

## **Foreword**

As Chairman of Soham Town Forum I am delighted to present the Forum's Business Plan for 2003/04.

This Business Plan has been developed following substantial work by the Forum over the last year and sets the framework for the year ahead.

The Soham Town Forum is a voluntary group of local people who give of their own time to help sustain the future of our town. The funding received enables the Forum to deliver real results within the town for the benefit of residents, businesses and visitors.

Soham Town Forum is open to anyone who would like to get involved in making the most of Soham, and we would be pleased to welcome you to any of the Forum meetings.

**Robert Peacock**  
**Chairman, Soham Town Forum**

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## ***Soham Business Plan (100304)***

### **1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

This summary records the background, initiatives and detail findings of various surveys and reports that took place from 1996 – 1999. A set of conclusions and an Action Plan to take forward, key issues and concerns raised by those involved.

The Soham Community Appraisal was undertaken in 1996 as a mechanism to investigate local people's views on the future needs of the Town. The Appraisal placed a key emphasis on local views and the community judged the strengths of the town in terms of the services and facilities available. Once strengths were established the community went on to highlight what was missing and what was needed to enhance the quality of life of everyone that worked in, lived in and visited the town. Particular focus was placed on the specific needs of the young and the elderly, opportunities for improved transportation and the more general issue of Economic Development. This Appraisal was felt to be the starting point to enhance the area and was seen as a document, which could be updated and reviewed, on an ongoing basis to reflect local trends and aspirations

A number of local strengths were identified, including the availability of Schools, the Sports Centre, and the Recreation Ground. In addition a commitment to cycling and walking was highlighted. Social interaction was also high on the agenda as a strength of the Soham community with networks for social support firmly established, a wealth of community involvement and a strong focus on local people taking forward ideas, sharing information and working in partnership to secure community benefits.

In the Civic Trust Regeneration Unit Report specialist advisors were recruited, to provide detailed guidance on commercial and development aspects. It was also acknowledged that the Town could not be transformed overnight and that effective action would be dependant on the quality of the organisational structure in place to implement the measures identified to improve the prosperity of the Town.

All surveys and reports suggested that a Community Forum and Action Plan should be developed. The Civic Trust said in October 1998:-

**“The Aim is to Build on Existing Partnerships Working Arrangements to Forge an Effective Town Centre Forum With Executive Responsibilities. To support Implementation and Programme Review. To Involve as Wide a Group of Retailers as Possible in the Initiation.”**

Soham Town Forum was established in 1998 to carry forward these findings, and have identified the following Vision Statement, Aims and Objectives.

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### **1.2 Vision Statement**

To meet identified needs of a thriving community by providing opportunities for people to participate in community events, encouraging the creation of an active town centre which is visually appealing and welcoming to shoppers, and which provides a range of commercial and social outlets.

### **1.3 Aim of Soham Town Forum**

To provide a vital and viable Town Centre in Soham, based on four principles—*Accessibility—Amenity—Attraction—Action* and to build on the work already achieved.

### **1.4 Objectives for the Soham Town Forum**

|   | <i>Accessibility</i> | <i>Amenity</i> | <i>Attraction</i> | <i>Action</i> |
|---|----------------------|----------------|-------------------|---------------|
| To encourage business growth  |                      | √              | √                 |               |
| To improve recreational facilities  |                      | √              | √                 |               |
| To enhance the built environment in such a way that Soham retains its historic character                                      |                      | √              | √                 |               |
| To enable all residents to participate in community activities and to give them the opportunity of enhancing their own future | √                    |                |                   | √             |
| To establish a base for tourism   |                      |                | √                 |               |
| To research issues to provide the best solution for the whole community   |                      |                |                   | √             |
| To involve in particular the young, elderly and disadvantaged groups  | √                    |                |                   | √             |
| To promote sustainability for the Town  | √                    | √              | √                 | √             |

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### **2.0. BACKGROUND HISTORY**

#### **2.1 Current Issues**

Prior to Soham Town Forum being established, the predominantly rural characteristics of the area and the development of out of town superstores led to declining local services and closures of local shops. Local people are now forced to travel in order to access many essential services eg clothing establishments, shoe shops, the job centre. The declining public transport services means that this can be difficult for those who do not have access to a car. (In Soham Parish 20.8% of households have no access to a car according to a 1999 report "A Study of Community Transport Needs in East Cambridgeshire" by Sue Beel). It is acknowledged that as shops and services close the town centre environment deteriorates creating a general perception of the town centre being one of decline.

