council for the following year.

### Involve young people in projects in the town

Appropriate projects will be identified that will be advertised to young people, via social media, to encourage their involvement.

### Introduce annual Civic awards for young people

A scheme to reward young people for their contribution to their local community, to the school community or to the town as a whole will be developed and launched.

## **APPENDIX 1 – ANTI-LITTER STRATEGY**

## **APPENDIX 2 - GREENING EVESHAM FRAMEWORK**