

Great Malvern

Town Centre

January 2004

## Great Malvern Regeneration – Time for Action

The town centre is traditionally the place where the provision of shopping and service facilities is concentrated together with leisure facilities such as cinemas, theatres, libraries and restaurants. It is the social and economic heart of the town and a focal point for the surrounding area.

A successful town centre can be characterised as one that has a good range and balance of retail 'offer', one that has a lively, varied and vibrant economy seven days a week and one which can attract and manage visitors and residents alike in a clean, safe environment. In Malvern's case it can also be added that the Great Malvern town centre should be playing its central role as the cultural and civic heart of the Town and indeed the District. Indicators of vitality include the level of pedestrian flow, yields and demand for shop premises from national multiples, retailer representation, vacancy rates and the type and level of space within the town. Proposals for development can be considered against a combination of these criteria.

A general perception in the decline in the quality of Great Malvern town centre and its failings to live up to this definition of a successful town centre has brought its future sharply into focus as a topic for local debate.

In keeping with other rural towns, Great Malvern town centre has suffered a decline in the number and quality of retail units. There is likely to be a number of contributing factors, but this trend may be primarily due to increasing competition from various areas including **Regional Shopping Centres** (Cribb's Causeway at Bristol and Merry Hill at Brierley Hill), **Larger Towns** (Cheltenham, Gloucester, Hereford and Worcester) and other **smaller Towns** (Ledbury, Tewkesbury).

The recent opening of the Bull Ring Centre in Birmingham and that city's continued regeneration will provide additional potential for further spending leakage from other towns (including Great Malvern) in the region.

In response Malvern Hills District Council and other key partners including the Malvern Town Council and the town trade organisations have identified the regeneration of Great Malvern town centre as a priority for action.

The Government also recognises the importance of the town centre and encourages the concept of town centre management to provide effective management and promotion through joint public and private sector initiatives.

This document presents a series of initiatives to ensure the success of the town centre of Great Malvern. \*

This document outlines the strategic and policy framework for our work, highlights some facts and figures about the town and draws out its key features. It brings together all the projects in a coherent strategy for the town centre of Great Malvern, The strategy presents a vision for the town, a mission statement for the Partnership that will take the project forward plus the key objectives and actions to ensure its success.

Individually and collectively, the initiatives are designed to revitalise Great Malvern and promote prosperity and viability of the town centre. They will also help to maximise the economic benefits accruing from the optimisation of consumer spending – resident, tourist or visitor. Some of the initiatives have already been proposed in previous documents; some have been part-implemented – others are new.

The overall aim is to restore Great Malvern to its rightful place as a vibrant and successful trading, civic and cultural centre and enhance its role as a place of interest and quality.

The approach we will adopt is one that seeks to deliver social and physical enhancements and improvements and seeks to create a centre that is a vibrant place to live, visit and work.

This work cannot be taken in isolation or left to one or two key agencies. It will be up to all of the key stakeholders working within the town and those who have an interest in its vitality to work together to produce and deliver the measures that will bring success. A partnership approach will be required to achieve a successful outcome to the vision and supporting initiatives.

The following pages outline the agreed vision for the town centre, the key objectives of the strategy and the key actions or initiatives to achieve our goals.

Although there are some short-term tasks to be undertaken, there is no immediate remedy to the challenges facing the town centre. The work will be difficult and at times frustrating. However, we can deliver as the solutions are within our collective gift. Others will require persuasion and negotiation to persuade other external agencies and organisations to invest in our town and future.

The strategy is ambitious, but ultimately realistic and achievable.

It is up to all of us, working together to deliver them.

*\* For the sake of clarity, Great Malvern town centre represents the area bounded by and contained within the area described in Appendix 1 and shown in the accompanying map in Appendix 1a*

## **Great Malvern Town Centre – Setting the Scene**

### **About the District**

The Malvern Hills District (MHD) is largely rural in character and covers an area of 56,657 hectares (219 square miles).

The population of the District in 2001 was 72,196. The Census analysed the age profiles as follows:

0-17 years 21%;      18-64 years 58%;      over 65 years 21%.

Unemployment within the MHD stands at 1.4% (compared with 1.8% for Worcestershire and 2.7% nationally). Only 0.5% of the District's workforce is classed as being long-term unemployed.

The ageing profile of the existing population, access to affordable housing and appropriate employment for all sectors of the community are key issues that are addressed separately by the Local Plan.

**Around 1.9 million visitors came to the MHD in 2000, comprising about 1.7million day visitors and 200,000 overnight visitors. It is estimated that the total expenditure by visitors amounts to £59 million or about £31 per person per visit.**

### **About Malvern**

Visitor attractions around Malvern include the Malvern Hills, Malvern Theatres and the Three Counties Showground, which hosts a variety of events and major shows throughout the year.

Malvern is dominated by the backdrop of the Malvern Hills and retains much of its Victorian character of large individual residences in a landscaped setting. Besides being the largest town, Malvern is the administrative centre of the district and has important educational establishments and service providers.

The local workforce is highly skilled – particularly in mechanical engineering, electrical engineering and the sciences. Malvern's largest employer is QinetiQ, which employs about 2,500 people. Adjacent to this site is the Malvern Hills Science Park, which continues to expand and allow for fledgling high-tech businesses to attain their potential.

The area also nurtured a reputation for a centre of education (Malvern Colleges). The development of RADAR gave rise to the area becoming a centre of excellence for scientific exploration (DERA, QinetiQ and a dedicated Science Park).

### **A profile of the Town Centre**

Great Malvern came to prominence in the early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a fashionable resort for Victorians eager to take what came to be known as The Cure.

It is the largest population centre within the district, located in the southern half of the District area. The population is approximately 30,900. It is known as a district centre and is an important tourist attraction due to its historical features, topography, arts and theatre. Although Great Malvern is the administrative and business centre of the district, two other trading centres at Barnards Green and Malvern Link offer convenience shopping for the local neighbourhood.

The district's only major out-of-centre retail development – Three Counties Retail Park - is located at Townsend Way, close to Malvern Link. This consists of a large supermarket, eight purpose built warehouses and one further small unit housing non-food retail operators, fast food outlets. All have substantial customer parking that is free and at surface level, which is beneficial to mothers with pushchairs and less-able visitors.

It has been suggested, from the Malvern Hills District Shopping Survey February 2002, that Great Malvern town centre is the pre-eminent location for retail services within the district, in comparison with Barnards Green and Malvern Link.

Great Malvern developed in an unplanned fashion with many large residential homes being built close to the town centre. These properties together with the topography of the land effectively prevented much further expansion of the town centre. In years to come, many of the residential buildings would be adapted for business uses.

### **Setting**

Great Malvern town centre shopping area is concentrated in linear fashion along the two main roads that run perpendicular to one another – Worcester Road / Belle Vue Terrace and Church Street. The Waitrose store has been built, with a large customer car park with a pedestrian link to Church Street.

There is a significant change in levels within the town centre with Church Street rising to Belle Vue Terrace and further to Worcester Road. While contributing to the visual attractiveness of the centre, this variation in levels undoubtedly deters certain less mobile members of the shopping community. It also presents difficulties in being able to create flat sites to accommodate large-scale retail or commercial development.

Future development is confined by boundaries – both natural and artificial. In many ways the town's great strengths of its natural and built environment also restrict its development and expansion. The area's great attraction, the Malvern Hills form both a majestic backdrop and a western limit on town centre development. The scope for expansion is determined by planning considerations regarding listed buildings, residential properties and a road layout not harmonious with contemporary requirements. The town centre contains a number of historic buildings and the whole is located within a Conservation Area.

In other towns, narrow streets clogged with traffic have been solved by removal of the latter. The absence of suitable alternative routes for through traffic only exacerbates the situation in Great Malvern. This highlights the challenge of how we can expand the economy within the existing area.