#### **2.2 Soham Community Appraisal**

During 1996 Soham Town Council played a lead role in a community appraisal instigated by Cambridgeshire ACRE (Action with communities in Rural England.) and funded by the District and County Council. Other organisations involved included Cambridge Health Authority, Soham Association of Commerce & Trade, Soham over 60s Club and Soham Village College. A key recommendation was to establish a Town Centre Forum.

#### **2.3 East Cambridgeshire Parish Council Survey**

During 1996 East Cambridgeshire District Council compiled a survey of all Parish Councils in their district in association with Cambridgeshire County Council, Cambridge/Peterborough Association of Local Councils, and Parish Council representatives. One of the aims was to collect feedback from Parish Councils about their perception of current service provision. A majority of Parish/Town Councils asked for greater involvement and consultation in both how resources are delivered and how standards are set.

#### **2.4 Town Centre Health Check Report for Soham, Ely & Littleport.**

During 1997 the District Council produced a report drawing information from several sources to monitor economic health, assess retailers and consumers needs, perceptions of crime and safety and accessibility into town centres. There was also a comparative study in 1999 that provided useful data to help the Forum identify how far it had progressed in achieving improvements in the town.

#### **2.5 The Civic Trust Regeneration Unit**

A report was commissioned in March 1998 to prepare a framework town centre strategy for our three main settlements in East Cambridgeshire –

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Soham Ely & Littleport, based on the US Main Street Model. It was agreed at that time, in consultation with the District Council and Town Centre Steering Group that the focus would be THE TOWN CENTRES, to identify key issues, potential projects and to involve the whole community through effective consultation and partnerships.

### **2.6 Further Information**

More in depth information can be found on the reports and surveys mentioned, at :-

- East Cambridgeshire District Council Offices, The Grange, Nutholt Lane, Ely, CB7 4PL Tel 01353 665555
- the local Soham Town Council offices, The Pavilion, Recreation Ground, Fountain Lane, Soham, Tel 01353 723472, Fax 01353 723472  
Opening hours 9am-1pm Monday -Friday
- Soham On-line: [www.soham.org.uk](http://www.soham.org.uk) , e-mail: [webmaster@soham.org.uk](mailto:webmaster@soham.org.uk)

#### **Soham Town Forum**

Meetings are held every six weeks on a Thursday evening at 7.30.p.m at The Pavilion, Recreation Ground, Fountain Lane, Soham

Soham Town Forum  
C/o P O Box 21 Council Offices,  
The Pavilion,  
Recreation Ground,  
Fountain Lane,  
Soham,  
Cambs,  
CB7 5PL

E mail: [info@forum.soham.org.uk](mailto:info@forum.soham.org.uk)  
Website: [www.forum.soham.org.uk](http://www.forum.soham.org.uk)  
Telephone: Soham Town Council 01353 723472

Team Leader Town Centres 01353 616386  
E mail [alison.callaby@eastcambs.gov.uk](mailto:alison.callaby@eastcambs.gov.uk)

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### **3.0 WHATS HAPPENING NOW?**

#### **3.1 Management Arrangements**

The Soham Town Forum meets on a 6 weekly basis. During September each year an Open Meeting is held which serves as an Annual General Meeting (AGM). This AGM provides an opportunity for the Forum to explain to residents of the town what it is doing and gives them an opportunity to express their views in relation to what they consider should be happening.

To enable specific activities to be undertaken in respect of detailed projects, a number of working groups have been set up.

Depending on the activities they are involved with these groups usually meet on a six-week basis. To ensure overall co-ordination and validate that aims and objectives are in accordance with the requirements of the Soham Business Plan, each Forum working group has a spokesperson/Chair responsible for submitting reports back to the Town Forum.

An executive group oversees the formation of the business plan and representatives on this group are agreed by the Town Forum.

