

# STEPPING OUT:

## Towards an action plan for Stroud's evening economy



A report for Stroud District Council and Stroud Town Council by URBED - August 2005





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## SUMMARY

Stroud District Council and Stroud Town Council appointed URBED (Urban and Economic Group) to help prepare an Action Plan to encourage the diversification of the evening economy. The brief was to add value to what was already known, by drawing on consultations and experience in other towns, and to come up with five or six key actions that can be taken by town centre stakeholders. The action plan has been developed through research into what other towns offer, consultations with a range of interests, and a series of workshops.

This summary draws together the main findings and recommendations:

- There are considerable benefits to having a lively evening economy, and the formula for success involves providing more reasons for people coming into town, minimising the causes of conflict, and making it as easy as possible to get in and out of the centre at night.
- Stroud, the historic heart of the five valleys, is going up a league, with its new entertainment complex, and offers potentially a great place to meet. The evening economy is expanding fast. However the centre has to draw on a very fragmented settlement. Real success means appealing to diverse communities, not just ‘pubbers and clubbers’, as one consultee put it. This is difficult as the venues are very dispersed. Hence getting the basics right is fundamental. Promotion is also key.
- While the town is doing rather well for its size in the attractions it offers, it is lagging behind in both access at night, and also amenity, that is the feeling of security, which is where efforts need to concentrate.

Our vision is of Stroud town centre being known not only as the heart of the Five Valleys but as a great place to meet. The strategy in essence is therefore to make it:

- easier to access by car and taxi at night, with priority for pedestrians in the centre and improved links at the edges, with more shared surfaces through different traffic management regimes, and much better information
- generally ‘cleaner, safer and greener’, with brighter lighting, better pavements, and more welcoming gateways, through improvements to the main car parks
- and known nationally as a model for good management, with coordinated promotion, support for new enterprises that broaden the food offer and encourage people to

meet up outside shopping hours, and collaboration between leisure operators to raise standards and market the town centre to the new customers that may be drawn by the cinema and bowling centre.

The recommendations are designed to produce comprehensive improvements in stages as resources and opportunities allow. They cover six themes:

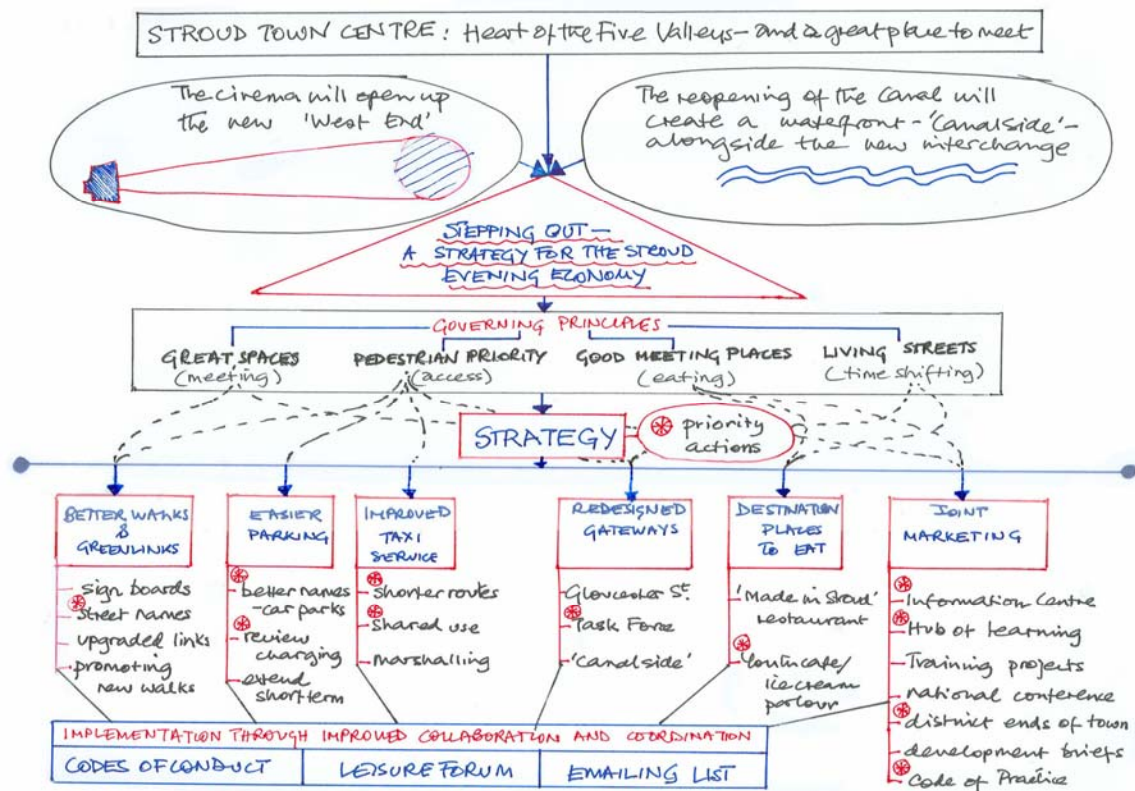
- 1 Better walks and 'green links'
- 2 Easier parking at night
- 3 Improved taxi service
- 4 Redesigning the gateways
- 5 Destination places to eat
- 6 Joint marketing and a new role for the Sub Rooms.

URBED's review of policies suggest the need for more proactive planning, for example through development briefs for the main gateways which currently let down the town, and offer scope for mixed use development. Resources can then be packaged from a range of sources. The main recommendation is therefore to start with Stroud's new 'West End' and the traffic intersection around the new Merrywalks Centre, Gloucester Street, and the Slad Road. The six recommended priorities for action are:

- 1 Re-signing Stroud** Plans for introducing new street name boards should be followed up with further signs at the principal car parks identifying what Stroud has to offer to visitors. These should be used to promote the idea of different ends of town (particularly the Upper Town, West End, and Canalside), and linked by high quality pedestrian routes to the main attractions. A start should be made on the route from the Church Street (Upper Town) car park through to Cornhill.
- 2 Easier access** Parking controls in the late afternoon should be relaxed by allowing people to park in the centre without charge after 4.00 p.m., and removing unnecessary double yellow lines. This should be combined with measures to make it easier for taxis to get through at night, and to take groups home. This should include trying out the idea of taxi buses on a well populated route that lacks a good evening bus service
- 3 Charter for responsible hosts** All licensed premises in the town centre should be asked to sign up to common rules of conduct, which will include measures to help keep the streets orderly late at night, such as being responsible for getting customers away without noise

- 4 **Gloucester Street gateway** A task force should be set up to come up with proposals for upgrading the Western gateway, covering lighting, signing, crossings, parking, street surfaces, and shop front design, as a prototype for other areas. Funding for improving gateways should be packaged from developers, including building higher density new housing on the edge of the town centre.
- 5 **Youth café/ice cream parlour** A proposal should be worked up through developing a business plan and identifying the most appropriate premises, and the project developed in consultation with groups in touch with young people.
- 6 **Great places to meet** The Sub Rooms should become the focus for efforts to promote activities in Stroud outside normal shopping hours, working with a Leisure Forum to encourage joint marketing of activities that bring people together, including arts, sport and continuing education. Further work should be done to assess the options of developing a first class café/restaurant in the ground floor and running the building as an arts centre, with the relocation of the Tourist Information Centre to an empty shop.

The next step will be to discuss the recommendations with those who will be involved in leading implementation.



## **STEPPING OUT: Towards an action plan for Stroud's evening economy**

Earlier this year Stroud District and Town Councils commissioned URBED (Urban and Economic Development Group) to produce the basis for an action plan to make the most of Stroud's evening economy. The consultants, led by Nicholas Falk, have drawn on the experience of working with many other towns (both in the UK and internationally) as well as their local knowledge as residents of the town. They have added value to what is already known through a range of analysis and consultations. Specifically the team has:

- reviewed previous research and current policies
- analysed the current and potential markets
- researched into relevant experience in other towns
- interviewed leisure operators
- consulted a range of opinion leaders and local experts on different types of regeneration
- organised a workshop with young people
- reviewed options at a workshop with key people involved in all kinds of leisure provision
- held several progress reviews with the steering group to help work up options

This draft report is produced as a basis for agreeing an action plan to which costs and responsibilities can be assigned. It is organised into five main sections:

- 1 We first set out the case for investing time and effort in developing the evening economy and addressing potential issues before they become serious, and identify the potential benefits against which progress can be measured
- 2 We review the current and planned attractions, and draw lessons from our research
- 3 We outline a strategy for making the town centre more vital and viable, using the opening of the cinema as a stimulus
- 4 We set out the elements of an action plan, identifying the main projects on which efforts should focus
- 5 We suggest ways of making things happen, including where resources are to come from, how improvements should be managed, and how success should be monitored.

A number of appendices set out supporting evidence:

- **Appendix A** lists useful publications we consulted
- **Appendix B** sets out the results of a review of experience in 20 other towns and cities, and for each place we have set out the strategy and the results where known
- **Appendix C** identifies the people we consulted, and those who attended workshops, and to them go our grateful thanks
- **Appendix D** summarises the entertainment offer of the Subscription Rooms and The Space, in Stroud, and compares them with main venues in similar sized towns
- **Appendix E** is a partial list of the attractions that draw people into town in the evenings.

The essential message is that Stroud is on the up again. However the town needs to take a number of further actions to ensure that it appeals to a wider range of people in the evening, as well as the day. Hence improving the evening economy should be a continuing priority for the Concordat between the main authorities, and their private and voluntary sector partners.

## 1 THE BENEFITS OF A LIVELY EVENING ECONOMY

The term 'evening economy' is used to cover the range of activities that can take place in a town centre 'out of hours'. The term was probably first used in research by Comedia which pointed out how most British towns die in the period between 4.00 and 8.00 pm, unlike their Continental equivalents. Research by URBED for the ODPM, *Strategies for Smaller Centres* (forthcoming), and *Town Centre Partnerships (2000)*, has highlighted the impact of the loss of trade by smaller towns to peripheral and out of town developments, and the importance of diversifying their attractions, including both leisure and housing (see **Appendix A** for list of relevant publications). The closure of national multiples in smaller centres, and of independent shops on the fringes, and their replacement by bars that are very busy on Friday and Saturday nights, can result in centres that feel dead or threatening in the evenings. There have also been attacks on the way in which town centres increasingly look alike (which have been called *Crap Towns* or *Clone Towns*). This has led to the New Economics Foundation predicting that we will end up with Ghost Towns, rather as in the USA, unless we encourage the growth of independent businesses, and make towns more distinctive. Work by URBED for the Greater London Authority published as *Late Night London* has highlighted the conflicts that can arise between residents and leisure activities, unless much higher standards of management are introduced to make the new licensing system work as intended.

The idea of planning for the evening economy is aimed at five main concerns or objectives, each of which have their own indicators which can be used to monitor success:

- 1 ***increasing vitality*** to make full use of the facilities that a town centre offers, including car parks and streets, measured by indicators such as footfall by night as well as by day
- 2 ***developing more sustainable patterns of development*** in which a range of needs can be served without having to get in a car, and in which empty buildings are put to good use, measured for example by the utilisation of public transport and by levels of vacant shops and buildings
- 3 ***tackling social exclusion and anti-social behaviour***, and providing a ***good meeting place*** for young people to grow up, measured not only by crime rates for both violent and non violent crime, but also by attitudes to the town, such as in press publicity, good and bad

- 4 ***generating opportunities for the growth of small and community enterprises***, and the provision of ***good jobs and training opportunities***, which can be measured by employment and activity levels
- 5 ***encouraging continuing investment in the centre*** to maintain and upgrade properties within the town centre, measured by comparative property values for both commercial property and housing.

Stroud is not alone in grappling with economic and social change. While both trade and investment tends to be concentrated in the top 90 town centres in the UK, almost every other town centre is having to cope with new forms of competition and the challenges from out of town or 'Edge City' forms of development, exemplified by Cribbs Causeway in Bristol. The problems are explored in the initial report and literature review for the Local Government Association *Spreading the benefits of town and city centre renewal* (see [www.urbed.com](http://www.urbed.com)), which recommends that towns work together as clusters or networks to differentiate their attractions and roles.

Five main factors are expected to shape future developments:

- ***The new economy*** with changing career and work patterns as traditional jobs have been lost, including the growth of activities like eating out, but also the need for improved/excellent interpersonal skills
- ***One stop shopping*** as a result of rising car ownership and usage, and the loss of leisure time, and the tendency for superstores and retail parks to end up opening at all hours to sell everything that can be found in a town centre
- ***Urban exodus*** with population dispersal from the larger cities to smaller towns and villages, and a car based lifestyle, encouraged by free car parking in out-of-town centres and business parks.
- ***Increasing polarisation*** between those who own houses and those who cannot afford to get on the ladder
- ***The space race*** as people with choice look for more and more space under their control, with growing numbers of households as people live longer and families split up, and as house building rates lag far behind potential demand. Town centres can appeal to households without children, but sites are often blighted by conflicting uses, such as late night revellers.