### **Car Parking**

Car parking is reasonably priced and relatively easily accessible to the town centre. These facilities tends to be more predominant at the lower slopes of the town, which is on balance probably preferable as customers are travelling down hill on foot with their purchases when they return to their cars. It would appear that the current levels of car parking are sufficient to cope with the current levels of town centres usage. However, it will be necessary to review provision with a view to the encouraging and sustaining a growing town centre economy.

### **Pedestrian Access**

There are a number of routes to various destinations in town. Customers can stroll through areas of outstanding natural beauty or make take a purposeful 'cut through' at the rear of shops to reach another street. Consequently, they are not obliged to walk past the majority of retail shops to reach their particular destination. This physical characteristic may have a particular effect on perceived

footfall past commercial outlets and may skew statistics in terms of enquiry conversion ratio, if and when measured in relation to individual businesses. It also means that retailers are not only competing each with each other, but also with the attractiveness of the route that customers take to reach individual shops within the town centre.

Following on from the above, it is most important that each individual shop is attractive in its own right and combines with other shops to produce a compelling and persuasive offer to entice customers to use a commercial thoroughfare rather than one of the alternatives.

Malvern is the main location for retail activity in the District as well as the focus for commercial, leisure, entertainment and administrative services. However all three of the District's Town Centres (Great Malvern, Tenbury Wells and Upton Upon Severn) serve a localised function with retailing provision being more limited in comparison with what is available beyond the District boundary with substantial 'leakage' of retail expenditure to Birmingham, Cheltenham and Worcester.

Great Malvern is an important area for tourism and there is scope to support speciality shops that can generate a wider catchment than the local population.

Given the background and context to strategy there is a clear and established need to develop a series of actions that will 'put the life back into Great Malvern'.

### **Size of Centre & Range of Outlets**

Great Malvern Town Centre has some 23000 sq. metres of retail space in some 142 outlets. There is limited representation of multiple retailers and a correspondingly high proportion of independent retailers. There is high representation of financial and support services (Banks, Building Societies and Estate Agents) in Great Malvern.

There has been no significant loss of retail floorspace in Great Malvern Town Centre in the past five years. In fact, provision of retail floorspace was dramatically increased due to the opening of a Waitrose supermarket in the town, providing 2323 (sq m) additional floorspace. The full figures are included in appendix 4

There is a close comparison between the number of outlet proportion and Great Britain average, indicating that as far as retail offers are concerned, Great Malvern typifies a typical British locality.

### **Vacancy Rates and Comparable Rent Levels**

At April 2003, there were seven vacant shops (5% of total) in Great Malvern.

Following analysis of existing retail premises available in the town centre currently the rental levels range from £13 - £18 per sq ft., and average £15 per sq ft.,.

The average rent for prime retail premises in Ledbury is £14.00 per square foot (where rents range from £8.70 - £33.00).

These rents can be compared to those in Leominster (£7 - £23: average £12 psf). Rents in Great Malvern appear to have been relatively stable in the past few years.

## The strategic and policy framework

“The long-term vision is for a District that has a mix of people who live in supportive communities, where people can get about without being dependent upon the car, where people can live in safety free from crime and the fear of crime, where the rural character and beauty of the area is looked after, where people enjoy a good standard of living and have secure well paid and fulfilling jobs and can afford a house that suits their needs.”

*Vision 21 - The Districts Community Strategy 2002*

**The Community Strategy**, developed and agreed by the Vision 21 partnership establishes the overall vision for our District and is instrumental in developing our work in Great Malvern.

Among the themes designed to deliver the vision are five that specifically provide the framework and impetus for this document. They are:

- A good range of shops and services where they are wanted
- A sense of belonging to a supportive community
- The chance to play sport, enjoy culture and relax
- A safe community with no crime
- Secure and fulfilling jobs

Work to regenerate Great Malvern town centre is one of five priorities identified by the District Council and forms a cornerstone of the **Council's (draft) Economic Strategy**.

**The Malvern Hills District (Draft) Local Plan** also provides a more detailed framework for the future development of Great Malvern Town Centre.

**The Great Malvern Town Centre Strategy of 1996** observed certain key elements about Great Malvern – the features were identified as:

- A Gateway to the Malvern Hills      An Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- A Cultural Centre                      The Arts – Music and Theatre
- A Business Centre                      A pioneering centre of employment
- A Residential Area                      An area for families and persons all ages
- An Educational Centre                  Malvern College & Malvern Girls' College
- An Administrative Centre              Home of the MHDC Offices
- A Shopping Location                    Belle Vue was regarded as the town's principal shopping area

**A SWOT Analysis of the key features of the Town Centre undertaken by the key stakeholders in Great Malvern is attached at Appendix 2**

## **THE WAY FORWARD**

### **Great Malvern Town Centre Partnership Forum**

A Partnership forum has been established to take the strategy forward and ensure its delivery.

The composition of the Partnership's representatives is:

District Council	4	Traders' Association	4
Town Council	4	Malvern Experience	4
County Council	1	Tourism Association	2

### **Our Overall Approach.**

This will be one that is guided and informed by the strategic and policy framework of vision 21, the District, County and Town Councils as the elected representatives of the community as a whole. The views and interest of the key business partners will also contribute hugely to the success of the strategy.

### **The key themes of our work will be to:**

- Creating and developing a sense of place
- Enhancing the legibility of the town
- Enhancing the spaces, facilities and amenities of the town centre and the movement between them
- Promoting enterprise, stimulating growth and business start up particularly in the hospitality and leisure sectors.
- Promoting and recognising quality and excellence.

### **Our task as a Partnership**

- Identify priorities, lead partners and resources
- Co-ordinate activities
- Develop joint working
- Attract investment
- Communicate the vision and progress
- Actively promote the town and the town centre.

### **Our Commitment**

- Genuine partnership and commitment of Great Malvern Partners and stakeholders
- Working together and giving maximum possible support
- Agreeing principles
- Focussing on and pursuing priorities
- Releasing/securing resources (time, people, money, products).
- Organisational development (*see objective 5*) including clarifying and agreeing action leaders and teams.
- Maximising funding opportunities through the strength of the Business Plan and the local partnerships i.e. *Vision 21*, Heart of England Tourist Board, Advantage West Midlands, Learning and Skills Council, Chamber of Commerce, Herefordshire and Worcestershire.

## **The PARTNERSHIP'S VISION for GREAT MALVERN**

“Great Malvern will be a premier visitor and shopping destination that is alive and prosperous with a healthy and vibrant shopping offer, hospitality, attractions and tourism accommodation open for business seven days a week for the benefit of resident and visitor alike.”

## **The MISSION STATEMENT of the PARTNERSHIP**

“To strengthen Great Malvern as the first choice for local people, and build its reputation as a desirable place to visit by nurturing its niche shopping and ambience and exploiting its unique history and location for the benefit of Malvern's people, businesses and its visitors”.

## **OUR KEY OBJECTIVES**

### **Objective 1**

Improve Great Malvern's sense of place by enhancing its attractions and amenities to provide an attractive environment at all times, which promotes pleasurable town life, enables ease of movement and is conducive to business development.

### **Objective 2**

Develop a growing town centre economy that provides a wide range of quality shopping, attractions and hospitality including accommodation.

### **Objective 3**

Develop co-ordinated and mutually supportive marketing and promotion activity that promotes, capitalises on and develops Great Malvern's name and reputation.

### **Objective 4**

Develop and maintain high standards of customer service and facilities throughout the town.

### **Objective 5**

Establish sustainable, organisational and communication mechanisms to support and drive the implemented strategy; generate local pride and commitment to Great Malvern and secure the active participation of all stakeholders.