Current working groups are:-

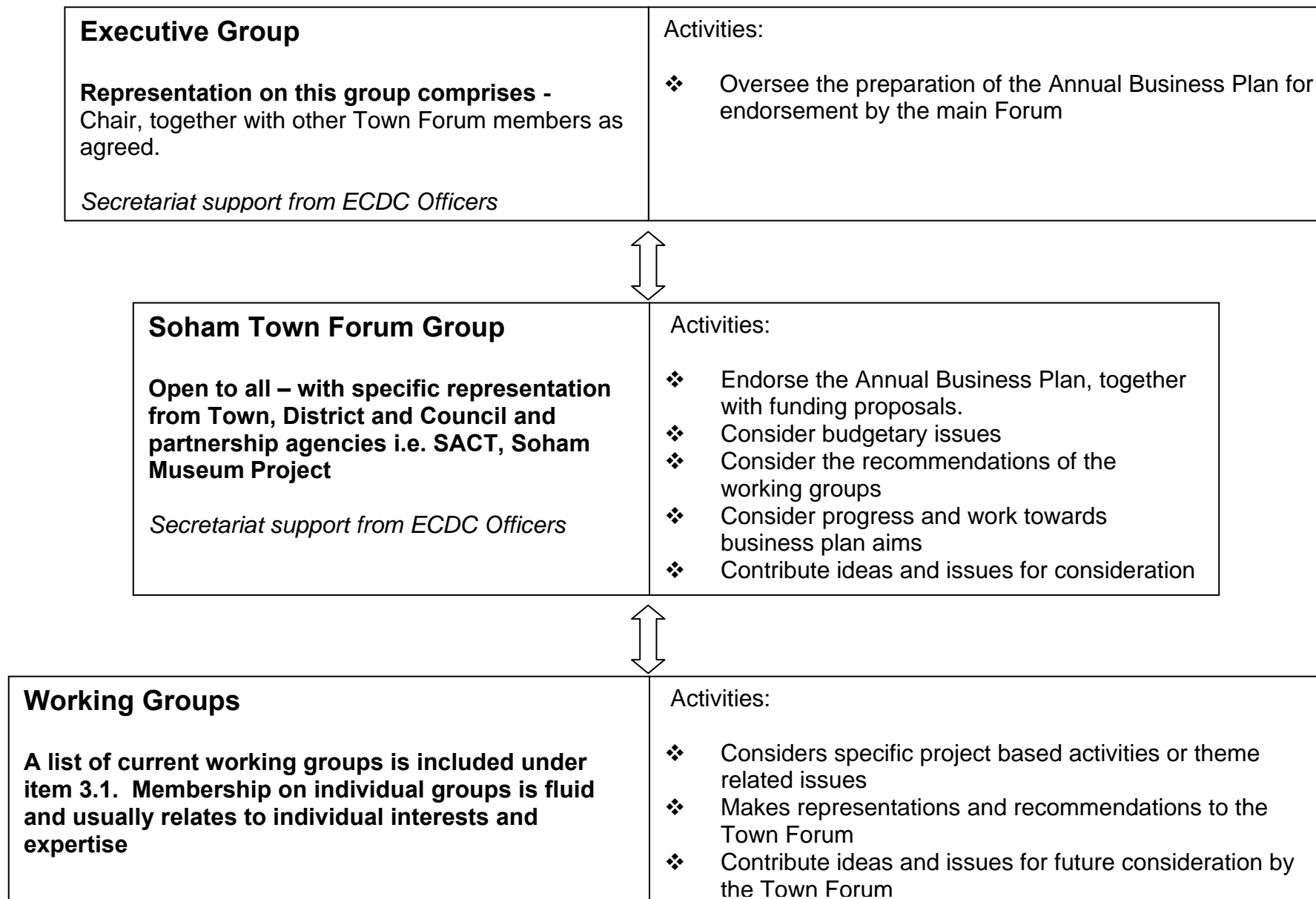
- ❑ Soham Design Group
- ❑ Community Hall
- ❑ Community Newsletter
- ❑ Soham Rail Station
- ❑ Soham Festival Group

It should be noted that while some working groups are permanent in nature, others will only operate until their particular projects are complete. Details of membership, and status of these groups are contained in the Appendices.

The Soham Town Forum also receives regular reports from Soham Association of Trade and Commerce, Soham Museum Project, Soham Area Resource Centre (ARC) and Soham On-Line, which operates a community web site for Soham.

Advice and support is available from both District Council/Cambridgeshire ACRE for helping with any administrative problems. However a need has been identified for a Minutes Secretary for the group.

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### **3.2 Terms of Reference and Rules**

The activities of the Forum are bound by terms of Terms of Reference which were established for the group in 1999 and are included in the appendices to this plan. Subsequent to this there has been a perceived need to formalise certain 'operational' aspects of the organisational structures. The Forum in the interests of clarity has in response developed a set of rules as a mechanism to address the day-to-day activity and organisation of its groups. These follow on from the existing Terms of Reference, and are included as Appendix A, their purpose is to detail procedures/practice for the election of Chair and Vice Chair positions in respect of the Forum and Working Groups, and consider meeting practice.

### **3.3 Legal Status**

The Forum is a voluntary not for profit organisation with its own constitution. It is an open forum with a Chairman & Vice Chairman, representatives from County, District and Town Councils, Soham Association of Commerce and Trade, Soham Village College, the Over 60's Club, Churches Together, Soham Museum Project, Soham On-Line, Youth Services and Community Education and those local residents who are interested in the future of Soham.

