

Briefing note 8th December 2004

'Cittaslow' – the Slow Cities Movement

1 Introduction

- 1.1 At the Town Forum on 4th November which discussed the 'Vision for Winchester' project, the City of Winchester Trust brought to the forum's attention the concept of *Cittaslow*.
- 1.2 In order to investigate *Cittaslow* the Trust sent a delegation to Ludlow, the first *Cittaslow* accredited town in Britain, to explore what it meant to be a *Cittaslow*, and whether it would be a designation worth pursuing for Winchester town. Antonia Perkins attended the visit as a City Council representative.
- 1.3 The City of Winchester Trust is keen to gain the *Cittaslow* designation for Winchester, and is seeking a response from the City Council as to whether or not it will actively support the movement and, if so, in what capacity. Antonia is currently the principal contact for the Trust.
- 1.4 This report describes the *Cittaslow* movement, how it was setup in Ludlow and sets out benefits and concerns regarding a possible application by Winchester to join the movement for consideration.

2 The *Cittaslow* Movement

- 2.1 *Cittaslow* started in Italy as an international movement founded on the back of the Slow Food movement. It aims to provide a set of goals and aspirations for small towns based on the following principles:
 - encourage diversity not standardisation
 - support and encourage local culture and traditions
 - work for a more sustainable environment
 - support and encourage local produce and products
 - encourage healthy living especially through children and young people
 - work with the local community to build these values
- 2.2 To join the movement, a town must not have a population of more than 50,000. It also must not be a county town, although there is some dispute as to whether the original intention in Italy was to exclude provincial towns, which would not necessarily align with English county towns.
- 2.3 To be accredited as a Slow City, a town must assess itself in relation to a set of goals (**Appendix A**) under the headings: Environment, Infrastructure, Urban Fabric, Local Produce and Products, Hospitality and Awareness. The town is required to initially to comply with at least 30% of the aspirations, and subsequently work to attain all the *Cittaslow* goals.
- 2.4 The town is then required to pay a 500 euro fee to the international *Cittaslow* Co-ordination Committee, followed by an annual subscription.

3 The Movement in Ludlow

- 3.1 *Cittaslow* was initiated in Ludlow by the Ludlow 21 Group, their Local Agenda 21 group. This was then launched at a public meeting, involving organisations such as the Chamber of Commerce, the Civic Society, the Women's Institute and South Shropshire Tourism.
- 3.2 Ludlow's role as a *Cittaslow* is overseen and owned by a sub-committee of Ludlow Town Council. The committee is made up of a variety of local organisations, including a district council Member and three officers.
- 3.3 The project forms part of the area's Market Towns strategy, and links to the Ludlow Marches Partnership which was set up to oversee the area's Market Town Healthcheck.
- 3.4 The South Shropshire District Council does not fund the project, although three of its officers are closely involved in the project's work, particularly the conservation officer.
- 3.5 The Chair of the *Cittaslow* sub-committee in Ludlow recommended that the idea of *Cittaslow* be seen as management tool rather than a range of new, individual projects. She felt that the role of the sub-committee is to lobby and influence organisations, (particularly statutory organisation) to achieve *Cittaslow* goals, and to give focus and identity to disparate organisations in order to help co-ordinate their efforts.
- 3.6 One of the principal areas in which the *Cittaslow* sub-committee has sought to influence and lobby the district council is in planning. The *Cittaslow* ideal is for shopping districts to contain small, independent shops as opposed to large amounts of chain stores. Chain stores wishing to open a branch in Ludlow are subject to the uncompromising enforcement of planning restrictions, even at the expense of the withdrawal of an application, in order for the town centre to maintain its historic character.
- 3.7 Two separate projects have commenced under the *Cittaslow* banner. Firstly an after-school club has been set up in partnership with restaurateurs to demonstrate cooking with local produce. These clubs also serve to help those attending gain qualifications in basic food hygiene. The second project is co-ordinated by the district council's conservation officer, encouraging the setting up of a lime centre and the re-opening of quarries to promote the use of traditional building skills and to provide local building materials which are used in historic building restoration work in Ludlow.
- 4 Links to current City Council initiatives
 - 4.1 The goals of *Cittaslow* clearly describe sustainable development and principles which the City Council, as well as its partners, is working towards. The goals and aims of *Cittaslow* deal with improving the quality of life for residents and visitors and so there is the potential that this movement could align with Community Strategy aims and goals, with this project dealing specifically with the Winchester town area.
 - 4.2 Many of the goals listed as the *Cittaslow* criteria are being worked towards either by the City Council, the Local Strategic partnership or by the Council's partners. Participation, therefore, in a movement to gain *Cittaslow* status

would therefore be relatively simply and mainly require co-ordination of our and others' efforts.