## **Objective 1 – A Sense of Place and Purpose**

**Improve Great Malvern's sense of place by enhancing its attractions and amenities to provide an attractive environment at all times, which promotes pleasurable town life, enables ease of movement and is conducive to business development.**

The approach adopted in this document is to encourage a much greater usage of the town centre by designing features that enable and encourage people to circulate between the different sections of the town from Waitrose in the north, to the theatres in the south, Bellevue Terrace and Graham Road.

Key developments should address this point by improving the built environment of the town, its arrival management and access around the town, ensuring quality of design in keeping with and promoting the town centre's status as a conservation area. .

There may exist a number of opportunities for redevelopment or improvement in the built environment. It is important to emphasise that the Malvern Community Strategy document recognises and puts forward a number of key issues, which this document strives to address. These include:

- Creating new opportunities for businesses (particularly retailing and related services) within the town centre
- Creation of local employment opportunities
- Reduce the 'spend leakage' to other areas
- Protecting and enhancing the quality and character of the town centre
- Provision of better local choice to reduce private vehicle journeys
- Address local transport issues

The only site specifically identified in the Local Plan for proposed redevelopment in the town centre is Edith Walk

The Post Office & Delivery Office and the area behind Belle Vue Terrace have also been identified for potential redevelopment or improvement, but are not contained in the Local Plan.

A review will be undertaken of the town centre's key buildings and locations to investigate their future and associated possibilities.

## **IMPROVING THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT - Opportunities for Development**

### **Post Office and Delivery Office**

A priority opportunity for new business development, which will serve as a catalyst for further improvements is seen as the **Post Office and Delivery Office**. A large prominent building - too large for its current uses – has the greatest potential for re-development.



This building also houses a basement club. All three uses could be re-located to other premises; the Delivery Office to a Business Park; the Post Office to smaller town premises within the town. The club may be accommodated in a variety of buildings within the town or stay in its present location. Freeing up the space opens up various exciting possibilities:

It is envisaged that the redeveloped site must provide a vista that allows the beauty and grace of the Priory to show through the new structure.

The whole may be re-developed into retail units of varying sizes e.g.

Lower Ground - Retail Provision  
First Floor – Visitor Centre

Ground Floor – Retail Provision  
Roof top – Restaurant

A vision of the remodelled building is seen below

The glass-domed roof restaurant can be accessed separately from the street to enable the business to operate outside the building's normal hours.



**1.1 Explore, with the Post Office, the potential for relocating the Delivery Office, moving the Post Office elsewhere in the town and redevelopment of the site.**

Creating a Town Centre 'Focus' - Festival Square and Edith Walk

Great Malvern Town Centre lacks a central focal point. It is considered that Belle Vue Terrace represents the premier shopping address of Great Malvern, but like Church Street is single sided.

Although it is acknowledged that there may be legal and financial constraints it is proposed to revisit the feasibility of creating a 'town centre focus' in the area of what has become known colloquially as Festival Square (the area situated in the middle of Edith walk and bounded by Waitrose and Somerfield). No other opportunity has been identified within the town centre that is capable of providing sufficient space for any meaningful development. Existing buildings on the periphery of Festival Square lack aesthetic appeal, character and suitability for future needs. The site is capable of providing a suitable size and successful attraction that can become the focal centre of Great Malvern.

This area bounded by Church Street, Church Walk and Edith Walk could be redeveloped into a small multi-storey, split level shopping centre consisting of fashion boutiques, gift shops and catering outlets.

**1.2 It is proposed to explore the feasibility of creating Festival Square that will provide an area for commercial development and create a central, focal attraction with access to other parts of the town.**

**It is important to emphasise that one party working alone cannot achieve the above initiatives. Expectations must be tempered with reality. A consortium of varied interests will need to be formally set up in order that various barriers and impediments can be overcome. The fact that such difficulties are recognised might be considered sufficient stimulus for action.**

#### Property Usage

Landlords and property owners to be consulted with the aim of restoring premises to profitable use by:

- Encourage property owners to convert upper floor premises to office or residential use.
- Non-retail uses (such as office space above existing premises) must also be encouraged, whilst retaining core retailing premises
- A study should be made of other key buildings within the Town Centre (and if necessary extending the boundaries – if thought likely to have future impact upon the town centre) in order to ascertain their future use and potential requirements.

### **1.3 Open dialogue with landlords, property agents to explore methods of freeing up property premises for profitable use**

### **1.4 Review the present situation and future requirements of key buildings within the town centre and immediate local area**

## **MOVEMENT AROUND THE TOWN CENTRE**

### Walkways

Movement between different points of the town is made difficult by the steep gradients. Apart from the main roads, Church Walk provides the only contour route. It is essential to open up other access routes such as:

### **1.5 Create an additional walkway route from the top of Church Street through to Festival Square**

### Church Walk

Although it is noted that Church walk is privately owned the partnership will approach the owners to propose enhancement of the existing walkway with improved surfaces, street furniture and soft landscaping from Church Street to promote contour routes to access Edith Walk. The approach from both directions is inadequately signed, poorly lit and does not encourage visitors to explore.

### **1.6 Improve Church Walk to provide a pleasurable and comfortable contour access route**

### Disability Access Provision

It is essential to bear in mind that the requirements of this legislation come into force during the time of this document. With effect from October 2004, access to all buildings - private and public - plus public facilities must be accessible to all persons. The natural situation of the town centre presents access problems for many users.

The Disability Access legislation is shortly to be introduced and any changes or new developments must conform to the law. The subject warrants a separate paper dedicated to this subject. However some of the topics to be addressed include:

- Clutter. Removal or repositioning of various impedimenta – e.g., hydrant signs, pavement signs, A-boards etc
- Signage. Are signs clear and at a level suitable for all users?
- Surfaces. Ensuring a full appraisal of the need for and location of anti-slip measures needed?
- Other ideas - Braille menus - encourage caterers to provide help for visually impaired

## **1.7 Ensure that the needs of less-mobile users are considered in all proposals**

### OPEN SPACES

Great Malvern is situated in a setting rich with shrubs and trees. The town is blessed with the magnificent Malvern Hills, which reach far down into the town. The town centre is also fortunate to possess some outstanding open spaces within close proximity. Behind the theatre is to be found Priory Park complete with bandstand and water features. Abutting Belle Vue Terrace and Wells Road is Rosebank Gardens wherein lie the Ninety Nine Steps that lead up to St Ann's Well and thence on to the Malvern Hills.

Both Priory Park and Rosebank Gardens have been assessed as urban spaces having a major contribution in terms of landscape, biodiversity and informal recreation for Malvern. *A scheme to enhance Foley Terrace has already been developed and the 'sponsors' of this scheme will be invited to include their scheme as an important contribution to the project as a whole.*

## **1.8 Highlight the open spaces and create a series of short walks for the enjoyment of both residents and visitors. The walks could be themed (architectural, botanical, heritage, water) or could be regarded as a straightforward walk.**

It is believed that a draft Heritage Lottery Bid was drawn up in 1998 for improvements to Priory Park – in particular to the paths and entrances. Both are identified as being in need of improvements today; the paths to curb skateboard activity and the entrances require more prominence to attract visitors.

## **1.9 Review the draft Heritage Lottery Bid prepared by consultants in 1998 with regard to paths and entrances to Priory Park**

### ARRIVAL MANAGEMENT AND VEHICULAR MOVEMENT

This includes all modes of arrival – by bus, car, coach or train. The term 'arrival management' refers to and includes the route / directional signage from the national / regional road network and the subsequent information provided into and around the town centre.

#### Signage

Every effort must be made to reduce the clutter of signs and to ensure that all conform to a consistent size and format. The information must be clear and concise, which can be readily understood by the visitor (who is obviously less familiar with the area than the resident). An audit of signage is currently being conducted jointly with the MH Conservators and the Highways Partnership.