### **3.4 Current Financial Status**

The Soham Forum has an annual business plan and budget. For the year ending March 2004 the Forum's budget is £9,113, including the sum of £5,000 awarded by East Cambridgeshire District Council to help develop projects identified in our initial business plan. The current financial status of the Soham Town Forum stands at £8,844. A breakdown of these figures is shown in the appendices.

Soham Town Council has indicated that it will consider making a contribution to the Forum this being subject to similar match funding being available from the District Council.

A key aim of the Forum is to seek possible funding/match funding from other organisations/agencies for all potential projects so as to enable the best use of available resources.

### **3.5 Achievements to date**

#### **Closed Circuit Television Cameras (CCTV)**

One of the Forum's earliest projects was to campaign for CCTV and Forum Members spent significant time researching the possibilities. As a direct result of this work the Forum is delighted that the local councils have worked together and the scheme became operational in Autumn 2002. East Cambridgeshire District Council were successful in obtaining funding from the Home Office for the three main market towns in the District but only two

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decided to take up the offer, Soham & Ely. A proportion of the funding comes to Soham, and Soham Town Council have agreed to provide ongoing revenue funding to support the future of C.C.T.V.

### **Community Transport**

This was another early project which the Forum prioritised soon after it had been established. Cllr Anne Tuite was convenor of this a small but industrious subgroup. They held numerous meetings with professional input from many experts, for example Cambs Acre's Rural Transport Partnership Officer, Cambridge Dial a Ride Manager, Cambridgeshire County Council's Transport Officer, the Transport Manager at Branching Out, the District Council's Town Centre Officer, Soham Village College's Community Youth Leader, over 60's Representative and the General Manager of Care and Repair. This led to the production of the Soham Community Transport Brief in July 1999. This brief enabled the group to obtain funding for a feasibility study conducted by Toni Battison in March 2000.

Ely and its surrounding villages had also undertaken a similar process in August 1999. It was decided that the best way forward was a joint scheme based in the northern part of East Cambridgeshire, covering Soham, Ely and District, thereby, with the inclusion of Community Buzz, an existing community transport scheme at Newmarket and the Littleport Community Transport Scheme, achieving coverage of the whole district. This was something not achieved anywhere else. The steering group for the joint scheme included Members from East Cambridgeshire District Council, Cambridgeshire County Council, Soham Town Forum, Ely City Council, Age Concern, Hereward Housing, Care and Repair, Soham Village College and many others. A business plan was produced. It was agreed by the steering group that they form their own Company Limited by Guarantee, ie. 'Ely, Soham and District Community Transport Ltd' to enable funding bids to be made. The Board of this new company currently has eight directors and Anne Tuite is Chairman.

The funding bids were submitted in early 2001, with funding awarded by the Countryside Agency and the Lottery Community Fund enabling the group to move onto the implementation phase of the scheme. The scheme is anticipated to commence during November 2003, with the official launch planned for 21<sup>st</sup> January 2004.

### **Soham On Line Community Web Site**

Soham On-Line Community Website was initially launched in November 1999 as a non-profit organisation by volunteer Chris Scurrah to help create an on-line resource of information and links for the local and wider community over the Internet. Over the last four years it has actively and successfully been promoting the town in various areas such as heritage, tourism, leisure and business as well as successfully campaigning to get broadband provision in the town.

In 2001 the website won a BBC Look East Award for the 'Best Community Website' in East Anglia. More recently the website has been a finalist in the

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Cambridge Evening News 'Community Awards' two years running, in 2002 and 2003. Since its launch the website has had thousands of hits and visits. Many regular users and visitors have made positive comments and commended the website on how useful it is for the Soham community as a whole.

The Website is run by a single volunteer and mainly relies on donations and sponsorship to help with the running costs, with long term funding remaining a key issue. To date the project has received funding from Soham Town Council, Soham Town Forum, Soham Community History Museum, Soham Village College Community Education, Viva Youth Theatre, East Cambridgeshire District Council, The Greater Cambridgeshire Partnership as well as numerous local businesses.

Soham On-Line Community Website is an ongoing and expanding project, which is updated on a daily basis. It is hoped to use the website even more effectively in the future to help with the economic regeneration of Soham itself and encourage a more active involvement from the local community in helping to make the most of what Soham has to offer now and in the future, with the main aim of making it an even better place to live and work.

### **Broadband**

Soham On-Line Community Website initially started seriously campaigning for Broadband provision for Soham in May of 2002 by promoting the BT Pre-registration Scheme. BT set an initial target 'Trigger Level' of 350 pre-registrations before BT would upgrade the Soham telephone exchange to allow ADSL Broadband access.

