



Cricklade Neighbourhood Plan

Town Centre

Cricklade is classified as a 'local service centre' by Wiltshire Council with this being defined as a small town serving a surrounding hinterland. The retail 'offer' that the town provides is concentrated on the historic High Street and the 2012 Town Plan states that:

"The High Street and its local businesses are a vital part of Cricklade's economy and intrinsic to the existing character and vitality of the town."

There are also some other businesses away from the high street including Bath Road and Culverhay.

Current Provision

As the population of Cricklade has increased over recent decades the number of retail premises has actually declined because shopping patterns have changed. A number of properties in the High Street that were partly commercial, but are now just residential, can clearly be seen. This decline has stabilised in more recent years and some protection is now provided by the retail policies of the North Wiltshire Plan 2011 which apply to a designated area of the High Street, between

Alkerton House and the Red Lion on one side, and between 23 High Street and St. Mary's Church on the other.

A benchmarking survey was carried out at the end of 2012 by 'Action for Market Towns' and a copy of the draft report is available here.

The report takes data on twelve key performance indicators such as parking, business confidence etc, from Cricklade and compares this information to that for similar small towns in the south west and nationwide. Among the findings are:

- the commercial property vacancy rate is below average
- the number of shops as a proportion of commercial premises is below average
- the footfall count shows levels typically 20% below small towns nationally
- when asked to assess the positive aspects of the town centre the 49 users surveyed rated Cricklade above the south west and national averages in 13 out of 14 categories, the only exception being the lack of provision of a market

Finally, the Town Plan refers to a perceived lack of B&B accommodation.

Key Issues

The key issue is how best to protect and enhance the vibrancy of the Town Centre economy to ensure that Cricklade prospers as a sustainable community over the plan period to 2026. As part of this it may be necessary to consider the mix of businesses in the town centre and the attractiveness of the town to residents and visitors.

Your views

The Town Centre has a crucial role in the identity of Cricklade and we are seeking your views on:

- How can the economic vibrancy of the town centre be protected?
- Should new retail businesses be encouraged to establish themselves in the town centre and, if so, whereabouts?
- Should other new businesses be encouraged to establish themselves in the town centre and, if so, whereabouts?
- Should there be stronger policies in place to protect the high street retail/commercial area, to stop conversion of existing shop or business premises to residential?

Please use the questionnaire to comment on these and any other land use issues that relate to the town centre.