Because of the tendency for private investment to be concentrated in the largest cities and historic towns, and in out-of-town sites that are easiest and most profitable to develop, it is hard for smaller towns like Stroud to compete in terms of shops alone. In this kind of

situation, the 'evening economy' provides important opportunities for smaller town centres to:

- find new niches or attractions
- make the most of their distinctive heritage or amenity
- take action to make the centres highly accessible to all
- create a positive image that will also attract people to spend time and money in the centre because it is essentially a pleasant place to be, rather than because it offers a better choice of shops and services.

As part of the study we consulted research into strategies and have written up over 20 examples of good practice, under the main headings of access, attractions and amenity. Most of the experience with handling the evening economy comes from the larger cities, as our review of experience elsewhere illustrates (see **Appendix B**). The best known examples are mainly from much larger cities like Manchester or Wolverhampton. Hence Stroud as a smaller centre is going to be breaking new ground, and its experience is already generating interest; for example, it has been quoted nationally as a success in tackling alcohol abuse. The experience suggests such a large range of possible initiatives that it is going to be vital for the town to adopt a clear strategy, and to have convincing answers to potential letters of complaint to the local papers!

Our forthcoming report for the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister *Strategies for Smaller Centres* argues for developing strategies to make the most of strengths and to differentiate smaller towns from their larger and out of town rivals. This includes checklists for getting the basics right; securing connectivity; meeting shoppers' needs; promoting diversity; and resourcing improvements. There is no simple fix, and one size does not fit all. The brief for this study recognises that making a success of the evening economy is not just about opening a few attractions but rather generally raising standards, which is why it calls for an action plan. The challenge is how to move forward progressively in ways that carry the support of the wider community.

While a health check and audit can cover many different features, URBED's experience in other towns suggests that the formula for a successful town centre in the evening boils down to what we call the three 'As':

- **Attractions** Providing more reasons for a wider range of people to use the town centre in the evening, including non-commercial forms of leisure as well as paid entertainment

- **Amenity** Minimising the causes of conflict among young people, such as occur when queuing for taxis, and making everyone feel better through '*cleaner, safer, greener streets*'
- **Accessibility** Making it as easy as possible for people to get into town in the evening, as well as finding answers to the problems of getting large numbers of people home late at night, some of whom may have had too much to drink.

In the next section we have therefore reviewed what makes Stroud distinctive, drawing on interviews (see **Appendix C** for consultees) and competition with other places we know.

## 2 CHANGING PLACES

From a low point some ten years ago, which led to the pioneering Stroud Community Planning Conference – that called, among things, for a cinema – Stroud town centre has been fighting back. From a situation when its traditional shops lost out to competition from superstores on the edge, and to stronger centres like Cheltenham and Bristol, the town centre has been on the up, a trend which most of our respondents recognised. Town Centre Management is making a real difference. Our research highlighted six factors on which the strategy and action plan need to be based, and we have included some of the comments from respondents, that have influenced our conclusions. All in all they suggest that Stroud is changing for the better, and that the new attractions should provide the incentives for taking further action on a number of fronts.

### Stroud is going up a league

*“The town looks down at heel and grubby, but can be buzzy and is not a totally cloned town.”*

*“Stroud is dead after 4.30 and there need to be more incentives for people to come in; you need a choice of things to do, restaurants and cafes like Nailsworth that will attract the middle aged, and people to walk in from the top end of town.”*

**Evening entertainment** The succession of bars and takeaways that are recolonising areas like Russell Street, along with pioneering efforts by various galleries, are being joined by some major attractions that should put Stroud on the sub-regional leisure map. Most important of all is the new six screen cinema and bowling centre that is opening in the late Autumn. This will create a major draw for families and young people in particular who currently do not use the town centre. Few towns of the size of Stroud can boast a cinema any longer, as investment tends to be concentrated in much larger towns, like Bath. With the closure of the independent cinema in Cirencester, the current appeal of new films, and the cost and inconvenience for people in the Stroud catchment area of getting to Gloucester and Cheltenham by public transport, the new Merrywalks centre is likely to draw on a much larger catchment area than do most of the shops. Research into the demographic profile shows that while there may be a fairly urban and sophisticated population living close to the town centre, the bulk of the population living in the surrounding catchment area, which extends beyond Stonehouse and Nailsworth, is made up of groups that tend to prefer sitting in their gardens to going out at night.

Hence they will be particularly concerned about being able to get in easily, and will be put off by any signs of conflict or disorder.

The brief asked us to benchmark Stroud against similar towns. To assess the attractions of the Subscription Rooms and The Space we compared their programmes with the offers of facilities in Barnstaple, Bicester, Chippenham and Devizes, which are all similar sized towns with rural hinterlands (see **Appendix D**). In all aspects Stroud scored very much better in terms of the range of facilities and the number of things to do on an evening. The gaps in family provision will be filled by the cinema and bowling alley. Hence, where the town falls down is the quality of the environment it offers, as can clearly be seen by comparing the quality of the streetscape with towns like Chippenham, or nearer rivals like Cirencester and Cheltenham. In particular the pedestrianised High Street that links the upper and lower ends of town looks particularly poor when there are few people around.

Other attractions opening up include another nightclub, Bar Riga in Nelson Street, plus a growing number of takeaways and places offering food in the evenings. An extension of opening times will make Stroud even more of a 'mecca' for younger people who have previously gone to larger centres like Cheltenham. But it could also draw in older people, who want something quite different. The Experian *Summary Expenditure* report suggests that Stroud only has 75% of the restaurants and hotels it might expect. The *Snapshot* report carried out for the Market Towns Healthcheck puts the number of restaurants as only four compared with 14 takeaways, 7 cafes, and 25 public houses, suggesting there may be scope for something a little larger and more 'upmarket', a point made by many of the people we interviewed.

***Potentially a great place to meet*** A further possibility, which was raised in consultations, lies in the opportunities for increased socialising among both young people and older sections of the population with special interests. Not everyone either wants to or is able to go into licensed premises. A coordinated and promoted programme of entertainment, not only at the Subscription Rooms and The Space, but also at the relatively large number of churches and chapels that surround the centre, could also add to the numbers coming into town out of hours. At present most of the customers are local (85% of the customers at the Sub Rooms come from GL5 and Stonehouse postcodes). Young people also stressed the importance of Stratford Park in providing good sports facilities. The potential for increased evening sports activities, for example more floodlighting, of the facilities would also help to draw more people through the town centre at night. Older people stressed the need for good places where you could eat and drink in a peaceful atmosphere. Nationally people are eating out more, and leisure is a growth area for jobs and investment. Though Stroud is one

of the best read towns, the librarian pointed out that while it is lively during the day, it is quiet in the evenings and relatively few people live in town. Others stressed the competition from excellent places to visit in the surrounding countryside, and in places like Nailsworth that have transformed themselves in recent years.

***Canalside and the new waterfront*** The most exciting potential attraction of all in the longer term is the impact that the reopening of a section of the old Stroudwater Canal might have on the town. Boating is unlikely to take off on any significant scale, as the canal is cut off from the main system. However the prospects of a major new residential and mixed use quarter in Cheapside to create a new area of Stroud Canalside, with over 600 new homes, could provide the boost to private investment needed to create a major waterside venue, and the developer wants to promote a mixed use scheme that will effectively extend the town centre to the South beyond the railway line. Examples from elsewhere include Skipton and Sowerby Bridge in Yorkshire, and Bradford-on-Avon in Wiltshire. Waterfront restaurants in Bristol show what is possible given enough space, the right location, and first class design.

### **The evening economy is expanding fast**

An escalating number of takeaways (as in most British towns) can give an image of a town centre that is failing, but in fact there is evidence that Stroud is broadening its attractions for the better. First, a number of prominent empty buildings have been reused, including many of the empty shops in Russell Street, which is what people who drive through the town tend to see. Second, projects to develop an 'arts quarter' with for example the development of the John Street workshops and new galleries are reinforcing the town's image as a centre for creativity and design. Third, new places to eat, such as Nine, which has reused the old Council offices, or Woodruffs, which has begun to open in the evenings, are filling some of the gaps. A popular venue such as The Retreat serves quite different groups of people at different times. We counted over 30 different clubs who use the centre at night on occasions, from the Cotswold Players to the Stroud Symphony Orchestra, and a number of activities, like bridge or yoga, would probably expand their numbers if there were more suitable places to meet.

The workshop with leisure operators brought out the diverse organisations involved, from pubs and clubs to those putting on live entertainment, like The Space or the Sub Rooms, or providing space for amateur groups to perform, like many of the churches. One way of assessing the level of the evening economy is the number of people working in the centre in the evening. There are huge variations between Friday/Saturday and the rest of the week.

On the basis of the partial information supplied, a broad estimate suggests on Friday and Saturday nights there may currently be 150 – 200 staff in 20 – 25 premises. Our discussions with a number of operators provided some useful benchmarking figures. For example, McDonalds occupies 4,000 sq ft and employs 52 staff, of whom 70% are part-time. They do 4,000 transactions a week, with 40% of business on Friday/Saturday and Sunday. In contrast the Warehouse employs 25 – 30 people with all their business being done on Friday and Saturday nights. There are 138 taxis in the District, of which about 30 operate in Stroud at night. The footfall survey will provide some useful benchmarks against which progress can be assessed.

The maps showing recorded crime, and also litter hot spots, confirmed the common sense view that places that attract lots of people at night will tend to be the places where trouble occurs. Furthermore, takeaways inevitably tend to generate litter and worse. In turn it only requires a few broken windows for an area to look uncared for, and for disorder to spread. At present the view of the police is that the situation is under control, and certainly Stroud is no worse than other similar towns at the present time. As demand builds up, it is important to take action to avoid the typical problems that arise before they hurt the town's image, and deter further private investment.

### **The centre has to draw on a very fragmented settlement**

*“Stroud looks industrial; the impact of the ring road and the police station means that you can't believe there is a nice town in it.”*

The town's location at the apex of five valleys presents some major challenges. The population needed to support the expanded range of facilities is much larger than those who live within walking distance. Thus while the population of the town is given as under 13,000 and expanding by 4% since 1991, the population of the town from the latest Census has been calculated at 32,000 (compared with 33,000 for say Chippenham). However the key statistic is what is now called the Primary Urban Area, which includes the adjacent settlements of Brismcombe, Nailsworth and Stonehouse, which brings the figure up to 47,000. This is the figure that investors are likely to look at in the future, and it is also the figure that the South West Regional Development Agency looks at in deciding where to put its resources. The town's population puts it in a similar bracket to Bicester, Chippenham and Barnstable, though its history is much more industrial than most market towns in the South West. The Experian mosaic map shows vividly the concentration of population along valleys, particularly towards Nailsworth and Stonehouse. However a socio-demographic

profile prepared by Experian for Stroud Town Centre Management shows that many of the groups that live around the town are much more likely to spend leisure time in their gardens than to seek out evening entertainment. Stroud does not have a university, and many of the people who are most likely to go out in the evening are either studying in cities like Bristol or Cheltenham or working there. Furthermore, though there are sophisticated people living in the town with money to spend on going out, in general the wealthiest people with the greatest spending power live on the edges. Hence Stroud will need to work hard to make a success of the evening economy.

In the past Stroud has sought to apply sustainable development principles and is known as a relatively 'Green' town. It seems to have a much larger pedestrianised area than other similar towns. However the spatial framework of the Five Valleys makes it difficult, if not impossible, to run a good enough public transport system to compete with the private car, particularly at night when people naturally want the maximum personal convenience. Population densities are simply not high enough, and people in rural areas tend to be too wedded to their cars to expect a competitive bus service outside rush hours. Even relatively dense and large cities like Newcastle have only just introduced late night bus services, and much larger places like Swindon rely on taxis to get young people home after a night out. Also the hilly and confusing nature of the town's streets limits the scope for increasing walking and cycling, which are important to the vitality of a successful town, and means people easily get lost. One lady from the Congregational Church in Bedford Street complained about the poor state of the street surface, and the difficulty older people had in finding their way to the church. Also there are far more street names than other similar towns, but few in place on the corner of buildings, which makes it difficult for most people to get a clear picture of the layout of the centre, or to know, for example, how to get to John Street. There are also major differences between the upper end of the town, with its medieval buildings and narrow alleyways, and the lower end, with its largely Victorian streets, which also tend to be wider.

### **Success means appealing to diverse communities**

*"Stroud is a place about people - proactive people"*

*"Older people do not like walking from the Church Street car park. They don't feel safe and are terrified of the vehicles and the street surfaces; lots of people are frightened of multi storey car parks.*

*Moving from one part of the town to another by car is difficult."*

A major attraction of living in Stroud for many people is the diverse range of people, in part reflecting its industrial history, and its appeal to those leaving metropolitan centres to pursue more alternative life styles. At one level this means that Stroud can boast as creative a community as much larger cities, even though it lacks a university. This is reflected in the popularity of events like SITE (previously Stroud Open Studios) and the arts festivals. But it also means that Stroud includes many people who would describe themselves as working class, and who may have very different aspirations and prospects. Hence an action plan has to cater for all groups.