At the end of October 2003 an announcement was made by the East of England Development Agency (EEDA) of a broadband competition they were launching called the 'Connecting Communities Competition' to help establish better broadband access in East Anglia. The competition prize was a share of three million pounds of funding to be distributed to the communities, who in the opinion of EEDA, had demonstrated a sound business case as well as proof of support from the local community.

On the announcement of the EEDA competition, Soham Town Forum (STF) immediately decided to officially enter a bid and over the next 6 months gathered a large amount of support from businesses and residents in Soham and the surrounding villages of Wicken, Fordham, Isleham, Chippenham and Freckenham culminating in the submission of the final entry at the end of April 2003.

During the support gathering process for STF's competition bid there was a lot of help and support from East Cambridgeshire District Council (ECDC) who subsequently decided to enter their own bid to the competition to try and achieve broadband provision to all areas of the district. If the East Cambridgeshire District Council bid was successful, Soham Town Forum would retract their entry bid as all STF's objectives would have been met and covered by the ECDC bid.

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Another independent campaign called 'Broadband 4 Soham' was started in January 2003 with the sole purpose and intention of reaching the BT 'Trigger Level' of 350. This campaign, supported by BT, involved promotional posters and leaflet drops to business premises and households in Soham as well as a dedicated website to try and get more people to pre-register in the scheme. In March 2003 BT decided to drop the trigger levels on all exchanges that had one set by 50. Soham eventually reached its reduced target trigger level of 300 on 7th July 2003 and ADSL Broadband finally went live in Soham on Wednesday 15th October 2003.

At the end of July 2003, EEDA announced the winning communities of the 'Connecting Communities Competition' and East Cambridgeshire District Council were delighted to have been awarded £300,000 to roll-out broadband to the areas of the district that would not otherwise have had broadband access in the near or foreseeable future.

After just over a year of intense campaigning by many individuals and organisations from across East Cambridgeshire, broadband should be available to nearly all the district by the end of 2004. The larger settlements in East Cambridgeshire such as Ely, Soham, Littleport and Sutton have now all reached their BT target 'Trigger Levels' and will have ADSL Broadband access before the end of December 2003.

### **Farmers Market**

A pilot scheme was carried out last autumn by the Soham Association of Trade and Commerce to test the feasibility of this project. It was found that although there was local interest in the market an appointment of a co-ordinator is needed to carry the project forward effectively. Soham Town Forum continues to investigate the way forward.

### **Soham Design Group**

During Soham Town Forum consultation events with the local community, 'Lets Make the Most of Soham,' a key concern identified related to the appearance of the town centre. The Forum received presentations from Nick Abbey, then Chair of the Ely Design Group, who explained how his group had tackled the problem in Ely. It was agreed to set up a Soham Design Subgroup, chaired by Donna Martin. One of their first events was an investigative town walk around Soham which took place on the 20th April 2002. This was well attended by local members of the community and it identified a range of issues where actions are needed. These are shown below:

- Number of vacant retail premises
- Pedestrian signage
- Number of properties requiring maintenance and repair
- Community notice boards
- Requirement for person to resolve issues such as fly-posting, vandalism and rubbish dumping
- On street car parking in town centre and lack of enforcement

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- Maintenance of road markings
- Fairhaven Home/Railway Sidings Site
- Planning policy re. conversion of retail premises to residential units, design of buildings
- Lack of street numbering on properties

With the overall support of the Town Forum in partnership with East Cambridgeshire District Council, Soham Design Group has been able to resolve a number of these issues. An application for HERS (English Heritage) funding was successful to the extent that £180,000 of grants will be made available for town centre enhancement work over the next three years. This includes major maintenance and repair work on key areas and buildings within the town centre. A second 'Town Walk' took place in August 2003 and reported that, although some improvements have been made to the town centre during the year 2002/03, there are still a number of 'black spots'. Soham Design Group is currently prioritising these issues and working towards solutions with their partners.

### **Soham Town Centre Enhancement**

Whilst the bid submitted for Town Heritage Initiative funding was unsuccessful Partnership funding from English Heritage has been secured to deliver a Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme (HERS) for Soham over the next three years. This scheme will contribute to the enhancement and regeneration of Soham Town Centre, particularly the principal shopping streets of Churchgate Street and High Street. The scheme will target shop fronts, empty premises, derelict buildings and those requiring major repair and unused floors above shops. The information and photographs taken on the walkabout organised by Soham Design in Spring 2002 were submitted as part of the bids.

The HERS scheme funding is made up of a £30,000 contribution from English Heritage to match £30,000 put forward by East Cambridgeshire District Council with these sums being reviewed on an annual basis during the following 2 years. Assuming funding continues at £60,000 per annum, which is anticipate a joint sum of £180,000 will have been secured over the programme period.