#### Gateways

First impressions count. The welcome must start at the various entrances. Town nameplates should be maintained and enhanced with planting displays to create 'an entrance'. The roundabout currently located at countryside stores on the town southern entrance is also in need of improvement.

#### Traffic Management

The east-west (up/downhill) traffic routes in the town are few and unfortunately very close together.

Church Street carries two-way traffic, allows street parking and often comes to a halt. The situation is not going to improve with the ever-increasing number of vehicles and the high number of HGVs and other delivery vehicles. The top of the hill junction close to the intersection with Edith Walk causes a further problem.

The other street - Edith Walk - is one-way down for part of the way and then becomes two-way to allow traffic into the small parking areas.

**1.10 Agree a traffic management strategy for the town centre and its approaches**

Car Parks

A survey of spaces in and around the town centre reveals the following information: The town provides a variety of pay and display car parks - capable of accommodating approximately 600 cars - situated above and below the town.

The town car parks - all Pay & Display - are situated at:

Venue	Bays	Stay	Comments
<b>TOWN CENTRE</b>			
Waitrose	288	Long	2 Hours free with receipt
Edith Walk	27	Short	
Grange Rd	33	Short	
Grange Rd South	14	Short	2 locations - Toilet facility
Belle Vue Terrace	31	Short	
<b>EDGE OF TOWN</b>			
Priory Rd	141	Long	Coach bays – Recycling
Victoria Rd	64	Long	Toilet facility
<b>Total</b>	<b>598</b>		

In addition, there are many private parking lots plus streets where parking is permitted.

Given the certainty of increased vehicle ownership, it is evident that the car parks of today will be insufficient for the needs of tomorrow. Other areas of car parking need to be identified.

The introduction of park & ride facilities should be explored. To start, the scheme could be operated on Saturdays only and extended as required. A regular two-way shuttle bus service would need to operate between the P&R area and the town centre.

**1.11 Review the provision of additional car park facilities to cater for the needs of 2010**

**1.12 Consider the introduction of Park & Ride facilities supported by shuttle transport**

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

An alternative shuttle bus service (operating throughout the week) to be introduced which would link the town centre with the other trading areas - Barnards Green, Malvern Link and the Three Counties Retail Park. The route would be circular and operate in both directions.

The provision of a shuttle bus service linking car parks and the four shopping areas has been discussed earlier. Great Malvern's streets are too small to tolerate the use of large buses as well as tourist coaches. The bus operators must be encouraged to operate most local services with mini buses.

### 1.13 Review the provision of circular route shuttle bus (2-way) linking Great Malvern and neighbouring shopping areas in order to reduce the number of private vehicle journeys made

#### Objective 2 – The Economy

**Develop a growing town centre economy that provides a wide range of quality shopping, attractions and hospitality including accommodation.**

Great Malvern must appeal to a different market than that provided by Barnards Green, Malvern Link and the Three Counties Retail Park. This can be achieved by concentrating on browsing or comparison merchandise groups and enabling the town centre to create its own niche or specialist retail offer. (This has already been successfully achieved in similar rural towns such as Hay-on-Wye, Ledbury and Ludlow.)

#### Improving the retail offer

The town has two large supermarkets and a variety of convenience shops – browsing / comparative shops being under-represented. Great Malvern has a high number of service businesses (in particular estate agents, financial) which comprise 25% of the town’s building stock). In comparison, similar size towns such as Ledbury, Leominster, Ludlow, Monmouth and Ross have no more than 20% in this sector.

Although Great Malvern has a similar proportion of charity shops to other comparable towns the more critical difficulty is that charity shops in Great Malvern trade out of prominent premises that should be occupied by businesses that enhance the merchandise offer of the town centre.

In 2002, the District Council commissioned a district-wide retail study that established the vitality and viability of each of the District’s town centres. The towns were measured in quantitative and qualitative terms. In terms of their levels of vitality and viability in relation to their size and position in the sub-regional retail hierarchy:

- Great Malvern displayed “medium to high levels”
- Malvern Link “reasonably healthy levels”
- Barnards Green “high levels”
- Tenbury “reasonably high” and
- Upton “very high levels”

The District Council has defined the following street lengths of Great Malvern that shall be regarded as Primary Shopping Frontages for A1 (Retail use)

Belle Vue Terrace	west side	Worcester Road	west side
Church Street	north and south side		
Abbey Road	east side	Church Walk	both sides

The *MH District Shopping Study* produced by White Young Green Planning and conducted in February 2002 submitted the following recommendations for additional retail provision:

#### Convenience Shopping

Their report reasoned that there was no further need for additional convenience shopping floorspace, but did recommend that there was scope for a deep discount store to broaden the choice for those local residents whose primary emphasis when food shopping is value for money.

### Comparison Shopping – non bulky goods

The study highlighted expenditure capacity to support between 2,172 to 5,600 sq/m of additional non-bulky comparison floorspace, depending on the assumptions used. In addition to the quantitative need, the Report noted that there is a qualitative need to improve the range of national multiples representation in Great Malvern Town Centre, since at present there are few such retailers represented and the outlets they occupy are not of the highest quality.

However the Report conceded that there is only limited potential to consolidate and improve the non-bulky comparison shopping facilities within the District, despite the household survey indicating that there are high levels of expenditure wastage to centres outside the District. This is partly due to the strength of offer in the nearby larger towns (Worcester) and the fact that those centres are likely to improve further.

Other important factors inhibiting the attraction of quality national retailers to Great Malvern Town Centre are a lack of modern retail units with a substantial open floorscape with adequate storage and service arrangements; the topography of the Town Centre which makes land assembly difficult and reduces the prime pitch area within the centre; the conservation area status and the presence of numerous listed buildings that add to the problems of achieving substantial redevelopment to provide modern shop units.

Notwithstanding the above, it is considered essential that Great Malvern develops and enhances a reputation for offering goods and services that cater for residents and visitors alike. Great Malvern must strive to present an offer that is separate to the range of goods and services supplied by the neighbouring centres at Barnards Green, Malvern Link and Three Counties Retail Park. These are mainly delivering convenience goods although it is conceded that TCRP is providing some comparison and bulky goods provision.

### Developing the Retail Opportunities

Much of the commercial premises consist of unit stock that dates back to the early 1900s and / or is not conducive to modern day business needs. Modern businesses require premises that are regular in shape to conform to their corporate layout, on one trading level and preferably with as open a floor layout as possible.

Few units in Malvern meet these criteria. Consequently, it is necessary to create space and units to provide the facilities required. Consequently, we must identify and maximise every opportunity to create a town centre that stands comparison with any other of similar nature, attractions and amenities.

Great Malvern should offer goods and services that are described as browsing, comparison, niche, or specialist. Typical merchandise that is included in such a description are fashion boutiques for women and children (including accessories); men's clothing; casual leisure (activity, lifestyle, youth); house and home accessories; gifts (including arts and crafts); books, music and video; hobbies and pastimes.

The future town centre must operate seven-days a week. It can be argued that as many day visitors come to the district on Sundays as on any other day of the week.

**2.1 Invite retail companies in the comparison category to visit Great Malvern and market the opportunities to them**

**2.2 Explore other opportunities such as 'co-operatives', 'sharing premises' to encourage new start-up businesses and assess the potential of 'return to work', complimentary and local produce goods.**

## 2.3 Encourage the town to trade seven days a week

### Developing the Food & Drink Opportunities

Hospitality plays an important role in creating the right ambience for residents and visitors to relax and enjoy the town's and area's attractions. Apart from pubs, restaurants and hotels, the town's offer should include bistros, continental restaurants, teashops plus coffee and wine bars.

One of the key 'attractors' in any destination and a key component in a vibrant visitor economy is a range of opportunities for eating and drinking.