The steering group felt it was important for the town to appeal to a wide range of people so that others diluted the young 'pubbers and clubbers' on the street. When people have had too much to drink, and there is some stimulus, only a few people are needed to start a disturbance. We identified a number of distinct segments, including not only families, but also young people on their own, and those with special interests. With growing numbers of single people, the town centre has a vital role to play in providing a social, as well as an economic, role and this needs to include people who have time, but not money, to spend – such as many of those who have retired.

A uniform response on the part of all those we consulted who were old enough to have children was disappointment at the way the High Street feels so dead whenever they come in at night, which leads on to one of our principal recommendations aimed at attracting more people to walk through the town centre in the early evening. They also complain about the lack of a 'good restaurant', by which is meant a place that can rival the gastropubs that have opened up all round the District, particularly in and around Nailsworth. There is a fear that the profusion of takeaways and youth culture will put off older people from coming into town.

There is consequently a real danger that, if the right actions are not taken, the new attractions will simply draw people in by car, who will never go beyond the cinema, the canal or McDonalds. At the same time the development of another nightclub at the upper end of town will lead to people walking through the centre at night in search of taxis, which could easily lead to disturbances if groups clash, or if people who have been queuing feel aggrieved, and will lead to residents being annoyed. This in turn could end up with shops erecting blank shutters, as they do in many inner urban areas, thus reinforcing the feeling that the centre is unwelcoming, and could put off people from living in town. This leads on to our recommendations for different parts of town playing different roles. The conflicts in Bath that have occurred between alienated young people and tourists should be a warning. The Police believe that Stroud is relatively safe at present, with disorder being concentrated on a

few streets at the bottom end of town, as the recorded crime maps clearly show. However the area is too spread out to provide much in the way of visible policing, and it is hard to predict what will happen when there are nightclubs and bars in all ends of town, all competing for the same customers. Hence problems could escalate if the town centre only appeals to 'pubbers and clubbers'.

## **The venues are very dispersed**

Unlike some towns, for example Wolverhampton, that can promote a distinct 'entertainment quarter', Stroud's attractions are very spread out, which not only makes access harder, but makes it very difficult to know what is going on where. The reasons lie in the town's history and geography. The old town is clustered at the upper end, around the old road that led from London over the hills and down the High Street, with its focus around St Lawrence Church and the Shambles. In Victorian times new roads were built to relieve congestion, while the canal and railway line divided the town from much of its hinterland. Finally in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century bypasses opened up new development opportunities on the edge of the town centre, and created further barriers to movement on foot.

Many of the community facilities that served a rapidly growing population are today finding new roles. Hence concerts are put on in Trinity Church at the top end of town, as well as sometimes in St Lawrence. The chapel on Parliament Street has been turned into a fine theatre inside, with raked seats, even if from the outside the Cotswold Playhouse may not look very inviting. More recently the Church of the Latterday Saints building in Lansdown has been turned into The Space, offering a couple of medium sized rooms for live entertainment. There will soon be three night clubs at different ends of the town, again turning old buildings to new uses. Many of the pubs also put on live entertainment on regular evenings. Hence there is no shortage of things to do in Stroud in the evening if you know what's where.

As a building, the Subscription Rooms is a jewel in the Stroud's crown, built almost at the same time as the fine Congregational Church as a civic hall in the heart of the town. Sensitively restored a few years ago, and upgraded to meet disability and loading requirements, the forecourt provides a natural meeting point, and is close to the main public toilets and a car park. The problem is that despite intensive management, and a growing programme on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights, of which the Council promotes 25% of the events, the Sub Rooms still does not satisfy many people's expectations. We have

therefore compared the situation with some other similar towns to put the situation in context (**Appendix C**).

Most English market towns have some kind of hall in their centre, dating back to Victorian or Georgian times. Cirencester and Devizes have their Corn Exchanges, the latter of which was developed by a trust with funding coming largely from the Parish Council, to create a successful conference centre and meeting place. Larger inland resorts, like Cheltenham and Bath, have their Assembly Rooms, which provided programmes of musical entertainment for summer visitors. Many of these halls have become buildings at risk, and have often depended on voluntary initiatives to save their structures and turn them back into the community hubs they once were. Our assessment of the current live entertainment offer, comparing Stroud with similar sized places such as Bicester, Barnstable, Chippenham and also Devizes, suggests that the town already enjoys a relatively rich offering for its size, and needs to recognise that the market for live entertainment is increasingly competitive. People no longer have large balls, or watch the kinds of entertainers that were killed off by television. Certainly there are niche markets, like listening to 'tribute bands', but no town outside the main provincial cities can afford to support professional level musicians more than a few times a year, which is why Arts Festivals have become so important.

The situation with the Sub Rooms is complicated by a series of factors. First, the main hall is on an upper floor, and downstairs there is little to draw in the casual visitor. The gallery is only used occasionally and the Tourist Information Centre serves a relatively limited function (though it does offer great potential). Also the entrance is not very inviting, and there is no way of seeing into the building to find out what it might offer. Second, the building is on a very tight site, making it hard if not impossible to extend the facilities, for example to put in a proper kitchen to enable it to provide a restaurant, as in many successful reuse projects. Third, the building is, of course, listed, which makes people nervous about any major modifications. And finally, it is owned and run by the Council, which makes taking risks difficult, and the programmes are run under a very tight budget. Nevertheless, with rising standards and growing competition from other cities, such as Cheltenham, Bristol or Cardiff, for live music, it is time to rethink how it could contribute even more to the life of the town at different times. This does not have to mean fundamentally changing its audience, which is among the over 25s, as the cinema will tend to target the family audience.

The nature of the Sub Rooms offer is influenced by its status, as a municipal building, and a desire to play safe and appeal to the most obvious markets, who tend to be people living in the immediate surrounding area, and who are on the elderly side. However there is another

potential marketing approach which is to appeal to what makes Stroud special, and which puts it into the same category as places like Totnes in Devon and Hebden Bridge in Yorkshire. Under this approach, the concept of Stroud as a great place to meet would enable a more ambitious programme to be put on, catering for a series of niche markets living in the wider surrounding area, which could extend out to Cheltenham and Cirencester, as well as, of course, taking in the surrounding villages and their more affluent residents. Such an approach would depend as much on fundamental changes to the ground floor of the Sub Rooms as it would on the programme being offered, to ensure that the Sub Rooms is a place that people want to visit, whatever is going on. It could also require a different financial structure to enable a more experimental approach than is possible as part of the District Council, which is explored in the next section.

### Getting the basics right is fundamental

*“Taxis and signage are rubbish; there’s nothing to promote in Stroud - it’s a one horse town”*

*“Very difficult to find suitable buildings (for a restaurant) in Stroud.*

*Not enough space in the right location.”*

*“Do away with pedestrianisation at night and this will add to security”*

Previous research, such as for the *Crime and Disorder Strategy*, has emphasised that most people have fairly basic concerns, such as dog fouling of pavements, and can easily jump to wrong conclusions, often on the back of a few newspaper stories, which are very hard to change. The *Perception of Crime Survey* found that nearly one third of respondents felt unsafe after dark in Stroud. An officers’ night walkabout last year revealed that the problem is often lack of people on the street rather than threatening behaviour. Poor lighting on many streets makes people feel uncertain about what they might expect. Litter can easily proliferate around takeaways, particularly if rubbish bins are not strategically located or emptied fast enough. Improvements to the built environment are essential to reducing crime and disorder, a view that has been under-pinned by American research called ‘*Broken Windows*’ which suggests that signs of disorder increase the chances of minor crime, like smashing shop windows, which if not quickly dealt with soon escalates.

While people often ask for a more visible police presence, this is not in fact viable, given the extended nature of the district. Instead efforts must be focused on avoiding the causes of incidents, and making the town centre look more welcoming, and increasing levels of activity. It was also clear from the meeting to review options with leisure operators that unless the

Council was seen to be implementing small-scale improvements, there would be little confidence in combining to do anything more fundamental. While there are clearly very different interests, particularly given the differences between independent pubs and commercial developers, there was general agreement on a number of points:

- 1 Stroud is special in terms of its steep hills, existing (narrow frontage) building stock, creative community and interest in socialising. In the same way as the Farmers Market operates, new attractions, for example the cinema, will draw people who want to meet up as well as attend an event.
- 2 An image of yobbish behaviour could destroy confidence, and priorities are dispersing clubbers and pubbers quickly, cleaning up afterwards, and 'diluting' their impact on other groups. Real success depends on broadening the users in the early evening as well as late at night.
- 3 The running is being made by pioneering entrepreneurs, and national organisations will only back winners. Incentives and support for new ventures is essential if a thriving critical mass is to be achieved.
- 4 Stroud is a 'walking town', and 'park and walk' may be what people have to do. However, getting around, particularly for example for the elderly, is difficult and car parking needs to be more accessible, with cleaner and safer car parks, possibly colour-coded with well-lit routes into town.
- 5 Taxis will increase as demand increases, but they may need an incentive from the SDC to support a greater supply, and to cater for groups of people, for example taxi buses which take a number of people to the same place for a prearranged fare.

### **Investment depends on public leadership**

Over the last five years Stroud has started to receive national publicity, partly due to the proximity of so many Royals, but also due to the success of initiatives like the Farmers Market. During the course of the study we spoke to a number of private businesses, including developers who took part in the workshop for leisure operators, and others with an interest in new ventures. The new Merrywalks cinema and bowling centre is the result of a partnership between Stroud District Council and the private sector. The development could have a major impact on Stroud town centre and its users if attention is given to providing a wider range of eating places and managing traffic around this west gateway to Stroud. This gateway is used by many people from Uplands and Lansdown (and is also the link with Stratford Park as Stroud's major sports facility). The new Merrywalks centre will have access at grade level from King Street, but it is not clear how access will work at night.

Hence the success of the venture depends not just on private enterprise, but on how well the various parts of the public sector work together.

Similarly the new Stroud Canalside area around Hill Paul will extend the centre even further, with new residential, shops and offices. This new quarter will need good links to the centre as well as the other attractions along the canal such as Capel Mill which is also being developed. The conversion of the old Brunel Goods Shed into a gallery will create a further attraction, but a great deal depends on ensuring there is a direct link through from Russell Street, and over a new bridge if the waterfront is to feel an extension of the town centre, rather than being another competing attraction.

So, though the success of the evening economy depends largely on the efforts of independent businesses, and without them it is unlikely that larger schemes will ever get off the ground, Council leadership and support is vital. Businesses could see the value of continuing contact, but people are simply too busy to do much on their own, and many who are interested are cynical or may simply forget to turn up for meetings. It is therefore important to use the excuse of the new entertainment complex to push through other related changes so that anyone who visits the town (including potential new businesses or their investors) can see that the town is definitely 'on the up'.

### **Coordinated promotion is key**

*"Facilities and safety are key issues for the evening economy. The best way to improve facilities is to approach operators and ask them what we need to do to get them into Stroud."*

Though Stroud town centre is starting to move, it will take a long time to convince the sceptics, such as national leisure investors and those who advise them. Hence it is vital to promote a positive image, a process that has already started well through the success of the Farmers Market. In a district where most people live a drive away from the main town centre, and where the improvements and new attractions are not readily obvious because of the extensive pedestrianisation, it is going to be vital to find better ways of making people aware of the range of attractions Stroud has to offer at night. Venues like the Stroud Playhouse need to be able to use external lighting to promote what they are putting on. Small operators complained of difficulties in dealing with bureaucracy, particularly as far as building work is concerned. While this is just part of the work of getting permission for a large development, the distrust of the Council that characterised the meeting with leisure operators is a problem that needs to be addressed if further investment is to flow in.

A smaller town like Stroud has to rely on local entrepreneurs and volunteers for most of the life it can offer. Organisations like The Space, who are too small to promote regular programmes, face difficulties in making those with relevant interests aware when they do put something on. This is a challenge which metropolitan and historic cities like Bristol or Cheltenham do not face to the same extent, due to their much larger number of students and visitors. It is therefore essential to be able to combine any physical improvements with actions to bolster word of mouth, which is why the town's image is so crucial. Basically so long as Stroud retains an image or reputation, however undeserved, for being scruffy or down at heel, it will find it difficult to attract sufficient trade to make businesses viable, and hence to justify the continuing levels of private investment needed to meet the demands of its population, whose standards are increasingly set by larger cities or foreign towns they see on their holidays, for example in France or Italy.