In response to notification of the funding success the Forum immediately organised a 'Retailers Update Event', attended by representatives of 12 local business, to ensure that the maximum number of potential beneficiaries heard about the scheme.

### **Soham Museum Project**

The Soham Museum Project, was started in June 1998 as a direct result of the Civic Trust Town Centre Initiative. The museum project aims to raise £1,000 per year towards providing a collection of local interest, and is presently exceeding this aim. The project is run by a committee of 10 dedicated volunteers, and is affiliated to other local history societies and museums. Meetings take place bi-monthly, with a regular 'History Group'

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held during the intervening month. The project is very popular with the local community and events such as the annual Open Day are very well supported. The 'Friends of Soham Museum' membership scheme works to involve local people with the museum and helps to raise funds. This scheme has recently been reviewed and a new annual membership will be put in place on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2004. The museum is currently applying for charitable status and hopes thereafter to secure major project funding towards obtaining suitable premises within the town centre.

### **Soham Festival**

The idea of a Soham Festival was introduced during 2003 and a working group was set up to take forward this aspiration and turn it into reality. An interesting and varied programme of events has been developed for the planned event which is to be held in the week preceding the established Soham Carnival. A key element of the festival will be youth activities and Local Network Funding has been secured to underpin this, the Town Council are also a partner in this exciting initiative and have pledged support for the grand finale of the event.

### **3.6 Current Projects**

The following projects are the focus of current work:-

- Developing a Community Newsletter,
- Feasibility Study for a Community Hall,
- Campaigning for a Railway Station in Soham.
- Seeking to develop the market in Soham
- Expansion of Soham On-line Community Website
- Development of Soham Town Forum Website
- Update of Soham Mini Guide,
- Delivering the range of projects identified in the Soham Revival Scheme
- Completing a Healthcheck for Soham
- Developing a Soham Festival

### **3.7 Soham Revival**

Parallel to the work of the Soham Town Forum a complementary programme of activities has been developed, which has been informed by the activities and aspirations of the Forum. The 'Soham Revival' initiative funded by the Greater Cambridge Partnership, on behalf of the East of England Development Agency will provide for £30,000 per year over a three year programme period (2003/2006), this sum matching contributions from both the District and Town Council.

Further details in respect of the individual projects to be undertaken can be found in the Soham Revival Business Plan, copies available from the District Council's Team Leader Town Centres, however a brief summary of projects to be brought forward are attached as Appendix E.

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### **3.8 Health Check 2003/04**

Soham Town Forum was invited to bid for funding, in August 2003, to enable a Soham Healthcheck to be undertaken. In October the Forum was advised that the bid had passed through the initial evaluation stage and having provided further information in support of the project, as required by the Market Towns Advisory Forum, a formal offer of funding has now been received.

Whilst a healthcheck has previously been undertaken in Soham, para 2.4 refers, the proposed Soham 2004 Healthcheck will enable us to significantly expand this document. As it will consider a wealth of questions relevant to the way we live, work and spend our leisure time within the area, focussing largely on the quality of life in Soham and the surrounding countryside. The Healthcheck will start with a factual 'snap-shot' and continue with worksheets covering four main topic areas: environment, economy, social and community issues, transport and accessibility. A healthcheck co-ordinator will be employed to draw together the answers to the worksheets in consultation with the local community, this will take the form of a healthcheck report and will provide a basis for the vision and action plan.

The Forum is keen to ensure the maximum level of community input and actions will be taken over the coming year to ensure this. These will include a Let's make the most of Soham 'Healthcheck' consultation event, awareness raising at key local events and providing links between the Healthcheck process and the award winning Soham on-line community website.

### **4.0 MISSION STATEMENT AND FUTURE PROPOSALS**

#### **Mission Statement**

'To provide a vital and viable Town Centre in Soham, based on four principles —*Accessibility—Amenity—Attraction—Action* and to build on the work already achieved'

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### 4.1 Areas for Future Work