Great Malvern requires cafes, bistros and inexpensive restaurants to cater for day and weekend visitors plus evening needs. However, any additional eating options must operate during the day as well as during the evening to create the 'life' of the town.

**2.4 Assess the town's needs to provide sufficient and suitable hospitality outlets to cater for the day, evening and weekend user (resident and visitor). Ensure that such outlets contribute to the daytime as well as night-time economy.**

## PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

Malvern has many USPs (Unique Selling Points). These include:

<i>Cultural</i>	<i>Physical</i>	<i>Other</i>
Malvern Theatres	Malvern Hills	Morgan Cars
English Symphony & String Orchestra	Three Counties Show Grounds	Scientific Heritage
Malvern Festival	Water Cure	Educational Centre
Elgar Festival	Malvern Water & Fountains	
Shaw Associations		
Malvern Priory		

It is important that Great Malvern builds on the themes of its artistic, natural and scientific heritage in promotion of itself and in its projection of civic pride.

A number of 'quick wins' can be gained by publicising and developing Town and water trails.

Consideration should also be given to developing an outdoor activity event that captures the 'spirit' of the town and its environs. One option is to hold a 'Kite Festival' as an annual event in honour of Elgar. This might take place on the commons around the town.

There is also a need to develop the heritage theme either through an improvement to the existing museum or by developing a number of heritage attractions in different venues.

The development of an outdoor 'walkers' corner around the existing TIC also presents an opportunity.

### Town Trails

The town has many assets that can be accentuated. A self-guided walk (or separate walks) may be created to embrace the prominent features (historical associations) and attractions (water fountains) of the town.

## Markets

The market will only prove viable if located in the town centre and operate on a traditional market day. Besides a weekly market, other attractions to be pursued include a monthly Farmers' Market, regular specialist markets (bric-a-brac, crafts, hobbies etc) and a Christmas market.

## Priory Park

This is a gem hidden away from visitors. Its location is easy to reach, but it is not signed or featured from the roadway. Use by more people may help to enhance the atmosphere of the park.

A formal archway should be introduced at each entrance. For the sake of continuity, it is suggested that the style of archway should be the same as that at Abbey Steps

The Park should be used to greater promotional effect - particularly in the summer. Suggestions include:

- Artists under the Sky (Held each Sunday)
- Music in the Park (Brass, Jazz, Orchestral, Youth)
- Flea Market (Monthly)

## Entertainment Areas

Create an area in the town centre for public entertainment for use by musicians, mime artists, and other performers. The area by Elgar's statue on Belle Vue Terrace would be ideal. Such activity would be presented initially at weekends.

### **2.5 Create a Programme for all forms of promotional activities**

### **2.6 Introduce self-guided / organised walks within the town centre and adjacent foothills**

### **2.7 Introduce street entertainment, leisure and recreational attractions in the town centre and Priory Park.**

## **IMPROVING THE VISITOR INFRASTRUCTURE**

### Hotels & Conference Facilities

There are many examples of the good quality stock of hotel and other forms of accommodation. It will be prudent to record the current level of facilities to ensure that the town is best able to meet future requirements in terms of conference and event management.

Modern conferences prefer integrated facilities rather than have people booked in all over the town. A desirable criterion would be to suit meetings other than just conferences and would also be complimentary to the needs of external events such as the Three Counties Showground.

The attractiveness of the area provides an idyllic setting and an exciting opportunity for Great Malvern to develop itself as a small conference centre. It should be noted that many delegates attending large exhibitions at the NEC resort to accommodation far away from Birmingham.

### Accommodation

Great Malvern is served by a large number of hotels and guesthouse accommodation. However there appears to be a dearth of facilities for touring visitors such as campers, camper vans and caravans. In addition to the above, the town needs to provide adequate and proper facilities for coach vehicles. Day trippers from Birmingham and Black Country should be encouraged along with coaches of foreign tourists visiting the Cotswolds, Oxford and Shakespeare. A coach pick-up and dropping-off point is

envisaged in the vicinity of the Theatre; coaches would then drive to a separate parking area with access to facilities for the drivers.

**2.8 Conduct an audit of existing accommodation facilities and to identify the requirements for visitor accommodation in 2010 within the Great Malvern area**  
Malvern Hills and the Three Counties Showground

The Hills attract a considerable number of walkers annually – yet few of them venture into the town. Conversely, the Hills are inaccessible to the majority of visitors.

The current Hill Hopper service provides some access to the hills and back to the town.

The Three Counties Showground hosts regular events; some attract many thousands of people. The town should explore ways to encourage TCS visitors to visit Great Malvern

**2.9 In conjunction with the Conservators, explore means of popular access to the Hills and other recreational activities in adjacent areas**

**2.10 Explore methods of transport to shuttle visitors between the Town Centre and Three Counties Showground**

## **Objective 3 – Marketing**

**Develop co-ordinated and mutually supportive marketing activity that promotes, capitalises on and develops Great Malvern’s name and reputation.**

In many ways a good product can sell itself. However, research indicates that night stay visitors spend five times as much as the day visitor. People are also having more short breaks and are booking later.

Building directly on the key themes of the Great Malvern product, the town has a magnificent opportunity to promote itself as a short-break destination. The town should promote itself as offering mid-week and weekend breaks.

### Short Break Destination

The facility of Great Malvern and the immediate surrounding area presents a superb short-break destination. The Malvern Theatre complex combined with the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty status and top quality overnight accommodation provides an offer that is almost unparalleled in appeal.

#### **3.1 Market and promote Great Malvern as a short-break destination**

##### Day Visitor Destination

The Malvern Hills District is about one hour’s drive away from the second largest conurbation in the country and a number of other discrete centres of population. The town should develop opportunities to attract day visitors from Birmingham and the Black Country plus other areas such as South Wales.

Promote travel to Great Malvern in conjunction with Central Trains and other operators. Arrange cheap day returns combined with entrance to visitor attractions.

#### **3.2 Market and promote Great Malvern as a day visit destination**

##### Coach Circuit

The Malvern Hills District lies within easy travelling distance of the Cotswolds, Oxford, Stratford-upon-Avon and Worcester. All of these are attractions in their own right, but so is Great Malvern and the surrounding area.

#### **3.3 Examine opportunities for organised tour operators to include Malvern Hills District within their schedules**

##### Brand Identity

Enhancing a distinctive brand image around the principles of ‘quality and space’. The brand should also capture the essence of heritage and as a centre of arts, beauty and culture.

Brand awareness needs to be targeted specifically at the quality ABC1 market

A web site should be developed that concentrates on marketing the area and its availability to the user

##### Tactical Marketing

Develop a higher profile in association with third parties such as Malvern Theatre attractions, Three Counties Show events, and Malvern Hills activities. Other tactical marketing themes should capitalise on Elgar Festivals, Malvern Water Cure (suitably updated) and QinetiQ achievements.

The tactical marketing concentrates on specific events such as promotion in conjunction with Malvern Festivals, Three Counties Shows, Elgar and Shaw Festivals and tie in with short-breaks as above.

**3.4 Marketing Great Malvern as a centre of excellence, quality and hospitality by enhancing the consumer's perception by brand awareness and tactical event support.**

Training – Hospitality

Contemporary visitors expect higher standards of service in all respects – regardless of whether the delivery is provided by the private or public sector. We need to facilitate and co-ordinate Hospitality, Welcome and Customer Care training for the benefit of businesses and their staff. This is not intended to replace any training undertaken by the individual businesses, but to ensure that a consistent message is put across.

A comprehensive set of Frequently Asked Questions should be compiled that will be able to provide answers to the majority of visitors questions – and provide a ‘holding’ solution to questions not covered. It is envisaged that the information will be provided to every person employed within the hospitality and service industry of the District.