Research suggests that successful regeneration or renaissance starts with a shared vision, but that the image needs to be reinforced by pilot as well as flagship projects. Furthermore people need to be continually told why things are being done, and at present there is a surprising level of ignorance, as we found when we started to discuss the proposed access and parking arrangements for the cinema. In view of the levels of distrust and cynicism, any strategy for improving the town needs to be linked to early action that tackles the main concerns that have been identified in this and other reports, backed up by notices or hoardings at the main gateways to explain why improvements are being made and where the main car parks and attractions are to be found. This will be far more effective than relying on notices or even electronic boards in the centre of town, which visitors may never reach.

A commitment to higher standards would help to change the image of the town, and here the example of Ealing, or the use of Town Charters in Yorkshire could provide inspiration. There is such a diverse range of stakeholders – bars, nightclubs, leisure centres, artspace, churches – that developing an effective leisure forum will be hard. Also, while they recognise the value of concerted action they are cynical about the Councils playing their role. However the value of a formal forum that could put a unified voice to the District Council was recognised, and this could be used to agree on both a set of standards or principles for the evening economy, and also to support joint promotions and events. The Pubwatch scheme could be built on, as this seems to have worked, and the police can help provide leadership, along with the management of the Sub Rooms, who are already producing an events programme. This suggests that any leisure forum should be a sub-group of the existing Concordat Group or Chamber of Trade, and that this draft action plan could provide the basis for bringing and keeping people together.

As a smaller town centre with a lot of evening attractions, Stroud will be breaking new ground, and so no single town can provide the information the town seeks. While it is probably not large enough to support a Business Improvement District, in which businesses agree to contribute to the costs of providing higher standards of service, it should be able to tap part of the value created by new developments, for example around the canal, to upgrade the environment where better links need to be made. Hence it could be useful to arrange visits for members of a new leisure forum to larger towns that could not only serve as models but where some collaboration might pay dividends. Possibilities include Bristol, Gloucester or Devizes (because of the canal) and Chippenham or Cirencester (because of their townscape improvements).

### 3 A VISION AND STRATEGY FOR MOVING FORWARD

Without obvious or nearby models to copy, charting the way forward for the town centre is difficult. Yet without a clear vision, there is a danger that short-term pressures and planning applications will make it much harder to realise the town's full potential. For example if leisure activities are distributed all over the town, the centre will lack the critical mass to attract major investment, and existing activities could well fail for lack of custom. Similarly late night activities next to new housing is likely to lead to ongoing complaints about noise, particularly if nothing is done to provide adequate insulation, or to move people away quickly from the area in the early morning. Drawing on the work already done for the Local Plan, the Market Town Health Check, and the report of the Community Planning Conference, we have set out some basic themes and priorities for moving forward.

#### A new vision

Given the nature of Stroud plus the physical constraints of living on the edge of the Cotswolds, we suggest a new vision, which has a number of implications for development, as it emphasises the town centre's social role: ***'Stroud Town Centre: heart of the Five Valleys – and a great place to meet'***. The vision can be implemented through a strategy with four elements (set out below), and implemented incrementally so that a better image is created for the whole town.

Specific problems were identified in consultation and need to be addressed by the Action Plan. These include:

- dispersed attractions
- steep hills and poor surfaces
- confusion over what's where
- off-putting car parks and charging practices
- limited bus and taxi capacity
- poor signing e.g. few visible street names
- a warren of streets which are difficult for visitors to navigate

Our audit of the town centre at night revealed in summary:

- a large and growing number of dispersed attractions

- used largely at present by people who live quite close by
- with poor accessibility at present for many parts of the population
- and a mixed image, made worse by unwelcoming gateways and poor levels of amenity or streetscape quality in parts of the High Street.

The crime and disorder maps, as well as the new figures for evening footfall that have been collected show that there are relatively low levels of activity in the evening apart from the lower end of town. The 'West End' around the former bus station, is hardly utilised at present. Our attempts to produce some simple maps for key routes that different groups might take on foot, and which could provide a focus for improvement efforts, showed how complex the centre is (and therefore the difficulty of drawing people in from further afield). It also suggested that the town centre could be seen as comprising different ends that appealed to different groups at different times, with some opportunities for healthy overlap – it was suggested that young people are likely to behave better if they think they may bump into their parents! While this may not appeal to the leisure operators, who are keen for extended 'circuits' so that they do not lose out, it may have a more popular appeal, particularly to those who have ever got lost in the town!

## Strategic elements

Workshops with leisure operators, young people and a group of urban professionals have shown there is a concern to stress what makes Stroud different. Stroud's distinctiveness comes not only from the centre being the place where different groups meet on common ground, but also a heritage that has been shaped by local enterprise, as the Subscription Rooms exemplifies. We therefore suggest that the strategy for the town centre and actions that are to be taken should be governed by four principles:

- 1 **Great spaces** Public spaces and venues should all be pleasant spaces to spend time in and meet others, and should meet the standards recommended by national advisory bodies such as CABI or English Heritage in *Streets for All*. This means looking not only at places like the Station forecourts, but also at District Council facilities as well and upgrading cafes and facilities in the Leisure Centre, Subscription Rooms, Museum in the Park etc so that more people want to go out in the town in the evening or at weekends. (A grant application is going in for next phase of Museum which should include a café facility, but in the meantime a coffee machine/drinking fountain could be introduced.)

- 2 ***Pedestrian priority, not just pedestrianisation*** While pedestrians should continue to have priority in the centre, there also need to be improved links between the centre and complementary nearby facilities e.g. Stratford Park and Cheapside. At the same time cars and taxis need to be able to enter the centre in the evenings when there are fewer people around, to generate a greater sense of activity or buzz, and make people feel safer.
- 3 ***Good meeting places*** During the day Stroud is a model for 'café society' but in the evenings and on Sundays the town lacks life. Sitting down where people can meet others needs to be encouraged at the expense of simply standing up (or lying down!) through drinking and clubbing. Places to sit and eat, with table service, should be encouraged, while those to stand and drink or just to order takeaway prepared food, should be tightly controlled. So too should evening activities that encourage group learning and skills development.
- 4 ***Living streets*** While the idea of towns open 24 hours or even 18 hours a day is a nonsense, there is value in the idea of different parts of town operating at different times, e.g. the upper end could both start and close later, with restaurants and related parking. This might also encourage shops to change hours so that, for example, the upper end of the town might open at 10.00 and close later on some evenings, and also open on Summer Sundays, perhaps combined with some kind of market to attract visitors. In Chippenham, where the public realm has been greatly improved, people use the town centre into the early evening (even though there is a smaller range of attractions than in Stroud). Whatever happens, it is important to encourage more people to want to live in and around the town centre, which includes encouraging the idea of Living Over the Shop (LOTS), and ensuring that late night noise and disturbance is kept under strict control in areas where people are sleeping.

## Incremental development

We therefore propose a series of actions to progressively raise standards, and hence footfall and levels of trade, which in turn, providing there is clear planning guidance, should encourage the private sector to fill any gaps in the market. For example improving lighting and removing certain traffic restrictions on the High Street, combined with a move towards creating distinct pavements on which tables could be put, would help encourage a 'restaurant quarter' and counteract the 'dead' feeling in the early evening. At the same time more people need to be encouraged and enabled to live in the centre. New housing at the gateways could

not only help make public places like car parks feel safer, but also contribute to the costs of making improvements.

The actions relate to the two major events that the centre is likely to experience over the next ten years, both of which extend the town centre in new directions:

- 1 the opening of the new cinema and bowling alley, which could create a new 'West End'
- 2 the reopening of the canal to the South of the town, which could create a new waterfront, along with the development of the transport interchange around the station.

Basically the strategy is to use these new attractions to draw more people into town – and to make the related improvements in such a way that they enjoy their visit and want to return. This is likely to include taking the centre more 'up market', so that it would draw people into town who currently get no further than Waitrose! Successful market towns like Ludlow and Chippenham can provide inspiration, as do similar sized Continental towns in the Netherlands or France.

## **Better image**

We have also drawn on experience in large industrial town centres that have changed their image through the development of their evening economy, such as Wolverhampton and Reading. This means in essence making Stroud town centre known for being:

- easy to access by car, public transport, foot and bike, with priority for pedestrians in the centre, but with more shared surfaces, and much better information
- 'cleaner, safer and greener', with brighter lighting, better pavements, and more welcoming gateways
- a model for good management, with coordinated promotion, and support for new enterprises that broaden the food offer.

#### **4. AN ACTION PLAN FOR STROUD'S TOWN CENTRE**

In this section we cover the menu of actions that are needed, and in the final section suggest how the improvements could be made to happen. The proposal is to link the first two actions of better walks and easier parking, which are both 'easy wins', to the launch of the entertainment complex and new West End. Others, such as welcoming gateways, and the attraction of places to eat that will provide destinations could be linked to the Stroud interchange proposal for easier implementation.

As not everything can be done at once we recommend focusing initial efforts on upgrading the gateways, starting with what might be called Stroud's new 'West End' around the cinema and Gloucester Street – as a 'pilot' of what can go on to be done in subsequent parts. For example, when the plans for the interchange are resolved, then the bottom end of town can become the focus. The upper end of town also calls for some concerted improvements. This would include upgraded links to the Church Street Car Park, welcoming signs, and the development of under-used land for housing, which can then also help to make the links feel safer. Further options for investigation might include enabling taxis to get through more easily, and rethinking the 'Berlin Wall' that cuts off the top of the High Street from Parliament and Nelson Streets.

##### **1 Better walks and 'green links'**

Vitality depends on many more people living in town, and walking through the centre from the outskirts. The development of the new West End should help, but there is also a mass of attractions at Stratford Park that need to form part of a regular circuit. At present signing is poor generally, and it is confusing for visitors to find their way around on foot. The current interpretation boards and three-dimensional maps are a good step forward, but need to be followed up by a concerted programme of action to encourage people to stroll or promenade through the centre in the early evening, as they do in Continental towns. The proposed redevelopment of the College campus provides a further opportunity to upgrade the links at the same time so that people walk though more often both during breaks and in the evening.

Short term action or pilot projects could be:

- a. **Sign boards** Welcoming sign boards should be installed at the entrances to each of the main car parks, highlighting the main attractions (as they do in French towns, for example), making the layout of the town clearer to the first time visitor. A good nearby example is Frome, which has also used imaginative new housing to revitalise the edges of the centre
- b. **Street names** Street names should be fixed to buildings on street corners and could copy Gloucester's approach of using a coloured background to brighten the streets in the town centre. The signs should include the district name and roads it leads to. This could be done swiftly and economically.
- c. **Upgraded links** The routes from car parks such as Church Street should be upgraded to meet minimum standards in terms of lighting, surfaces, and cleanliness, following the kinds of principles and examples set out in English Heritage's guide *Streets for All*. Though the variety of possible routes makes it very difficult to improve everywhere or even prioritise improvements, the first phase should concentrate on the bottom end of town, as in the past this has given the worst impression to visitors. The area around the Merrywalks multi storey car park should now be relatively easy to upgrade, with the priority being to create a safe and attractive route between the public entrance to the cinema and bowling centre, and the rest of the town centre by night as well as by day.

Longer term possibilities for investigation include promoting new walks from car parks on the edge of town through a new North/South route off Russell Street, connecting through to the Brunel Goods Shed, and then over the railway line, perhaps using the opening of what might be called 'Brunel Walk' to coincide with an anniversary in order to get good publicity. There may be scope for developing a new East/West route from the Merrywalks Centre across the bypass, as there are several possible routes though to Stratford Park that avoid the main roads. An investigation should also be made into ways of upgrading the experience of walking into town from the North, for example through an urban design study of the upper end of town, which would need to investigate the scope for improving the links between the top of High Street and Parliament Street, and also for developing land between the Police Station and Lewis's (which is now used as a job centre). The outcome of these projects should include greater footfall, better publicity, and an upsurge in tourism, as people drawn to the cinema decide to explore further, and as people begin to promenade through the town.

## 2 Easier parking

*'The success or otherwise of the outcomes of the report will depend, as stated in the report, on the convenient and acceptable movement of all highway users into and around the town'*

To support the launch of the new cinema, we propose that parking policies are relaxed to encourage more people to come into town at the end of the afternoon and the early evening:

- a. **Better names** The main car parks should be renamed to show their location in relation to the centre. Thus the Church Street and Parliament Street car parks would become the Upper End car parks, and the Merrywalks area would be promoted as Stroud's West End. London Road is clear enough. The station car park might in time be called Canalside, if that is the name used to promote the new residential quarter at Cheapside.
- b. **No hassle** Parking charges should cease after 4.00 pm, to encourage people on their way home from work to use the town centre, and to create a level playing field with the superstores, where parking is free 24 hours a day. Not having to pay will also encourage people to 'linger longer', and to visit the town centre when they are picking up children.
- c. **Short term surface parking** Short term parking should be extended in Russell and George Streets, and possibly elsewhere, by replacing the double yellow lines with single yellow lines, or preferably no lines at all (as in towns like Bury St Edmunds and Halifax that have upgraded their historic cores). The expected effects include: a busier bottom end of town, and hence better shops; more people walking through King Street and up and down Gloucester Street; a greater chance of restaurants opening and flourishing in Russell Street; and increased revenue from parking as more people are attracted to use the town centre during the day. Parking should effectively be unrestricted in the evenings and on Sundays, which is a relatively easy way not only of making the town feel busier, but also enabling the centre to compete with out-of-town attractions that offer free parking 24 hours a day.