Future work areas for the Forum will include:-

|   | Need   | Actions/Resources Required   | Status                                  | Priority |
|---|--|--|---|----------|
| <b>Vacant shops/ shop fronts</b>                          | To engage in a dialogue with proprietors to advise on enhancement which could improve their future commercial viability.                             | The successful HERS scheme will target the necessary resource; STF, SACT and ECDC officers will promote the scheme; the support of building owners will be required. | Ongoing.                                | High     |
| <b>A Community Notice Board</b>                           | Necessary to inform the public of what is happening in the town i.e. events, club meetings etc.  | Will form part of the Soham Revival Activities   | Programmed for Year 1 of Soham Revival. | Medium   |
| <b>A Community Newsletter</b>                             | To provide information about Soham, businesses, services, events, local issues etc.  | Part-time Co-ordinator.  | seeking funding and volunteer.          | High     |
| <b>New Mini Guide for Soham</b>                           | The original guide was published in 1999 there is a need to update the information and re-launch.  | Team Leader Town Centres and STF Design Group to take forward.   | In development.                         | Medium   |
| <b>Preserve railway site for a viable railway station</b> | To serve the community by allowing the socially excluded access to essential services caused by the extremely rural and isolated nature of the area. | This project will requires professional development work and funding to bring forward.   | Ongoing aspiration to secure the site.  | High     |
| <b>Soham Town Forum Webpage</b>                           | It is essential to invest in this I.T. format because it provides accessible information on a range of local issues.                                 | Funding identified under the Soham Revival scheme;   | Soham Webmaster taking forward.         | Medium   |

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|   | Need   | Actions/Resources Required  | Status  | Priority |
|---|--|---|---|----------|
| <b>A Weekly Market</b>  | Local people without access to a car should have a choice. There should always be a market in Soham. It is a market town. Rather than be in competition with local shops, the possibility of diversifying and looking for another location should be explored. | Forum to nominate member to investigate Charter situation   | Ongoing   | Medium   |
| <b>Signage</b>  | Need to identify where in the Town signage can be improved and what action needs to be taken.  | Funding identified under the Soham Revival scheme; STF Design Group & Team Leader Town Centres to take forward.                                     | Ongoing   | High     |
| <b>A New Community Resource Centre</b>                        | To provide facilities for all age groups, including recreational rooms, conference rooms, I.T café etc. and/or Soham Museum which could also house the same facilities.  | The Soham ARC (Area Resource Centre) project has been launched although has had limited success in securing funding.                                | Ongoing   | High     |
| <b>Christmas Lights</b>                                       | The Christmas Lights organised by the Soham Association of Commerce and Trade are a vital element in the annual event to promote the town centre, urgent works are needed to upgrade the electrical fittings to meet EU requirements.                          | Following on from the 'Soham Revival' success it is anticipated that works will commence on this project in Spring 2004.                            | Programmed for Spring 2004                          | High     |
| <b>Festival 2004</b>  | Aspiration to build on Carnival Event  | Funding and volunteers  | Ongoing   | High     |
| <b>Widen scope of forum to include surrounding hinterland</b> | To include social and environmental concerns as well as the Town Centre issues.  | Let's make the most of Soham programme of community workshops to continue. Healthcheck will also provide opportunities to widen scope of the Forum. | Healthcheck funding requires hinterland involvement | High     |

## ***Soham Business Plan (100304)***

### **4.2 Key Milestones 2003/04**

- ❑ Soham Town Forum AGM and Open Meeting September 2003
- ❑ ADSL Broadband Internet access available in Soham from October 2003
- ❑ The first of 3 Community Transport vehicles were on the road during November 2003.
- ❑ Soham Healthcheck Officer in post Jan 2004
- ❑ Successful completion of Christmas Lights upgrade in the Spring of 2004
- ❑ Launch of Revised Soham Mini Guide April 2004
- ❑ Soham Town Forum Web site launched April 2004
- ❑ Programme of Festival Activities delivered May 2004
- ❑ Soham On-Line enhancement Summer 04

### **4.3 Risk Analysis**

| <b>Risk</b>   | <b>Response</b>  |
|---|--|
| Restricted amount of time Team Leader Town Centres can spend in Soham     | ECDC seeking to focus job more tightly to enable more time to be spent in Soham. Success in securing Health check monies will fund a Soham based officer for a fixed term period . |
| Partnership not working together  | Soham Town Forum have key co-ordinating role. Development of Rules. Explore relevant training opportunities for the partnership.   |
| Lack of external funding for key projects                                 | Work with ECDC, ACRE and other funding advisors  |
| Lack of enthusiasm, local support for project                             | Ensure marketing/communication measures are in place, ensure at least annual meeting to provide feedback to residents and to receive their comments                                |
| Too many meetings, administrative overload                                | Ensure clear structure to Forum activities to streamline meetings  |
| Lack of support from other key agencies eg Town Council, community groups | Ensure reports back to the appropriate agencies and Councils to ensure they are in agreement with the work of the Forum.   |

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### **4.4 Marketing/Communication**

One long standing issue is the need for the Forum to ensure that it is communicating well with the local community and representing their views, ensuring that local people are aware of the activities of the Forum, to celebrate its successes, and to encourage the community to come along when they want to raise concerns about an issue.