- 4.3 The *Cittaslow* idea can be considered as another aspect of community planning, along with Parish Plans and Market Town Healthchecks, for example. As such, this process could potentially provide an opportunity to gain community and cross sector involvement in informing the future of Winchester town. Undertaking this community planning exercise under the banner of *Cittaslow* may also have the potential to provide a brand to which people find it easy to understand and relate.
- 4.4 The benefits of being involved in an application for Winchester to become a *Cittaslow* include the potential for a high community participation rate in the project. The City Council's involvement will also add a degree of democratic legitimacy to the process.
- 5 Issues to be considered
 - 5.1 The City Council is involved in a number of initiatives, and whilst the *Cittaslow* vision could link in with the Community Strategy and the work of the LSP, it may practically be difficult to gain ownership of a *Cittaslow* project and work will need to be done in creating a means for it to inform future Community Strategies. If work to achieve *Cittaslow* status is led by external organisations, it may be difficult to influence the project in a way so that it can be used by the LSP to inform its work.
 - 5.2 The creation of the parallel 'Vision for Winchester' document may mean that work is being duplicated in creating a vision for Winchester town. These two may be in tension and cause confusion not only for residents, but for organisations which may be approached separately to work to achieve each vision. The City Council may want to decide to only support the 'Vision for Winchester', and promote community and partner involvement in this project, whilst capturing some of the *Cittaslow* ideals in the 'Vision for Winchester'.
 - 5.3 The *Cittaslow* principles are far reaching, and seek to positively influence a wide variety of aspects which go to make up 'quality of life' for a resident or visitor. There is a danger that one aspect may receive more attention than others, to the detriment of the inclusivity of *Cittaslow*. For example, the promotion of small, independent traders at the expense of discouraging larger chain stores may negatively affect those who rely on larger stores for goods at a cheaper price than a small retailer could offer. In adopting *Cittaslow* ideals, the City Council would need to be aware of the potential to exclude sections of the community if one aspect of the ideals is over zealously pursued.
 - 5.4 The direction promoted by *Cittaslow* is only one of a multitude of directions that a town like Winchester could develop in. Rigorous consultation would be needed to ensure that there is a desire within the majority of Winchester's community to follow the principles of *Cittaslow* before a commitment can be made to pursue this designation.
 - 5.5 As highlighted in 2.4, there is an initial cost to join *Cittaslow*, followed by an annual subscription. It is not presently clear of the benefit that will be received from the international Co-ordination Committee in return for the fee. Any future discussion on a possible submission for *Cittaslow* status would also need to consider where the subscription would be funded from.

Below are the criteria for becoming a *Cittaslow*, at least 30% of which must be met in the initial application. This version of the criteria has been reviewed by the Ludlow *Cittaslow* sub-committee to apply to British towns wishing to gain the designation. The 'Comments' column refers to which of the Italian criterion are to be retained or deleted as the British criteria.

Ref	Requirement	Weighting	Comments
	A: ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY	3	Retain
A1	Apparatus to test air quality and report conditions	2	Retain
A2	Rules for the quality of water supplies and pollution free water in rivers and waterways	1	Retain
A3	Plans for the implementation of new composting technology , and the promotion of composting in people's homes	2	
A4	Ability to measure light pollution and a plan of action to prevent it	2	Retain
A5	Incentives to encourage the use of alternative sources of energy	2	Retain
A6	Mechanisms to measure electromagnetic conditions and a plan of action for their reduction	3	Retain
A7	Apparatus to measure noise pollution and plans to reduce it	2	Retain
A8	Plans for the elimination of aesthetically displeasing advertisements	2	Retain
A9	Application of an Environmental management System	3	Changed to keep a simple, less bureaucratic system
A9b	Application of ISO 9000		DELETE
A9c	Application of SA 8000		DELETE
A9d	Application of EMAS regulations		DELETE
A10	Participation in 'Local Agenda 21' projects	3	Retain