### 3 Improved taxi service

*'I think that Stroud has far too much pedestrianisation and the idea of taxis using those areas particularly at night is great'*

The most important aspect of keeping the centre safe at night is dispersing crowds of people quickly, and we have looked at a number of options. So long as buses and trains are not

truly integrated and affordable, taxis will play the key public transport role in towns like Stroud, and it is therefore important that they can provide as efficient and responsive a service as possible, to avoid people trying to use cars when they have been drinking. Stroud has been slow to acquire the larger cabs that cater for groups of people as well as those who are disabled, but incentives are needed if taxi owners are to invest. At present getting in and out of the town via the bypass adds £1.40 to the cost of a trip, and of course leads to people having to wait longer. While taxi drivers are very independent people, possible action could include:

- a. **Shorter routes** Enabling taxis to drive through King Street, and possibly up the High Street, but regulating speeds to 5mph, so that they can save time and also help make the street feel safer. In addition, another taxi rank at the upper end of the town centre, outside the Cornhill Market should make dispatching easier. The outcomes should include: reasonable waiting times; reduced conflicts; and less violence
- b. **Shared use** Encouraging shared use by setting fares to key destinations, such as Stonehouse or Painswick, and making it easier for groups to share, for example through collaboration between late night operators and taxis
- c. **Marshalling** Ensuring that night clubs take responsibility for getting customers away safely and quickly through consideration of the kinds of 'marshalling' schemes that have worked in other towns, for example the Bath Doorsafe Partnership

It would also be worth investigating the idea of 'Taxibuses' which for part of the day operate on regular routes, similar to the Dolmus system in Turkey for example or the 'Hail and Ride' buses that operate in some areas, with standard fares, and which stop on demand. It is possible that one of the bus companies might be interested if taxi drivers are not.

#### 4 Redesigning the gateways

*'The report talks about the community but at present the provision of such new housing is tilted to the bottom end of the market. If the town is to have a pleasant and viable evening economy of an indigenous nature, then it is imperative that the housing is mixed'.*

Over the next couple of years not only should the issues around the transport interchange be resolved, but agreement should also be reached on the massive development around Cheapside that is likely to be promoted as Stroud Canalside. This opens up opportunities for upgrading the roundabouts that form the Western gateways to the town, and making it

much easier and safer for people on foot and bicycle to get across, and for improving links between the centre and car parks. Roundabouts are unsatisfactory ways of handling traffic in towns (and the Danish have almost eliminated them in order to make cycling and walking easier). There are two immediate priorities, and some other longer term possibilities:

- a. **Gloucester Street** Redesigning the intersection at the old Police Station is vital to improving pedestrian access to Stratford Park, and would also encourage more activity on Gloucester Street. There could be increased problems as a result of traffic driving into the multi-storey at Merrywalks unless compensating action is taken. Neither bridges nor underpasses are satisfactory these days, and great skill will be needed to work out a better solution that allows pedestrians to have some form of priority so that they have a clear walking route from the town onwards. This is one of a number of areas where an urban design study should take place to provide a better brief for the traffic engineers. This could either be through commissioning a study from the County Council, or better still through a Planning for Real kind of exercise that brought together the different stakeholders along with inputs from experts with design and highway planning expertise.
- b. **'Canalside'** Redesigning the Bath Road/Cainscross intersection, which is much more difficult, offers a number of possibilities for using new development to mend the fractures in the town, and to open up the potential for walking along the canal. Even without new attractions, Stroud's textile heritage, such as Longmoor Mill, could provide a major destination for evening promenades, provided some of the barriers to pleasant walking or cycling can be removed. Transport 2000's project 'Revitalising Communities on Main Roads', has provided some useful guidance and examples, and the funding could be secured both through Section 106 contributions and as a demonstration project under the Gloucestershire Transport Plan.

## 5 Destination places to eat

*Perhaps the Sub Rooms could provide a chill out area away from continual drinking in bars, as is suggested in the report. I also wholeheartedly support the ice cream parlour suggestion which would be excellent for all ages; it might also fill the dead time after shops close, and before people come out for the evening.'*

Ultimately the main attraction of Stroud is the town itself, and there is every reason to think that the renaissance of the centre will come as a result of measures to improve accessibility and amenity. The town already receives considerable national publicity because of the Royal

connections, but has not been fully recognised for its creativity. Hence any promotional activity needs to build on what has been achieved (and for example both The Space and the John Street Studios are keen to see greater collaboration between the arts) and to target missing attractions. Increasing the choice and offer of sit-down eating places is key, and a critical mass could build on the axis from the Shambles across the High Street in and around Cornhill. We have identified a real interest in providing both an unusual restaurant that would get into food guides, and also a place that young people would seek out. There are three possibilities that could be taken forward:

- a. ***'Made in Stroud'*** While Stroud is probably not significant enough yet to justify a national group like Whitbreads opening up a branch say of Café Rouge, or a Pizza Express (unless a building becomes available with sufficient space in the right location), we do think there is potential for developing something uniquely Stroud – and independent – a kind of eating equivalent to Made in Stroud and the Farmers Market. The success of the HK House, and the fact that Matthew Fort, the Guardian's food correspondent, now lives in Stroud, makes us believe that a viable business proposition could be put together, and we have identified several possible buildings. The venture must be supported and we recommend that the Concordat give its backing to ensuring that a large enough premises is made available in the centre (at least 2,000 sq ft, with shopfronts) with plenty of parking close by. It is also possible that a destination restaurant could form a key element in the development of Stroud waterfront, and again several locations could be feasible.
- b. ***Youth café/ice cream parlour*** Our discussions with young people confirmed the need for somewhere other than McDonalds that would appeal to those too young to go in pubs, or who want somewhere to meet their friends and talk. One possibility, which works well in Sweden and many other Continental countries, is the idea of an ice cream parlour, and this met with strong support. Ice cream provides a buzz, like alcohol, but without adverse effects. The appeal comes from being able to choose from over 20 mouth-watering varieties. This could be seen as primarily a 'youth café', but we believe it will work better if it attracts a wider clientele, with different groups at different times. We have also discovered that a business plan is being put together for a milkshake parlour in Stroud, which could incorporate some of the same ideas. We believe that the best location for this would be at the upper end of town, for example the former Breadheads, or else in Gloucester Street, so it forms an attraction for those visiting the cinema to walk into town.
- c. ***Remodelling the Sub Rooms*** There is a general feeling that the Sub Rooms is not achieving its full potential as the most prominent building in the town centre. While the programme may tend to appeal to older people, unless the building feels

much more welcoming it will never draw the numbers needed to animate the centre in the evening and Sundays. This is because the demographic profile in the Stroud urban area is not predominantly one that tends to go out for entertainment, unlike say Cheltenham or Oxford. One option would be to develop the Sub Rooms as an Arts Centre, and there are models such as Salisbury to show what can be done, which has recently been upgraded with a £2 million grant from South West Arts. Certainly Stroud has a particularly creative community, and could develop even more of a niche role. However this would only work if the project was run as an independent organisation with Council support, and as there are a number of competing projects, it may be unrealistic, though the idea should be tested out. But if the aim is to attract a wide range of people into Stroud, then the real priority is to make the building feel much more welcoming, which will involve remodelling the ground floor. There are precedents for attracting national leisure operators to open popular café restaurants in buildings that are prominent and have an ambience. One example is the former Town Hall in Berkhamsted in Hertfordshire, which was developed by a trust before the ground floor was taken over by Café Uno, which is part of the Whitbread chain. Other possibilities that have been mentioned are ASK and Pizza Express, though normally they look for buildings that have glazed sides where people can both look out and be seen by passers by. Whatever the occupant, nothing can happen unless the Council resolves to use the ground floor and forecourt to generate the kind of activity to be found in Continental towns, rather than using it as the Tourist Information Centre, which will always be a limited draw, plus occasional exhibitions, and regular classes.

## 6 Joint marketing

The final proposal covers the way attractions are publicised, given the growing offer, and diverse tastes of the catchment area. Stroud is one of the best read places but today, in an electronic age, it is essential to go beyond the *Stroud News and Journal* or posters.

- a. **Information Centre** If the Sub Rooms is to play the larger role that many people would like, the key priority is to get many more people on to the forecourt, and passing through into the building. On the back of the new cinema there is scope to look again at drawing a larger clientele including young families and youth (under 25). While there are arguments for using the space occupied by the Tourist Information Centre for other purposes, we are proposing the Sub Rooms is seen as the hub for the provision of entertainment and learning in the town, which would

be a real innovation and for which no existing models are readily available. This means turning the TIC into a full information centre covering:

- Coordination of information on what's on where (with both public services, like the library, and also voluntary and business interests, as the cinema will need to communicate a changing programme, for example)
- Provision of information through an upgraded website and email newsletters to special interest groups e.g. folk music and jazz.
- Registering and marketing the full range of meeting and public assembly spaces in the town, so that they become first port of call for finding out where to book a room, or where a class is being held
- Using volunteers or training programmes to build up and maintain the data base
- Working with local arts organisations on how to get the message of what's on across, using not only advanced Information and Communication Technology (ICT) but also information boards or pillars at key points, for example car parking pay points
- Changing the layout so the ground floor is more welcoming, with for example, a coffee and sit down area, extending in Summer on to the forecourt, which is well placed to 'watch the world go by'. It could also take on the inevitably controversial task of managing the main public toilets, which happen to be next to the Sub Rooms as well as the ones inside!

b. ***Hub of a learning community*** The Sub Rooms have achieved a great deal over the past five years or so, and now needs to reassess its operation. Having reviewed the offer at the Sub Rooms, and compared it with other similar venues, we believe the way forward is to market it as one of a number of venues, as it is already starting to do with the Museum in the Park. There is no reason why municipally owned venues should not form part of a much larger programme, and festivals provide the excuse and means of reaching wider audiences. As the building is so prominent, it could easily develop its role as the hub of a 'learning community', with an expanding programme of workshops and participatory events, so that it builds a series of loyal clienteles, who can spread what's on through word of mouth. By drawing many more people through the doors by day and by night, it will not only be busier, but will also draw larger audiences for whatever it puts on. Big names in a small town will simply not work on a regular basis, and regular increased use is what is needed to keep the town alive 'out of hours'. Special events can be used not only to reach

wider audiences, but also to try out ideas that could later be taken up on a more regular basis.

- c. **Training projects** There is scope for setting up a marketing activity that builds on the excellent work done to promote Open Studios and Artspace, and that uses the facilities of a college to help develop and update an interactive website, which could be linked to an email newsletter or even phone links to tell people 'what's on in Stroud tonight'. Stroud Valleys Artspace are interested in the idea of running a training programme.
- d. **National conference** Stroud could also upgrade its image by winning awards and national recognition for the progress it is making. One way would be to host a conference on 'reinventing smaller towns', which could be used as an excuse for starting to market all the different venues through a single point. Inspiration could be taken from the success Devizes has had in turning their old Corn Exchange into a modern conference centre and venue.
- e. **Distinct ends of town** The key to successful marketing is not only to segment the market, so that instead of each place trying to appeal to everyone, each develops a distinct niche, but also to have a memorable 'brand'. Hence we recommend that different parts or ends of the town should to be seen as playing distinctive but complementary roles. This can be implemented in a number of ways:
  - First, it can be used to identify the main car parks, which can carry information on what the town has to offer, including Community Notice Boards or pillars where posters can be fixed
  - Second, we recommend that there is a policy of promoting the West End of town, which would run from the Merrywalks Centre to Stratford Park, as the 'family end of town', which makes it an appropriate location for facilities like playgrounds
  - Third, Russell Street and London Road has become the focus for clubbers and pubbers, and while Living Over The Shop is a sound general policy, it is essential to avoid anti-social behaviour spreading out to areas like Merrywalks. This requires not only vigilant and coordinated street cleaning, but also the use of double glazing in housing to keep noise levels down (and also save energy). Housing in this area will tend to be worth less, and therefore can make a useful contribution to making Stroud more affordable
  - Fourth, outside the bottom end of town, late night licensing should be avoided, except where, as in the case of the Uptown Downtown Club, it can be accessed on a circuit that does not involve passing housing

- Finally, the Upper End of town, or whatever name is used, should be the best place to bring visitors, and to encourage people to stroll around. This means promoting 'time-shifting', for example through early evening and weekend uses, or what is sometimes called 'Café Society' in the Upper End of town in the circuit around the Shambles and John Street. This is something which is already starting to happen, with for example the opening up of the Angel Tapas bar and Woodruff on some evenings, and needs to be encouraged further through sensitive lighting of key buildings and routes to car parks, and the highest quality of infill development, with new housing being used to make the area feel more interesting and safer. If precedents are needed, the former Piggeries in Frome, which was developed by the Guinness Trust, provides an excellent example, which has been publicised in good practice guides like *By Design*

- f. **Development briefs** While the local authority's powers to secure good development may seem weak, in fact urban design studies and development briefs can achieve a great deal. Briefs can be developed which enable a range of uses to coexist happily. In turn the resulting publicity will help attract private investment and achieve the general vision of Stroud town centre as the heart of the Five Valleys, and a great place to meet. By involving the community in an action planning event, as for example happened over Cheapside, local knowledge and ideas can be tapped. Once adopted as action area plan or SPG, they provide the confidence to developers to promote appropriate schemes, and can encourage collaboration between adjoining landowners.
- g. **Code of practice** There is a shift of hours underway in smaller towns, as fewer people work in them, and they become more like dormitories. However, as we have argued, if Stroud town centre is to become busier in the evening, changes are required not only in the behaviour of local residents, but also on the part of those who run shops and services. There are already complaints about the profusion of takeaways, who stay open after the clubs close, and who are blamed for problems with noise and litter. At the same time, early on in the evening and at weekends the town centre is dead. Progress depends on concerted action, and one way of achieving this would be for the Concordat to develop a Code of Practice, as has been done successfully in Ealing, through their Responsible Host Scheme. To progress this idea, it would be essential to work with a group of operators, who might be called the Stroud Leisure Forum, and to aim for a simple set of principles, no more than 7-10, that can be printed on one side of A4 paper, and be displayed by organisations who participate. Town Centre Management has a key role to play, and

useful lessons can be drawn from areas that have successfully changed behaviour, such as in Temple Bar, Dublin. To work, it is crucial that recommendations from the Leisure Forum, including for example the licensing of more taxis or the reissue of drinks licences, are channelled through the Town Centre Manager, who may well need support to carry out the additional responsibilities.