**3.5 Facilitate the provision of Welcome training for all hospitality and service employees to ensure that visitors are accorded the highest possible level of service.**

**3.6 Compile a set of Frequently Asked Questions with appropriate answers to ensure that hospitality and service providers are aware of the assets and attributes of the Malvern Hills District**

**3.7 Build on the strength of the Tourist Information Centre, to explore the potential of touch-screen Information points and kiosks at strategic locations and gateways, such as Three Counties Showground and Malvern railway stations and car parks.**

**3.8 Assess the potential for an updated information-led (rather than advert-driven) Town Guide for visitors**

Incentives to return

It is not sufficient just to attract visitors; success is judged by the number of repeat visits that are generated.

If the town gets the basics right, presents an interesting offer of attractions and facilities and welcomes people with a smile, success is not guaranteed, but almost assured.

Incentives may take the form of loyalty cards, car park (free on a return visit), money-off coupons, and targeted special offers. Most hotels already offer incentives of one sort or another. Incentives should be used on a tactical basis.

**3.9 Explore various marketing initiatives on a tactical basis to encourage visitors to return to Great Malvern**

## **Objective 4 – Exceed Expectations**

### **Develop and maintain high standards of customer service and facilities throughout the town.**

Today's consumers expect better service and treatment than ever before. They have travelled to other parts of the world where different – not always better – standards are practised. Today's customer is better informed and less likely to tolerate poor service or shoddy treatment. They expect – and are entitled to – a high level of customer service – our challenge is to exceed their expectations.

## **The STREET SCENE**

### **Street Cleaning**

At present Street cleaning and waste disposal are operated by the council and private contractors acting on behalf of businesses. Cleaning and waste management service provisions need to be agreed between the responsible agencies, businesses and the Partnership. This will cover waste management issues (including recycling) as well as street cleaning and any campaigns against public waste and nuisance (litter graffiti etc). Emphasis should be placed upon the end results rather than the process of capability.

The external placement (by traders) of garbage bags for collection some days hence should not be permitted, or else refuse collection schedules should be revised.

### **Toilets**

These amenities are often the first - and last - impression of the town.

- The town's toilets must be upgraded to a standard that is above the user's expectations.
- The toilets must be improved to the standard whereby they are worthy of being entered for the national 'Good Loo Awards'.
- Toilets that are deemed uneconomic should be closed down and converted to other uses

### **Landscaping, Hard**

The improvements made to some of the town's pavements are noted. The introduction of York stone paving around Belle Vue Terrace and Church Street lends an air of quality. However, the improvement is threatened when vehicles are able to access and park without penalty. Such areas need to be protected from damage / oil stains by bollards and / or trees.

### **Lighting**

It is noted that many street lights have been moved to building facades. This serves to brighten up the building, remove a pavement obstruction and improve the ambience generally. However redundant cables should be removed from buildings.

However, there are walkway areas that are not so well lit and these should be improved. The chief areas of concern include Church Walk, Edith Walk and walkways in and around Priory Park and the Theatre complex.

A number of feature gas lamps are in need of attention. These are to be found in the areas of: Great Malvern Station, Ninety Nine Steps and Belle Vue Terrace.

## **4.1 Review the delivery of essential services to ensure both optimum performance by service provider that subsequently exceed the expectations of end-users**

### **Street Furniture**

This heading covers: Bus Stops & Shelters, Information Signs, Railings, Lampposts, Seats and Waste Bins.

**4.2 Agree that all street furniture should conform to an agreed style and be painted in uniform colours - suggested as black and gold - or the town's corporate colours.**

Shop Frontages



Certain buildings have taken advantage of past restoration grants for shopfronts. It is hoped to encourage other businesses to also restore their property's façade. Grants should again be available to enable appropriate business frontages to be restored in keeping with the town's Victorian heritage.

Empty premises are blights on the town yet landlords seem to tolerate void units rather than seek practical solutions that might result in mutual benefit. Property owners should be encouraged to allow empty premises to be utilised for regional produce, suitable short-term lets, local displays etc rather than tolerating vacant properties

In addition to street cleaning routine, businesses should be urged to monitor the front of their premises. Most continental counterparts routinely wash / hose down pavement frontages, remove litter and ensure that flowers are watered and deadheaded.

**4.3 Encourage businesses to improve premises, in keeping with conservation principles, by means of shop front improvement grant scheme**

**4.4 Encourage empty shop premises for temporary use or local display initiatives**

Floral Displays

Although this section should come under the heading of Essential Services, it is considered worthy and important enough to warrant its own identity. Many towns have recognised the benefits of improving the townscape by the introduction and enhancement of judicious foliage. Towns and cities as diverse as Barnstaple, Birmingham, Ledbury and Nottingham have improved almost beyond recognition by planting that produces that Wow! factor. Properly tended, such displays can provide a picture of bloom throughout the summer period – and attract more visitors than towns that don't make the effort.

Landscaping, Soft

The town is situated in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty; much of the town has also been accorded Conservation status. It is important that the planting areas reinforce that position and are allocated resources commensurate with the town's importance.

- Belle Vue Terrace is a focal point of the town and must be singled out for special attention. The planting of low/no maintenance shrubs, although current council's policy, the lack of an irrigation system and the effect caused by the inappropriate choice of two large plane trees are evident of the need to revisit the scheme.



Besides Priory Park, other areas identified for planting features include lower Church Street, Church Walk, Edith Walk, corner of Graham Road and Edith Walk. Colourful flowers should be incorporated in all areas to provide seasonal displays.

**4.5 Review all aspects of floral displays to ensure that displays are co-ordinate, tended and enhanced and that maintenance services are not duplicated**

**4.6 Encourage local businesses to participate in floral displays at prices and on terms agreed by the Partnership and the key partners**

#### Malvern in Bloom

This provides an effective way of involving the community and further improving the appearance of the town is to enter the spirit and competition of Britain in Bloom.

Communities that are involved in Britain in Bloom have seen many benefits:

- An increase in civic pride through local people taking on the planning and management of their local environment
- Long-term improvement in their local environment through planting, floral displays and high levels of cleanliness
- A boost to the local economy through increased tourism
- Regeneration of disadvantaged areas
- Stimulation of voluntary work and co-operation between community groups

Britain in Bloom emphasises the need for environmental awareness, cleanliness, and sustainability. The scheme also stresses the need to secure the involvement of the community of all ages.

**4.7 Recommend that Great Malvern enter the Britain in Bloom competition annually with the aim of winning the regional section by 2008 and the national competition by 2010**

## **Objective 5 - The Partnership**

**Establish sustainable, organisational and communication mechanisms to support and drive the implemented strategy; generate local pride and commitment to Great Malvern and secure the active participation of all stakeholders.**

As stated in the introduction, the initiatives set out in this document can only be achieved in concert with one another. The Partnership which includes representation from the private and public sector will ultimately be judged to be successful by the consumers – be they residents, visitors or indeed the staff working in the town (for they are not only consumers, but ambassadors for the town).

In order to measure our progress and keep our focus on the objectives, it is essential that we know where we are going and where we are going wrong.

We need to measure if the initiatives have been successful. We need to introduce some meaningful reporting questionnaires, surveys and systems. Annual forums for business / consumer / visitor dialogue should also be convened. These will be monitored against pre-determined objectives and any variances or shortcomings followed up as appropriate.

**5.1 Review and consolidate, as applicable, methods of local business / visitor monitoring to identify standards of performance.**

**5.2 Compare performance against benchmarks, targets and other measures such as comparisons with similar towns.**

**5.3 Conduct footfall surveys at strategic points to measure visitor activity**

**5.4 Ascertain levels of satisfaction from consumer focus groups and perception surveys**

This paper covers a variety of initiatives that are not exhaustive. The town must monitor, review and respond to all aspects in the light of changing circumstances – the sudden onset of the Foot and Mouth Outbreak in 2001 serves to illustrate the point.