Ref	Requirement	Weighting	Comments
	B: INFRASTRUCTURE POLICIES	1	
B1	Existence of well kept green spaces	3	Retain
B2	Developing and implementing an integrated traffic management and access strategy paying attention to the needs of pedestrians and the historic character of the town.		DELETE (covered by UK law)and replace with this
B3	Disability-friendly access to public places and offices	1	DELETE – covered by UK law
B4	Infrastructure which facilitates alternative mobility	2	Retain
B5	Free and easily accessible public conveniences	2	Retain
B6	Places for people to sit down and rest, not just in town centres	1	Retain
B7	Uniform opening hours for the different departments of council offices	2	Retain

B8	Provision of Public Relations office	2	Retain
B9	Slow City Call Centre for people to contact	2	Retain
B10	Plan for all business hours to coincide with townspeople's needs	2	Retain

Ref	Requirement		Comments
	C: QUALITY OF URBAN FABRIC		
C1	Plans to promote the maintenance, conservation and enhancement of historic areas, buildings and artefacts of cultural and local significance and their sympathetic re-use.	3	Reword to account for UK Conservation Status
C2	Plans to abolish faulty theft alarms, combined with measures for the protection of property and the safety of the community	1	Reword to enable use of existing UK policies
C3	Encouragement of use of reusable or recyclable crockery and cutlery in public establishments	1	Retain
C4	Use of sympathetically designed litter bins and effective litter and waste management.	3	Reword to emphasise the need to deal with litter in UK
C5	Plans to plant sweet smelling or environment-enhancing plants in public and private gardens.	2	Retain
C6	Encouragement of the use of interactive websites where the public can communicate with the administrators of the town.	2	Retain
C7	Plans to promote eco-friendly architecture.	3	Retain
C8	Plans to promote appreciation of historic centres and to make them user-friendly through the production of a Town Plan, Conservation Area Appraisal, Town Design Statement or similar plan	3	Reword to enable use of existing UK policies

Ref	Requirement		Comments
	D: ENCOURAGEMENT OF LOCAL PRODUCE AND PRODUCTS		
D1	Up to date Cittaslow register of locally produced goods and producers within the natural hinterland of the town	2	Reword to reflect the area beyond the town itself
D2	Events and training to help people appreciate and preserve local cultural and artistic traditions and skills	3	Reword to include non-food skills
D3	Plans to encourage and provide space for farmers and organic markets	3	Retain
D4	Plans to increase awareness of good food and nutrition	3	Retain
D5	Educational programs about organic food production	2	Reword to reflect the website
D6	Implementation of measures for the preservation of unique local foodstuffs	3	Retain

D7	Plans to encourage organic farming and quality certification for products	3	Retain
D8	Creation of awareness of traditional foodstuffs	3	Retain
D9	Plans for the protection of goods and produce representing local tradition	3	Retain

Ref	Requirement		Comments
	E: HOSPITALITY & COMMUNITY		
E1	The commitment to develop a Slow Food Convivium	3	DELETE - covered by law. Replace as requested by Slow Food
E2	Multilingual signposting, directions and instructions	3	Retain
E3	Training for those providing services to tourists, adoption of initiatives such as "Welcome Host"	3	Reword to enable use of existing UK policies
E4	Existence of well marked tourist routes with information and description	2	Reword as web site
E5	Printed 'Cittaslow' guides	2	Retains
E6	Promote a wide cross section of social events, sports clubs and volunteering opportunities for the whole community	2	DELETE as covered by UK law and replace
E7	Managed car parks in areas with access to town centres	3	Reword
E8	Promote special local events to encourage development and support facilities to make it easy for people to come and enjoy them	2	Reword
E9	Promotion of any initiatives of a Cittaslow nature	3	Retain

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Ref	Requirement		Comments
	F: CITTASLOW AWARENESS CREATION		
F1	Directory of organisations contributing to the aims and objectives of Cittaslow	3	Reword
F2	Cittaslow logo on council/partnership documents (letterhead etc)	3	Retain
F3	Promotion of the movement's aims and practices	3	Retain
F4	Website showing how Cittaslow themes are applied	3	Retain
F5	To promote family life and healthy living for all age groups	3	Reword
F6	Provision in budget for the application of these requirements and measures to improve scores	3	Retain
F7	Press cuttings referring to Cittaslow to be shown on Council notice boards and establishment of lines of communication to local and national press and media.	3	Retain
F8	Initiatives to involve opinion leaders and local firms in helping to achieve compliance with Cittaslow requirements	3	Retain
F9	Encouragement of schools, hospitals, councils, community centres and tourism operators to use local produce	3	Reword to ensure involvement of all the community