The Ealing Code provides a possible model (see **Appendix B**), and we have identified below what we believe to be the main elements that need to be covered in a Code of Practice for Stroud:

- 1 The overwhelming priority is to promote the vitality and viability of Stroud town centre which means appealing to a wide range of groups through a range of functions including, not just shopping, but different aspects of the evening economy.
- 2 The best way of keeping the streets feeling lively and safe in the evening is to allow some throughput of traffic as well as encouraging more people to walk through the town.
- 3 Different ends of town should develop complementary roles over time, and different ends could adopt different hours.
- 4 Trading on the pavement should be made easier, for example by encouraging people to put out chairs and tables (and licencing areas in front of shops for the display of goods).
- 5 Much of Stroud is covered by conservation areas, but it is equally important that the areas most visible to passers by communicate a positive and welcoming image. Shops and cafes on key routes especially, such as the High Street, should keep their shopfronts illuminated at night (and shutters that cannot be seen through should be forbidden).
- 6 Activities that create noise late at night should be clustered together and should be close to adequate transport. It may help to have a ticketing system for cabs so that people can sit down or go elsewhere while they wait their turn.
- 7 Those who generate noise late at night may be required to contribute to the costs of installing double glazing on residential premises that are affected.
- 8 Every attempt should be made to keep litter down, including packaging, bottles and cans. One way would be to charge takeaways and other licenced premises for the costs of supplementary cleaning so they have an incentive to discourage abuse and to keep the space outside their premises clean at all times.
- 9 After midnight food and drink should only be consumed on the premises and there should be adequate space for sitting down. It will help if licenced premises sell only soft drinks and coffee in their last hour.

- 10 Any mess and damage should be put right before the following day and complaints might be coordinated through the Town Centre Manager at the Town Council, and any cost of addressing complaints might be levied on the responsible establishments.

## 5 MAKING THINGS HAPPEN

*Around the millennium, problems associated with the appearance of large numbers of young people, late at night, in a state of inebriation began to be recognised by public agencies and residents' groups. These are concentrated in particular micro-districts or 'hot spots'. Problems have occurred with drunkenness, anti-social behaviour, crime and disorder. This is acting as a deterrent to other social groups in making full use of their urban centres*

*Many local authorities have responded with imaginative initiatives. The most successful of these are multi-agency, public/private and holistic strategies that incorporate a variety of measures. These address issues such as late night transport, waste management, environmental improvements, the reduction of crime and disorder and a reduction in conflicts between residents and revellers. A proactive approach to the expansion of the NTE has been achieved in some localities at home and abroad. Again a multi-agency holistic approach that combines a consensus for intervention with directed growth appears to have been most successful.*

*Good Practice in Managing the Evening and Late Night Economy*, ODPM, 2004 (Marion Roberts, Central Cities Institute, University of Westminster)

An Action Plan is essentially a management tool for ensuring that different interests work together, and this draft therefore needs to be discussed and agreed, and linked to available budgets and human resources. Once comments have been secured it could be turned into a newsletter, and launched as part of the publicity around the opening of Merrywalks as an entertainment complex. In this final section we therefore review the barriers to improvements, the potential resources available, and alternative approaches to management, before suggesting how the action plan should be implemented in stages.

### Overcoming barriers to action

Despite the potential for going up a league, changing the town centre's image will be difficult, and progress is complicated by a number of factors including:

- Fragmented town centre with dispersed attractions and competing demands for investment e.g. reopening of the canal

- Lack of a shared vision for improving the town centre as a place for different groups to meet and enjoy themselves
- Need for concerted action that involves the County as the main Highway authority, as well as a number of different departments, and outside interests
- Very limited Council resources, with a number of centres to look after
- Council policies that are too complex to implement easily and do not discriminate sufficiently e.g. between sit-down restaurants and takeaways
- Little support at the Regional level, as the regeneration of Stroud is not one of the RDA's top priorities
- Differences between the interests of the main shops and those who provide leisure facilities
- Difficulties with getting the many independent leisure operators to work together
- A highly articulate population, with many factions.

## Planning needs to be more positive

Like many smaller authorities, Stroud District Council in the past has tended to react to planning applications as they are submitted, and has been hamstrung by staff shortages, and limited powers and resources. As a result, the opportunity to develop a coherent masterplan for the area in transition around the station may have been lost, and there could be clashes between, for example, new housing at Shunters and the takeaway that has opened opposite. Nevertheless, the opportunities that are starting to be created in Cheapside, with the highly acclaimed reuse of the Hill Paul building as apartments, and the potential for using further development to help fund improvements to the inadequate junction between the Bath and Cainscross Roads, make a more positive approach essential.

Our review of the planning policies suggests that the Council is missing the opportunity to insist on higher design standards in the town centre, and to require leisure operators to contribute to maintaining the higher standards that will now be required. This is partly because the vision is too general and the rules are too complex for small operators to understand, let alone follow. The plan's stated over-riding purpose is '*to make Stroud District a better place to live and work for everyone*', whereas action needs to be more targeted. The corporate aims include 'to protect and improve' the environment to protect the community's health and safety; and to expand recreational and cultural opportunities'. It quotes government documents on sustainable development – *A Better Quality for Life* (1999) – which has ten guiding principles including: 'putting people at the centre' and 'taking a long-term

perspective'. However, it does not make it clear that Stroud town centre should be the focus for services catering for the Primary Urban Area.

Stroud's Crime and Disorder strategy has had successes in responding to great public concern about alcohol abuse and antisocial behaviour, including 'BOBS' – 'behave or be banned'. However its licensing requirements, while very extensive, may not produce the desired results. Stroud's policy (2005) has the right intent but there are problems with its application, for example giving licences to clubs when there are already enough. Management of licenced premises is a big gap. While the impact on residents is referred to, the impact on others trying to enjoy themselves is not spelt out. The Council does not seek to impose quotas on applications, and its concern appears to be with the number of premises in any one area, rather than the impact of the critical mass on the locale. Stroud could copy authorities like Ealing in London, which has a simple eleven point Responsible Host scheme (see **Appendix B**). Discussions with Ealing discovered that 40 businesses signed up in the first year, and most renewed, while each succeeding year more have joined. Promoting such a charter could be a practical way for the Concordat between the main authorities to have an immediate and visible impact, by making it a condition for securing planning permission or a drinks licence.

A review of the Local Plan highlights how it backs up action for the town centre, but also has some weaknesses that may allow problems to arise.

Town centre regeneration:	
2.6.14	'the main towns of Stroud and Dursley have suffered gradual decline in their vitality and viability over a number of years. It is important that the local plan addresses the issue of regeneration of Stroud and Dursley'.
2.6.15	'other proposals will seek to promote specific sites in the centre for development especially for mixed uses including residential, leisure and commercial uses. Such developments will bring new attractions to the towns and again aid the regeneration processes'.
2.6.16	Stroud town centre has suffered from a lack of investment over many years and this has affected its vitality and viability ... there is a lack of leisure and entertainment facilities in the centre and consequently the atmosphere in the evening is poor. Few people live in the town, and while it has an attractive historic core there are no specific visitor attractions at present. The town centre also experiences problems of traffic congestion and difficulties with access due to its topography. This does not recognise the residents in the upper part of the town who are disrupted by noise and antisocial behaviour.
2.6.17	'The district council has identified the need to regenerate Stroud town centre as a priority'.
2.6.18	The regeneration strategy aims to guide the regeneration of the town centre – see especially 1,2,5,6,8,9,10.11.12.

Town centres and retailing: Stroud town centre	
6.5.10	Traffic management and improvements to the Sub Rooms forecourt have been done – 'this

	enables one of the most important buildings in the town centre to be used to its full potential as a venue for arts and entertainment and for the public area around the building to be used as a town square...’ The Sub Rooms still have potential to be more of a draw. The Town Square poses some problems with restrictions to movement (by bollards for example)
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Class A food and drink use	
6.20.1	‘introduction of restaurants and hot food takeaways can have a positive impact on an area’s vitality, but can also harm the amenity of an area, particularly where late opening hours affect local residents..... Town centres are less sensitive...’ This makes no distinction between sit-down restaurants and takeaways, which is key in Stroud, or the impact on the growing number of people living in the town centre.

Recreation and leisure	
10.6	‘The District Council recognises the important contribution these facilities [arts, cultural and entertainment facilities] make to the social and economic welfare of the community’

### **A coordinated approach is essential**

In acting to extend and broaden the range of its evening economy, there is no simple answer or obvious model to follow, as Stroud will be breaking new ground, as argued earlier. Nor is it easy to draw up a masterplan or blueprint to show how all the suggested improvements link together, as to some extent progress has to be opportunistic. Instead we believe that the evening economy needs to become a priority for all the organisations involved with the town centre (as recommended, for example, by the Stroud Project). We suggest organising through existing partnerships. The evening economy should be taken under the wing of the Concordat and Project Stroud. Action Area Plans should be produced for parts of the town where further change is most likely, such as Cheapside/‘Canalside’, and adopted under the new planning system. This should ensure that a critical mass or enough improvements are secured to overcome cynicism and distrust. The evening economy is critical to ongoing work, through the *Crime and Disorder Strategy*, which aims to reduce incidences of disorder and to keep people informed on the true position. Similarly *Project Stroud*, with its proposals for a Civic Pride bid and for revisiting pedestrianisation and car parking, can help to maintain the momentum. As an example, the combination of the new cinema opening up, combined with measures to light up key buildings involving the new landscape partnership, could also be used to promote a concerted effort to upgrade premises in Gloucester Street, along with an investigation of options for the road junction. Similarly, action to make parking on that side of the town much easier should be combined with reopening King Street to taxis outside shopping hours.

We looked at the option of a Business Improvement District (BID). Following up URBED's work with ATCM on the pilot BIDs, we spoke to the Town Centre Manager in Lincoln, which has some similarities, not least its hilly centre and new waterfront and cinema. Lincoln has made the evening economy a priority, with aims such as creating a civilised atmosphere and filling the 5-8 slot, including the possibility of some traders extending their hours. Ten years ago there were only estimated to be 500 people in town on an evening while now there are 5,000, and they are therefore appointing a manager to deal specifically with the evening economy, funded through contributions from businesses under a BID that won approval. However, developing a BID takes a lot of time and investment, and we are doubtful whether Stroud is large enough, and whether businesses really would support putting their own money into joint management at this point. But it is an idea worth canvassing at a later stage as BIDs become more widespread.

Some of the work involved in designing and promoting projects could be undertaken through a new partnership which is intended to bring together all involved in the look of Stroud. As many of the improvements that are needed go beyond what is needed to create a successful evening economy, this could provide the mechanism for improving the main gateways, starting with efforts to coordinate signing, lighting and small scale environmental improvements.

### **Resources for improvements must be packaged**

The key to making improvements will be packaging resources from a number of different sources. Much depends on taking action that does not cost a lot, for example changing parking policies or traffic circulation, and then using those improvements as an incentive to get the private sector to invest alongside. We have suggested calling the Action Plan '**Stepping Out**', as it emphasises the ideas of making a step change in the nature of the town centre, making Stroud a 'walking town', and also of going forward a step at a time. (Incidentally our original idea of promoting the programme under the name 'In Stroud Tonight' was considered too old-fashioned to appeal to the main market segments.)