People must be encouraged to think constructively, laterally and positively. Nobody has a monopoly of ideas; the secret is to tease out and consider new suggestions.

## Objective 1 – A Sense of Place and Purpose

**Improve Great Malvern's sense of place by enhancing its attractions and amenities to provide an attractive environment at all times, which promotes pleasurable town life, enables ease of movement and is conducive to business development.**

	<b>Initiative</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>Who?</b>	<b>Notes</b>
1.1	Explore, with the Post Office, the potential for relocating the Delivery Office, moving the Post Office elsewhere in the town and redevelopment of the site.			
1.2	It is proposed to explore the feasibility of creating Festival Square that will provide an area for commercial development and create a central, focal attraction with access to other parts of the town.			
1.3	Open dialogue with landlords, property agents to explore methods of freeing up property premises for profitable use			
1.4	Review the present situation and future requirements of key buildings within the town centre and immediate local area			
1.5	Create an additional walkway route from the top of Church Street through to Festival Square			
1.6	Improve Church Walk to provide a pleasurable and comfortable contour access route			
1.7	Ensure that the needs of less-mobile users are considered in all proposals			
1.8	Highlight the open spaces and create a series of short walks for the enjoyment of both residents and visitors. The walks could be themed (architectural, botanical, heritage, water) or could be regarded as a straightforward walk.			
1.9	Review the draft Heritage Lottery Bid prepared by consultants in 1998 with regard to paths and entrances to Priory Park			
1.10	Agree a traffic management strategy for the town centre and its approaches			
1.11	Review the provision of additional car park facilities to cater for the needs of 2010			
1.12	Consider the introduction of Park & Ride facilities supported by shuttle transport			
1.13	Review the provision of circular route shuttle bus (2-way) linking Great Malvern and neighbouring shopping areas in order to reduce the number of private vehicle journeys made			

## Objective 2 – The Economy

**Develop a growing town centre economy that provides a wide range of quality shopping, attractions and hospitality including accommodation.**

	<b>Initiative</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>Who?</b>	<b>Notes</b>
2.1	Invite retail companies in the comparison category to visit Great Malvern and market the opportunities to them			
2.2	Explore other opportunities such as 'co-operatives', 'sharing premises' to encourage new start-up businesses and assess the potential of 'return to work', complimentary and local produce goods.			
2.3	Encourage the town to trade seven days a week			
2.4	Assess the town's needs to provide sufficient and suitable hospitality outlets to cater for the day, evening and weekend user (resident and visitor). Ensure that such outlets contribute to the daytime as well as night-time economy.			
2.5	Create a Programme for all forms of promotional activities			
2.6	Introduce self-guided / organised walks within the town centre and adjacent foothills			
2.7	Introduce street entertainment, leisure and recreational attractions in the town centre and Priory Park.			
2.8	Conduct an audit of existing accommodation facilities and to identify the requirements for visitor accommodation in 2010 within the Great Malvern area			
2.9	In conjunction with the Conservators, explore means of popular access to the Hills and other recreational activities in adjacent areas			
2.10	Explore methods of transport to shuttle visitors between the Town Centre and Three Counties Showground			

### Objective 3 – Marketing

**Develop co-ordinated and mutually supportive marketing activity that promotes, capitalises on and develops Great Malvern's name and reputation.**

	<b>Initiative</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>Who?</b>	<b>Notes</b>
3.1	Market and promote Great Malvern as a short-break destination			
3.2	Market and promote Great Malvern as a day visit destination			
3.3	Examine opportunities for organised tour operators to include Malvern Hills District within their schedules			
3.4	Marketing Great Malvern as a centre of excellence, quality and hospitality by enhancing the consumer's perception by brand awareness and tactical event support.			
3.5	Facilitate the provision of Welcome training for all hospitality and service employees to ensure that visitors are accorded the highest possible level of service.			
3.6	Compile a set of Frequently Asked Questions with appropriate answers to ensure that hospitality and service providers are aware of the assets and attributes of the Malvern Hills District			
3.7	Build on the strength of the Tourist Information Centre, to explore the potential of touch-screen Information points and kiosks at strategic locations and gateways, such as Three Counties Showground and Malvern railway stations and car parks			
3.8	Assess the potential for an updated information-led (rather than advert-driven) Town Guide for visitors			
3.9	Explore various marketing initiatives on a tactical basis to encourage visitors to return to Great Malvern			

## Objective 4 – Exceed Expectations

Develop and maintain high standards of customer service and facilities throughout the town.

	<b>Initiative</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>Who?</b>	<b>Notes</b>
4.1	Review the delivery of essential services to ensure both optimum performance by service provider that subsequently exceed the expectations of end-users			
4.2	Agree that all street furniture should conform to an agreed style and be painted in uniform colours - suggested as black and gold - or the town's corporate colours.			
4.3	Encourage businesses to improve premises, in keeping with conservation principles, by means of shop front improvement grant scheme			
4.4	Encourage empty shop premises for temporary use or local display initiatives			
4.5	Review all aspects of floral displays to ensure that displays are co-ordinate, tended and enhanced and that maintenance services are not duplicated			
4.6	Encourage local businesses to participate in floral displays at prices and on terms approved by the Partnership			
4.7	Recommend that Great Malvern enter the Britain in Bloom competition annually with the aim of winning the regional section by 2008 and the national competition by 2010			

## Objective 5 - The Partnership

**Establish sustainable, organisational and communication mechanisms to support and drive the implemented strategy; generate local pride and commitment to Great Malvern and secure the active participation of all stakeholders.**

	<b>Initiative</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>Who?</b>	<b>Notes</b>
5.1	Review and consolidate, as applicable, methods of local business / visitor monitoring to identify standards of performance.			
5.2	Compare performance against benchmarks, targets and other measures such as comparisons with similar towns.			
5.3	Conduct footfall surveys at strategic points to measure visitor activity			
5.4	Ascertain levels of satisfaction from consumer focus groups and perception surveys			

## **APPENDIX 1 - Great Malvern Town Centre**

For the sake of this document, the town centre of Great Malvern is defined as:

Wells Road – Belle Vue Terrace – Worcester Road as far as the end of terrace shops beyond Bray's store. Returning along Worcester Road turning down the footpath to Waitrose, thence the lower section of Edith Walk, across Graham Road to beside and behind the Library. The boundary continues down Como Road and turns south along Victoria Road and its continuation along Priory Road as far as and including the Splash Leisure Centre thence skirting inside the bounds of Priory Park to include the Malvern Theatre complex. The circuit is completed along Grange Road and the return to Wells Road via Abbey Road.

Also included in the description are any car and coach park sites, lying outside the above, that are provided for the benefit of the town centre.

A map is included on the next page for further clarification.

