

October 2017

Summary Response to Horsham Council Town Centre Vision

A town vision should be just that; comprehensive, thought provoking, full of ideas often at early stages. It should include imaginative ideas about how residents can live, work, shop and be entertained.

This vision should support the image of a vibrant, progressive, historic market town and be capable of being implemented in the years ahead as money and circumstances allow. At the start of the project Horsham Society said that the Vision should aim to create an integrated series of spaces that form a continuous route across the town centre. The vision should reflect the changing appearance and character of the street scene; it should be coherent and beckon public to explore further.

So what do we have? The consultants have produced a document that lacks real vision, one that fails to ask questions about the long term development of Horsham, the development of the town centre and how it should be. Instead, the document concentrates on known sites for the short term, from them suggesting a number of "strategic directions" and identified what they call "opportunity areas".

The Vision does propose the development of a Public Realm Strategy, a Cycling Strategy, a Walking Strategy and a Tourism Strategy, all as key projects. . It is important that these are separate documents, each concentrating on either a single mode of transport or a single issue and we expect them to cover many of the issues we highlight. We are generally supportive of the delivery schedule and welcome the intention to start a debate on these questions. It is critical that the key partners are jointly involved in deciding the brief and scope and then in agreeing the outcome of these new strategies.

Horsham Society ask that the Vision be more ambitious, tackling the difficult questions of access into town, improvement of the gateways, the crossings of Albion Way, entertainment options, residential ideas for different age groups, education, tourism as well as creating a north to south route, to name a few.

Overall, the Vision is lacking in breadth and ambition.