Potential sources of funds include:

- Section 106 contributions from private developers for new development, including in particular new housing in the bottom end of town along the canal through the use of Development Briefs

- A Townscape Initiative bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for improvements to Conservation Areas, perhaps focussed on reusing empty buildings on the High Street and improving the links with surrounding car parks
- Local Transport Plan funding for the interchange, and for related measures to improve circulation

As far as organisations are concerned there is a new landscape partnership to bring together those interested in upgrading the public realm. It is possible that many of the smaller ideas, like new signs or better lighting, could be done through them, making the most of existing budgets, and using 'Stepping Out in Stroud' as a slogan.

### **Improved collaboration and communication are needed**

A number of different mechanisms have been used to secure concerted improvements in other towns (see **Appendix B**). Thus a number of towns have used Safer Communities Partnerships to promote innovations, for example, Newcastle's Taxi Marshals or the *Safe and Clean Charter* in Bolton. **Codes of conduct** can also be used to secure consistently high standards among licensed premises, as in Richmond Council, and, as we have argued, the Ealing Responsible Host scheme provides a useful checklist of guidelines for good management. However it is important to go beyond the 'clean and safe' agenda, if the full potential of Stroud town centre is to be realised.

We consider that the development and implementation of the Action Plan could be a means of bringing together a useful **Leisure Forum**. In following up some of those who did not attend the meeting, we realised how small operators not only find it hard to make time for meetings, but can also easily forget to turn up unless there is an over-riding priority. However a meeting once a year to report on progress in implementing the Action Plan, and to consider priorities for the next year should help. The first step would be to debate the strategy in this report and to agree on who is to do what.

Our proposal for using the Internet more as a means of communication could start with developing an **Emailing List** for leisure operators and available venues, and circulating this report for comments. This could be a useful step towards publicising events in a more concerted and effective way. It will also help in developing a spirit of collaboration among people who are used to seeing others as competitors, and who are suspicious of authority. It will be much more efficient for different venues to be promoted through a single source of

information, and good practice in Arts Centre like that in Salisbury or Bridgewater can be usefully adapted.

### **Stroud's evening economy can be monitored in several ways**

It will be important to set up a monitoring and evaluation system in order to:

- Assess progress on the delivery of the Action Plan
- Highlight any problem areas as they happen (and rectify them)
- Demonstrate the overall effectiveness of the Action Plan
- Capture the impact that the actions are having on Stroud
- Describe the changing perceptions of different user groups participating in Stroud's evening economy

A monitoring process needs to take into consideration:

- Who is going to be responsible for monitoring?
- What is going to be monitored (known and agreed objectives which reflect the delivery of the action plan), and what milestones are needed?
- How is it going to be monitored over what period of time (e.g. regular written reporting – monthly or quarterly)?
- How much is available to spend on monitoring (unless part of someone's existing job – in which case it should be written into their job description)?

In the first section we set out ideas for the outcomes from a successful evening economy against which progress could be monitored. It will be important to combine quantitative factors with more qualitative assessments, along with targets for key aims, such as the opening of a new destination restaurant by 2008.

*Quantitative* measures which are relevant to the evening economy, and which could form part of a general annual report, include:

- Overall numbers of restaurants, pubs and clubs
- Numbers of new openings (and use of vacant shops and buildings)
- Investment levels (where known)
- Estimates of the number of people employed at night in the centre
- Diversity of visitors to the town centre, for example in terms of the numbers coming from outside the GL5 post code
- Number of late night licenses in different parts of the town
- Disturbances (crime/arrests – drunkenness, assaults etc)

*Qualitative* measures could be drawn from:

- Opinion polls – different constituencies – residents, young people, older, businesses
- Views on the state of streets Saturday/Sunday mornings
- Positive/negative press coverage
- Other press references– national etc
- Descriptions in travel and food guides etc

## Six priorities for action are proposed

A summary of the action points with suggested responsibilities and budgets can be set out when a final draft of the plan is produced, incorporating comments from the Steering Group and members of the Concordat. Our current recommendations, drawn from section 4, are to concentrate on the following six priorities, each of which would involve a different team of people, and which will lead on to implementing other actions in the proposed programme, as success leads to success. The next step is to ensure there is a shared vision, and sufficient support for the general idea of using the opening of the cinema and bowling centre to kick off the process of making the town centre livelier out of hours:

**1. *Re-signing Stroud*** Plans for introducing new street name boards should be followed up with further signs at the principal car parks identifying what Stroud has to offer to visitors. These should be used to promote the idea of different ends of town (particularly the Upper Town, West End, and Canalside), and linked by high quality pedestrian routes to the main attractions. A start should be made on the route from the Church Street (Upper Town) car park through to Cornhill.

**2. *Easier access*** Parking controls in the late afternoon should be relaxed by allowing people to park in the centre without charge after 4.00 p.m., and removing unnecessary double yellow lines. This should be combined with measures to make it easier for taxis to get through at night, and to take groups home. This should include trying out the idea of taxi buses on a well populated route that lacks a good evening bus service

**3. *Charter for responsible hosts*** All licensed premises in the town centre should be asked to sign up to common rules of conduct, which will include measures to help keep the streets orderly late at night, such as being responsible for getting customers away without noise

**4. *Facelift for the Gloucester Street gateway*** A task force should be set up to come up with proposals for upgrading the Western gateway, covering lighting, signing, crossings, parking, street surfaces, and shop front design, as a prototype for other areas. Funding for improving gateways should be packaged from developers, including building higher density new housing on the edge of the town centre.

**5. *Youth café/ice cream parlour*** A proposal should be worked up through developing a business plan and identifying the most appropriate premises, and the project developed in consultation with groups in touch with young people.

**6. *Great places to meet*** The Sub Rooms should become the focus for efforts to promote activities in Stroud outside normal shopping hours, working with a Leisure Forum to encourage joint marketing of activities that bring people together, including arts, sport and continuing education. Further work should be done to assess the options of developing a first class café/restaurant in the ground floor and running the building as an arts centre, with the relocation of the Tourist Information Centre to an empty shop.

## APPENDIX A

### Useful publications

*A Better Quality of life: A Strategy for Sustainable Development in the United Kingdom*, DETR, The Stationary Office, 1999

*By Design, Urban Design in the Planning System: Towards Better Practice*, DETR, 2000

*Cheltenham's Night Time Economy Strategy 2004 - 2007 - DRAFT 9* Cheltenham Borough Council, April 2004

*Clone Town Britain: The survey results on the bland state of the nation*, Andrew Simms, Petra Kjell and Ruth Potts, New Economics Foundation, 2005

*Crime and Disorder Strategy*, Stroud Town Council, 2002

*Good Practice in Managing the Evening and Late Night Economy*, ODPM, 2004 Marion Roberts, Central Cities Institute, University of Westminster

Grimethorpe Activity Zone [http://www.sycf.org.uk/barnsley\\_grants.php](http://www.sycf.org.uk/barnsley_grants.php)

*How to... Manage Town Centres Cleaner Safer Greener Communities*, ODPM Publications, March 2005, Product code: 04SCDU02899/TC

*Keeping The Peace: A guide to the prevention of alcohol-related disorder* Working Solutions, Portman Group, 1998

*Late Night London: Planning and Managing the Late-Night Economy* URBED with CASA and Dr Andy Lovatt, The Greater London Authority, London Development Agency, Transport for London and The Government Office for London, 2002

*Out of Hours: A study of economic, social and cultural life in twelve town centres across the UK*, COMEDIA in association with the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 1991

*Revitalising Communities on Main Roads*, Transport 2000, 2003  
(<http://www.newlifeformainroads.org.uk/>)

ScooterMAN [www.scooterman.co.uk](http://www.scooterman.co.uk)

*Spreading the Benefits of Town and City Centre Renewal*, URBED, Local Government Association and Special Interest Group of Municipal Authorities, 2005

*Strategies for Smaller Centres* URBED, ODPM, forthcoming

*Streets for All*, English Heritage, 2005

*Stroud District Local Plan*, amended December 2003

*Stroud Area Crime & Disorder Partnership Strategy 2005-2008*, Gloucestershire Constabulary, Stroud District Council, Gloucestershire County Council, Gloucestershire Constabulary Cotswold and Stroud Division, Police Authority, Primary Care Trust

The Music Project <http://www.tameside.gov.uk/youth/image3.htm>

*Town Centre Partnerships*, URBED, ODPM, 2000

Youth Cafés in Action Project <http://www.youthcafes.org.uk/>

## APPENDIX B

### Examples of good practice in managing the evening economy

#### ACCESS

PLACE	STRATEGY	RESULTS
<b>Manchester</b>	<b>City Centre Safe</b> Late night bus service to assist with ensuring residents get home safely at night. Created in partnership with Greater Manchester police, the Passenger Transport Executive, the City Council, bus companies and pub and club owners. The new bus routes have been subject to high policing and CCTV. Help points have been installed at bus stops and bus marshals have been employed to control behaviour. Taxi Marshals were also introduced during the Christmas/New Year period every Friday and Saturday at three Taxi ranks in the city centre	12.3% decrease in serious assaults during 2001/2 in the city centre. 20,000 people using the service each weekend.
<b>Leicester</b>	<b>Night Bus Service</b> First bus company, the police and three night clubs worked together to plan a night bus service in a bid to tackle violence and disorder caused by the slow rate of dispersal of people leaving clubs and bars. The buses are fitted with CCTV and a protected driver area. One trained nightclub door supervisor rides on each bus while police are present at departure times.	The number of assaults has been reduced and the scheme is now self-sufficient commercial exercise.
<b>Bath</b>	<b>Bath Doorsafe Partnership</b> Security staff are employed to manage the taxi queue in the Orange Grove area (highly residential). Their responsibilities include keeping order in the queue, keeping noise levels down, reporting any problems to the police and helping people find the right taxi home.	
<b>Leicestershire</b>	<b>“Home and Dry” Campaign</b> Initiatives include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Free soft drinks for designated drivers who hand in their car keys at the club reception and collect a book of ten free drink vouchers</li> <li>• An assisted taxi booking service, which allows taxis to be booked and paid for in advance</li> <li>• Female cab drivers available on request</li> <li>• A driver rescue package to deal with situations where the driver realises that they are over the limit. It consists of two drivers, one to collect the young persons car and the other to drive the</li> </ul>	

	<p>group home</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One club provides a coach service as part of an all in admission into the club.</li> </ul>	
<b>Oxford</b>	<p><b>Oxford Late Night Bus Service</b></p> <p>Oxford's first 24 hour bus route was launched in 1996. Since then two more 24 hour routes have been added. Frequencies range from 20 minutes to hourly, depending on the route. There are between 60 and 95 passengers per bus. All buses run on a "hail and ride" basis so that the services are more like taxis in their flexibility – though along fixed routes. Passengers have often been drinking and the buses can be quite lively. Trouble can happen but it is rare. The bus company believes in reducing the chance of confrontation so buses are not fitted with driver assault screens or video surveillance. However, at the depot there is a 24 hour control room and every bus is fitted with a two way radio. In case of emergency the controller will go to the scene immediately. A good relationship has been developed with the police.</p>	
<b>Wolverhampton</b>	<p><b>Doorstaff on Bus Scheme</b> Clubs provide trained door supervisors to travel on buses which leave the town centre at appropriate times and travel on the routes identified as the most popular in a survey of clubgoers.</p>	
<b>London</b>	<p><b>Night Cab</b> Provides late night marshalled taxi service from Edgware Bus Station. A service controller allocates passengers into licensed taxis, which passengers can share for a fixed fee. Women only taxis are available and CCTV is in operation in the waiting area. This project builds on the success of the marshalled rank pilot scheme in Cranbourn Street, London.</p>	
<b>Newcastle</b>	<p><b>Taxi Marshals</b> Newcastle Safer Community Partnership funded a project involving taxi marshals. The marshals were door supervisors trained by the Security Industry Authority (SIA). They ensure that order is maintained on the city centre taxi rank.</p>	<p>Proved a success with over 3,500 people using it during the 5-week trail with no incidents of taxi-rank violence. The scheme has been extended into 2005.</p>

