

WINCHESTER TOWN FORUM

18 January 2006

CITTASLOW

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S UNIT

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RECENT REFERENCES:

WTF59 – Cittaslow – 13 October 2005

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The City of Winchester Trust has formed a steering group to research the concept of *Cittaslow* to inform a proposal that Winchester might undertake such an initiative. The Trust initially addressed the Winchester Town Forum in December 2004. At that time the City Council's Policy Officer produced a briefing note which is still helpful and therefore attached at Appendix 1. It acknowledges that many of the *Cittaslow* requirements are already present in programmes and future plans for the area, either those of the City Council, other key players, or the Local Strategic Partnership.

Since the initial presentation to the Town Forum, the Trust has held several meetings bringing together a range of stakeholders to explore what is already happening in line with *Cittaslow* aspirations, and the value of building on these activities through a *Cittaslow* initiative.

The Mayor of Ludlow (Britain's first Cittaslow), addressed the Town Forum on 13 October 2005 and this was followed by a visit to Ludlow by members of the Town Forum and Winchester City Council officers on 5 January 2006. Members were keen to draw out those Ludlow initiatives which would not have happened without the Cittaslow status. This proved difficult to pin down precisely as Cittaslow is more to do with creating a common ethos and understanding which facilitates positive change. However, some of the initiatives cited were as follows:-

- A scheme to preserve and foster traditional artisan skills linked to the conservation of Ludlow's built environment, and encouraging young people to learn from highly skilled adults nearing the end of their working lives.
- A project funded by English Heritage to restore the historic drinking fountain in the town to provide a source of drinking water for users of the town centre.
- The continuing expansion and success of the town's food festival
- The restoration of the town's weirs by a broad partnership including canoeing, fishing

and conservation interests, with plans for a possible renewable energy project linked to one of the weirs.

- The setting up of new trusts and charities able access to funds not available to councils to achieve positive benefits for the town (eg linked to restoration of local mines and the town walls).
- An initiative which has replaced fast food in the local leisure centre with healthy, locally produced foods.
- Ready public acceptance of the development of a new bio-digester plant on an industrial estate in the town.
- Potential for many other future initiatives currently under discussion.

RECOMMENDATION:

That, in the light of the visit to Ludlow, Members consider how the Vision for Winchester might further incorporate and reflect the principles and actions proposed.

APPENDICES:

Appendix One: Briefing note, 8th December 2004

Appendix Two: City of Winchester Trust, Cittaslow Presentation