Other locations outside this area that may be considered to influence or impact on the Town Centre will be included and referred to as relevant. These locations include the following:

- Rosebank Gardens
- Priory Park
- Great Malvern Railway Station
- Three Counties Showground
- Malvern Hills
- Neighbouring business areas and commercial districts described above

**APPENDIX 1a – Map of Great Malvern Town Centre**

**Great Malvern Town Centre – SWOT Analysis – Appendix 2 (Page 1 of 4)**

Strengths	Strengths	Strengths
Architecture	Geographical location	Accessibility
Brand	History / Architecture	Hills and Commons / AONB
Brays	Malvern Theatres	Low Crime
CCTV	Name – emphasise ‘Great’	Priory
High Green Spaces		
Residents & Visitors - Quality	The Hills	QinetiQ
Hotels	Waitrose	Retail Park
Location – Hills	Water spouts	Schools
Low Crime - Relatively		Theatre
Not all multiples		
Parking		
Priory – Some ‘nice’ spots		
Rail Network/Buses		
Some Restaurants		
Theatres – Priory Park, Library		
Top of Town – Belle Vue Terrace		
Uniqueness - diversity		
Views – Heritage, Museum		
Waitrose		
Water, Arts, Nature, Science, Heritage		

**Great Malvern Town Centre – SWOT Analysis – Appendix 2 (Page 2 of 4)**

<b>Weaknesses</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
Empty Shops	Gradient of Hill	Not visitor friendly
Drab, Grotty	'T' shape of the retailers	Car Parking
The Hill	No social dynamic	Disability Provisions
Opening Hours	Lack of eating e.g., post -Theatre	No Co-ordination
Old Fashioned	Identify problem?	Ageing population + / -
Is it Marketed	Destination shop bias	Working / Retired imbalance
Pickled in Aspic	Lack of and location of car parks	Public Transport links
Pessimism	Shop frontage aesthetics	Topography ( of Centre)
Vulnerable Existing offer	Pedestrian access	Road infrastructure
Dependent on above	Lack of information signs / boards	Lack of confidence (youth)
Free Parking	Poor links to events outside town	Lack of eating places
Specific Parking		Lack of hotels / quality hotels
		Three Counties Link
		Public Conveniences
Lack of and Quality of:.....		
Accommodation		
Traffic Circulation		
One sided shopping		
Focus Identity		
The Shopping offer		
Some Hot Spot Crime		
Public Conveniences		
No Appeal to youth		
Visitor Management – signage, incentives, guides, info		

**Great Malvern Town Centre – SWOT Analysis – Appendix 2 (Page 3 of 4)**

Opportunities	Opportunities	Opportunities
Lots of ideas	Market the name of Great Malvern	Cable Cars / Funicular rail
Lots of commitment	Good scope to create package i.e. the Malverns Experience	Developing Town Walks /Walking Centre (Lady Foley Tour etc)
Lots of things already going on - but not enough	A multitude of packages	Three Counties (Free shuttle / rail) bus link
Exploit 'strengths'	Develop water experience	Develop linked commerce
Three Counties, science , heritage, nature	Pedestrianisation	Greater support of cultural activity
Transports links from rail, buses etc	Shop frontage schemes and other visual improvements	(water colour / heritage centre)
Agree the brand identity and build on it	Pedestrianisation routes, linking Theatres, Splash and entertainment, catering	Identify key business and support ( Bettys Fish)
Arts, nature	Post office redevelopment for specialist retailers i.e. food,, craft and wine etc	Web site for Malvern Hills
Attracting a 'core' business	Street map and information, signs at Waitrose entrance	Viable Housing
Post Office	Novelty transport within town e.g. external escalator (e.g. Lisbon)	Encourage population / quality multiples
Council relocation	More events e.g. golf celebrities	Tourism exit strategy (+ 3CS)
Shifting the town centre - Market Square - library area – Miller's – Theatres – Conservators	Develop links (transport) to other towns when events are on e.g. Upton	
Cable car		
Not engaging the businesses		
Business Awareness		
Not concentrating on the offer		

**Great Malvern Town Centre – SWOT Analysis – Appendix 2 (Page 4 of 4)**

Threats	Threats	Threats
Centralisation of power	Doing nothing compared with like towns e.g.	Loss of major players leaving Centre e.g.
Young people drain	Ledbury	Woolworths, Boots, Somerfields
The Demographic Shift	Lack of a theme	Loss of major employers
Splits	Rate levels too high. Landlords have no	Dependency
Fiddling while Rome burns	vested interest. (i.e. absent landlords)	Ageing population
QinetiQ leaving	Local people not wanting change.	Lack of inward investment to
The Theatres collapsing		Town Centre
Not knowing the 'customer'		Youth migration
Big multiples leaving		Health demands (Doctors/Health
No 'stakeholder' interest – landlords		Centres)
		Fabric of Town façade, shop fronts, low
		quality
		Planning policy

## ANALYSIS of BUSINESS REPRESENTATION in GREAT MALVERN Town Centre – Appendix 3

Neighbouring Rural Towns with 120 plus Outlets										
	Great Malvern		Droitwich	Ledbury	Leominster	Ludlow	Monmouth	Ross-on-Wye	Tewkesbury	Average
Major	<b>3.70</b>		2.42	2.76	2.00	2.81	2.90	1.84	2.09	2.57
Convenience	<b>5.93</b>		8.06	11.03	8.67	8.43	9.42	7.36	9.95	8.61
Speciality	<b>1.48</b>		0.81	1.38	3.33	3.37	0.00	0.61	1.05	1.50
Service	<b>25.93</b>		27.42	20.00	18.00	13.48	16.67	17.79	21.47	20.10
Hospitality	<b>14.07</b>		11.29	15.86	13.33	15.73	14.49	14.11	17.80	14.59
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>51.11</b>		50.00	51.03	45.33	43.82	43.48	41.71	52.36	47.36
Women's	<b>4.44</b>		3.23	7.59	6.00	7.87	7.97	4.91	5.24	5.91
Family	<b>0.74</b>		1.61	0.69	0.67	2.81	2.90	1.84	3.14	1.80
Accessories	<b>11.11</b>		14.52	10.34	7.33	8.43	7.25	7.36	8.38	9.34
Lifestyle	<b>7.41</b>		10.48	11.72	11.33	9.55	13.77	12.27	8.38	10.61
House & Home	<b>15.56</b>		12.90	12.41	22.00	22.47	15.94	17.18	13.61	16.51
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>39.26</b>		42.74	42.75	47.33	51.13	47.83	43.56	38.75	44.17
Charity	<b>5.93</b>		4.03	2.76	2.67	3.37	4.35	4.91	2.62	3.83
Voids	<b>3.70</b>		3.23	3.45	4.67	1.69	4.35	9.82	6.28	4.65
Sub Total	<b>9.63</b>		7.26	6.21	7.34	5.06	8.70	14.73	8.90	8.48
Percent	<b>100</b>		100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

The above are the results of a separate survey. Premises, within the town centres only, were specifically identified in accordance with the type of business conducted.

The following notes may assist in the interpretation of the information relating to the statistics relating to Great Malvern town centre.

**Major** outlets include Bray's, Somerfield, Waitrose and Woolworths.

The high percentage of **service** businesses includes 11 Estate Agents.

**Family** indicates clothing shops that provide a family offer or are shops concentrating on men's or children's wear. Shops specialising in **women's** wear are shown separately.

**Accessories** refer to fashion and beauty; Malvern rates highly due to the high number of hairdressers and beauty salons

**Lifestyle** refers to shops offering books, computers, hobbies, music, outdoor pursuits, photography etc

Gift shops, arts and antiques *et al* are included in the **house and home** category

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION – Appendix 4**

### **Retail Type – Floor Space**

	<b>No. of Outlets</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>GB Av.</b>
Convenience	13	9.15	9.41
Comparison	70	49.29	49.22
Service	44	30.99	29.05
Miscellaneous	2	1.41	1.44
Vacant	13	9.15	10.89
Total	142	100	100

*Source: Goad Plan – Updated June 2001*

### **Proportion of Floor Space**

	<b>Floor Space (1,000 sq.m)</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>GB Av.</b>
Convenience	5.4	23.4	14.93
Comparison	9.2	39.89	54.75
Service	5.2	22.54	20.4
Vacant	2.7	11.7	8.39
Other	0.56	2.42	1.53
Total	23.06		

**The following documents were consulted in the preparation of this document for Great Malvern:**

- MH District Local Plan 2004
- Great Malvern Town Centre Viability 2003
- Urban Greenspace Study 2003
- MH District Shopping Study 2002
- MH District Local Plan – Adopted Plan 1998
- Town Centre Strategy 1996