**AMENITY**

PLACE	STRATEGY	RESULTS
<b>Bolton</b>	<p><b>Safe and Clean Charter</b> Created by the Neighbourhood Management Partnership (residents, police and the council). The Charter sets out which 14 service providers are responsible for keeping the area safe and clean. The Charter also states the standards of service the residents can expect and contact points for help and advice. Key contacts that residents can complain to if service providers do not operate to these standards are included as well as initiatives and pilots going ahead in the area. The responsibilities that service providers expect from the community in return are also set out in the Charter.</p> <p><b>Town Safe Partnership</b> This partnership has brought together many groups who were working to try and reduce the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour, and improve the image of Bolton Town Centre. Building on this success Bolton Town Centre Company were approached to run an evening economy initiative. They have employed an Evening Manager and part-time Evening Ambassadors. They are working with Greater Manchester Police, the Safer Bolton Strategic Partnership, licensees and all other evening businesses.</p>	
<b>Coventry</b>	<p><b>Evening Patrols</b> Evening wardens have been established by CV One, a tourism and city centre management company. Evening patrols were a means of tackling people's perceptions of threatening behaviour. At first the wardens were restricted to escorting lone females and visitors from the theatre at closing time, but their role has been extended to advising beggars, assisting people who have had too much to drink and helping tourists and new students with directions and information.</p>	The number of people using the centre increased in the first 18 months of the scheme.
<b>Cambridge</b>	<p><b>Better-designed toilet blocks</b> Cambridge City Council implemented a 4-year programme of providing high-quality safe toilet facilities. Design features include good lighting, vandal resistance and drug needle chutes.</p>	Through a combination of innovative design and management, the new facilities have reduced anti social behaviour, rough sleeping, drug use and improper disposal of needles.
<b>Taunton</b>	<p><b>Taunton Town Centre Partnership</b> Voluntary agreement (September 1997) whereby town centre off-</p>	Fewer alcoholics now congregate in the town

	licensed premises do not supply high alcohol/low value products to street people known to have a drink problem. To deal with any confrontation the police undertook to provide support in the form of carrying a TRAC (Taunton Retailers Against Crime) radio – a closed radio link to enable them to respond quickly. They have also provided extra Special Constables to help.	centre and those that do are less of a problem.
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### ***ATTRACTIONS***

<b>PLACE</b>	<b>STRATEGY</b>	<b>RESULTS</b>
<b>London</b>	In London, clubs try to encourage clubbers to arrive earlier by charging a higher entry fee after a certain time.	
<b>Denton</b>	<b>The Music Project</b> Run by Tameside Young Persons Centre for 13 – 19 year olds who want to make music and meet new people. They are keen to encourage participation from disabled young people. The centre is open between 7-9 pm Monday to Wednesday and 12–6 pm Saturday. Facilities at the centre include fully equipped rehearsal space, recording facilities, singer/songwriter tuition, Disco/Band nights, DJ workshops, MIDI skills and keyboard/piano tuition. They will also help young people promote gigs.	
<b>Barnsley</b>	<b>Barnsley Community Champion</b> Portable music facility to enable young people in isolated communities to have access to music production facilities.	
<b>Grimethorpe</b>	<b>Grimethorpe Activity Zone</b> Used grant from South Yorkshire Community Foundation (SYCF) to set up a group for 8 – 13 year olds to provide two to three activity sessions a week.	
<b>Scottish Highlands, Western Isles and Orkney</b>	<b>Youth Cafés in Action Project</b> Safe and secure non-alcoholic place where young people can meet friends and take part in a range of activities. A three year project to assist in the development of a network of sustainable youth cafés. They have produced a draft Survival Guide with information on how to set-up and run youth cafés. Supported by the Princes Trust and Scottish Hydro-Electric.	

## **PROMOTION**

PLACE	STRATEGY	RESULTS
<b>Wimbledon</b>	Events in the local area are advertised on the inside of toilet cubical doors in local pubs and restaurants.	
<b>London &amp; Manchester</b>	Pubs and clubs in London and Manchester display posters advertising a new company called ScooterMAN. ScooterMAN can be booked like a taxi but will arrive on a folding scooter comprehensively insured and ready to drive the car with the driver in it (www.scooterman.co.uk).	

## **STRATEGIES**

PLACE	STRATEGY	RESULTS
<b>Cheltenham</b>	<b>Night-time Economy Strategy</b> Developed in partnership with local businesses and residents. The strategy provides an aspirational framework under which action plans are set out to co-ordinate planning and licensing, improving facilities at night, encouraging diversity of uses and users, keep the centre clean and safe while protecting local residents' quality of life.	
<b>Richmond</b>	<b>Code of conduct</b> In 2004 Richmond Council got a large number of licensed premises in the borough to sign a voluntary code of conduct agreeing not to hold happy hours or drinks promotions. By signing up to the code licensees will work closely with both the police and the local council to deal with issues such as drinks promotions and drunk and abusive customers. Other clauses include maintaining a log book in all premises of disturbances, prohibiting the removal of any glass unless seating area outside is provided and having an effective ID-monitoring system.	
<b>Leeds</b>	<b>Steps to Encourage Safe Late-Night Activities</b> Leeds came up with 10 practical steps as part of its Leeds 24 hour Initiative. These are: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Safety first</b> CCTV operated 24 hours a day by dedicated LCC staff of 13 with direct links to police</li> <li><b>Brighter streets</b> All main and side street brightly lit</li> <li><b>Environmental improvements</b> Exciting environments attract people, making places feel busy and safe</li> <li><b>Improved transport</b> Provide groupings of well-lit</li> </ol>	25% drop in crime since 1996

	<p>“bus points” and a large number of night-time taxi stands (some over seen by club security). Make car parks safer (with CCTV</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. <b>Relaxed licensing hours</b> Allowing pubs and café bars to open long into the evening (some to 2 am) and clubs to open until 6 am</li> <li>6. <b>Responsible management</b> Provide code of practice for the management of venues and introduce registration scheme for door supervisors</li> <li>7. <b>Entertainment venues in commercial district</b> Encourage entertainment venues to locate in the office district where there are fewer residents</li> <li>8. <b>Cafes on the street</b> Key element to the initiative</li> <li>9. <b>Regular Events</b> Events encourage a wider range of people to use the centre at night</li> <li>10. <b>Late night shopping</b> Co-ordinate late night shopping hours.</li> </ol>	
<b>Ealing</b>	<p><b>Ealing's Responsible Host Scheme</b> Guidelines for good management of entertainment venues:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Operate an effective door-control policy which prevents overcrowding</li> <li>2. Ensure there is always a member of staff trained to deal with drunk and/or disorderly patrons. Where necessary pass on information to managers of neighbouring premises or to the police</li> <li>3. Watch over outside of premises</li> <li>4. Have contact name and number of the relevant police personal. Participate in Pubwatch, Businesswatch etc</li> <li>5. Consider ways of reducing the opportunity for criminal activity through attention to layout, design and safety</li> <li>6. Provide a safe 'outdoor' environment (e.g. properly maintained shrubs and bushes, good lighting and fencing</li> <li>7. Ensure that facilities are provided for the disabled</li> <li>8. Prompt repair or remove hazardous or damaged objects, material or property from the property and the immediate area</li> <li>9. Ensure that all servicing, waste disposal etc occur at a time which is considerate to local residents</li> <li>10. Ensure that noise from the premises and the outside area is kept to a minimum</li> <li>11. Provide up-to-date information on late night public transport and reputable taxi services for the benefit of patrons.</li> </ol>	

**APPENDIX C****Comparison of Entertainment Offering****Subscription Rooms, Stroud**

Saturday Day	Exhibitions
Saturday Evening	Concert/Musical/Dance
Week Day (Mon – Thurs)	Yoga classes
Week Evening	Yoga, Jive and Pilates classes

**Notes**

Occasional concert or comedy production on a Thursday evening.

Infrequently used on a Sunday during the day or in the evening.

Very little on offer specifically aimed at young people (occasional club nights) and families.

**The Wharf, Devizes**

Saturday Day	Nothing
Saturday Evening	Plays
Week Day (Mon – Thurs)	Nothing
Week Evening	Nothing

**Notes**

Fridays and Saturday evenings are the only times the theatre is open.

Does not cater for young people.

Closed From the 10<sup>th</sup> of July to September.

**Queens Theatre, Barnstaple**

Saturday Day	Children's Musical theatre/Dance
Saturday Evening	Dance/Musical Theatre
Week Day (Mon – Thurs)	Nothing
Week Evening	Musical/Comedy/Talent Competition/Plays

**Notes**

No performances on Fridays.

Lots of family entertainment.

**Courtyard Youth Arts Centre, Bicester**

Saturday Day	Nothing
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Saturday Evening	Nothing
Week Day (Mon – Thurs)	Workshops
Week Evening	Youth club

### Notes

The Courtyard provides a range of practical and artistic equipment, alongside a café space and workshops/studios that are available to professional artists at a low rent (currently occupied by a jeweller who works to commission and offers training opportunities to young people).

The Courtyard offers Young People all the traditional services of a Youth Centre but with the added advantage of recording studios, band practice rooms, photographic studio and darkroom as well as a multimedia suite, dance space and performance hall.

There is a regular programme of sessions and workshops open to young people, most activities are aimed at young people between 13-19 years.

The Courtyard is the only theatre in Bicester.

### Chippenham

No theatre. The nearest theatre is in Bath or Swindon.

They do have an independent cinema.

### The Space, Stroud

Saturday Day	Workshop and occasional play approx. one a month
Saturday Evening	Play/Concert
Week Day (Mon – Thurs)	Nothing
Week Evening	Workshop/Play/Concert

## APPENDIX D

### Consultees (To be finalised)

Hugh Barton	University of West of England and local resident
Sue Bearder	The Space
Sheila Booth	Councillor
Bob Brookes	Parish Councillor, Eastcombe
Matt Corrigan	Lincoln Town Centre Manager
Kevin Cranston	Councillor and Mayor
Mike Conroy	Proprietor Rooksmoor Mills
Alex Farrow	Youth Cabinet Member
Helen Foulkes	Stroud Library
Anghus Gordon	Founder of Ruskin Mill
Trudi Henry	Stroud Library
Mr Hui	HK House
Charles Landry	Comedia
Martin Large	Founder of The Space
Adrian Lawton	Councillor
Bairbre McAteer	Manager, Stroud Subscription Rooms
Julian McGee	Chelsfield, developer
John Mills	Mills Café
Ian Morrison	The Retreat
Carlos Ordinez	Research for David Drew MP
Mark Organ	Gloucestershire police
Andy Read	Councillor, proprietor Internet Shop
Richard Vick	The Space
Linda Townley	Councillor
Peter Waller	Local architect and resident
Andrew Watton	Estate agent
Neil Walker	Stroud Valleys Artspace
Stuart Wallis	Macdonalds
Five Stroud students	

## APPENDIX E

### Some of the Attractions and Venues drawing People into Stroud in the Evening

#### ***Art/performance centres***

Subscription Rooms, George St  
The Space, Lansdown

#### ***Nightclubs***

The Warehouse, London Road  
Uptown- Downtown, Merrywalks  
Bar Riga, Nelson Street (opening soon)

#### ***Bars and pubs***

Nine, Union Street  
The Retreat, Church Street  
The Greyhound, Gloucester Road  
The Queen Vic, Gloucester Street (live music)  
The Union, Union Street  
The Golden Fleece, Nelson St  
Lord John, Russell St  
Duke of York, Nelson St (live music)

#### ***Restaurants/ Bistros***

Angels, Union Street  
Balti Spice, Gloucester St  
Gardens of Kashmir, Gloucester St  
HK House, Russell St  
Nine  
Rajdoot Indian Restaurant, Gloucester St  
Woodruffs (some evenings)

#### ***Churches***

Baptist Church, John Street  
Congregational Church, Bedford St  
Quakers Meeting Rooms, Lansdown  
St Lawrence Church, Church Street

#### ***Meeting Rooms***

George Rooms, Subscription Rooms, George Street  
Old Town Hall, Church Street  
St Lawrence Hall, Church Street

Congregational Church, Bedford St  
Library, Lansdown

***Evening classes/ clubs meeting***

Stroud Counselling Service, Church St (Mon. Might be other eves too).  
Youth Dance Group, The Space (Mon 4.30-6pm)  
African Dance, The Space (Mon)  
Five Rhythms, The Space (Tues 6 – 10.30pm)  
Jazz-a-go-go, The Space (Tues. 3 classes for children 4pm – 7pm)  
Flies on the Wall, Youth Theatre, The Space (6-8pm)  
African Drumming, The Space (Wed. New class. To be confirmed)  
Dramarama, Youth Theatre (Thurs. 3 classes for children. 4-7.30pm)  
History Society, Old Town Hall (Friday monthly)  
Greenpeace, Library meeting rooms (Tues, Fortnightly)  
WEA, Adult Education Classes, Library (Tues)  
Jive Class, Subscription Rooms (Wed)  
Stroud Choral Society, St Lawrence Church Hall

***Youth Clubs***

The Door, Gloucester St  
Roxborough House, Gloucester St

***Hotels***

The Bell, Wallbridge  
The London Hotel, London Road (restaurant)  
The Imperial Hotel, Station Road (bar & restaurant)

***Library***

Lansdown. Open until 7pm on Mondays and Fridays.

***Sport***

Stratford Park  
Snooker Club, King Street  
Curves, Brunel Mall  
Yoga, British School, Painswick Inn  
Yoga, Subscription Rooms (Mon)  
Pilates, Subscription Rooms (Thurs)