Over the next year the Forum proposes to: -

- Ensure that there is an initial point of contact for the Forum
- Designate one Member of the Forum to act as press release co-ordinator
- Ensure a database of all press releases, survey material and projects is set up

This work may require the setting up of a small subgroup to ensure that it is carried out.

### **4.5 Future Changes Which Might Affect our Plans**

Government Policies  
Influx of commuters and retired people  
East Cambridgeshire Local Development framework.  
Strategic Planning Process.

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**5.0 Soham Town Forum Spending Plan**

| <b>Project</b>                                | <b>Total Cost Project</b> | <b>Forum Contrib.</b> | <b>Match Funders</b> | <b>Notes</b>                                    |
|---|---------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|---|
| Soham Community Resource Centre Research Fund | 500                       | 500                   |                      |   |
| Soham Festival                                |                           | 1,000                 |                      |   |
| Christmas Lights Upgrade                      | 12,000                    | 2,000                 | 10,000               | Match funding secured works planned Spring 2004 |
| Community Newsletter Co-ordinator             | 3,500                     | 1,750                 | 1,750                | Co-ordinator still required                     |
| Community Transport                           |                           | 1,000                 |                      |   |
| Healthcheck                                   | 24,900                    | 1000                  | 23,900               | ECDC - £5,000<br>EEDA - £18,900                 |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                  |                           |                       |                      |   |

**POTENTIAL MATCH FUNDERS**

Community Newsletter - Vital Villages Grants, Awards for All

## ***Soham Business Plan (100304)***

### **Appendix A**

#### **Terms of Reference for Soham Town Forum**

- 1 Prepare an Annual Work Programme for approval by the Soham Town Forum and the Constituent Partner Organisations.
- 2 Nominate a lead partner for each element of the Annual Work Programme.
- 3 Monitor progress on a quarterly basis against each Annual Work Programme.
- 4 Guide/advise the work of the Team Leader Town Centres.
- 5 Produce an Annual Report, measuring progress made against targets set.
- 6 Undertake a regular benchmarking exercise to measure the overall outcomes of the Strategy on the Town Centre.
- 7 Raise/attract funds and resources to contribute towards the costs of the overall programme.
- 8 Take specific responsibility for organisation issues for the overall Soham Forum/Partnership.
- 9 Review and advise the partners on the long term development of the town centre strategy on an annual basis.

*Approved 1999.*

#### **Rules**

- 1 An Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held each September to enable the Forum to update the Soham community of its activities and progress towards the business plan and enable the exchange of ideas and information.
- 2 Nominations for the Chair and vice-chair positions of the main Forum will be sought at the AGM and elected at the following Soham Town Forum Meeting, should there be more than one nomination those present at the meeting will be asked to take part in a closed vote with ECDC officers envigilating. Directly after the vote the new Chair and Vice-Chair will take up their positions.
- 3 There will be no restriction in respect of length of service, provided that the individual is happy to continue in the elected role.
- 4 The Chair and Vice Chair positions of the working groups will be elected, by a show of hands, within the individual groups at their first meeting subsequent to the AGM.
- 5 The role of the Chair is to organise and steer meeting proceedings, in addition they will ensure that the work programme of the Forum is adhered to.
- 6 To invite speakers with professional experience to future meetings to help us accomplish our challenging projects.

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**Appendix B**

**Soham Town Forum Financial Position**

| <b>Project</b>                     | <b>Spent date</b> | <b>to</b> | <b>Available Funds</b> |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|-----------|------------------------|
| Soham Farmers Market Grant to SACT |                   | £500      |                        |

**2002/03**

|   |  |      |        |
|---|--|------|--------|
| <b>Start balance</b>  |  |      | £4,470 |
| Community Transport   |  | £218 |        |
| Town Centre Environment Project                                     |  | £71  |        |
| General expenses, photographs, advertising and promotional material |  | £68  |        |
| <b>End Balance March 31<sup>st</sup> 2003</b>                       |  |      | £4,113 |

**2003/04**

|   |  |      |               |
|---|--|------|---------------|
| <b>Start balance</b>                              |  |      | £4,113        |
| ECDC Contribution                                 |  |      | £5,000        |
|   |  |      | <b>£9,113</b> |
| Stationery, logo and letterheads                  |  | £219 |               |
| Refreshments for Open Meeting                     |  | £25  |               |
| Purchase of OHP and associated Office Supplies    |  | £25  |               |
| <b>Balance as at 30<sup>th</sup> October 2003</b> |  |      | £8,844        |

|                                  |  |  |        |
|----------------------------------|--|--|--------|
| <b>Commitments identified:</b>   |  |  |        |
| Healthcheck match funding        |  |  | £1,000 |
| Christmas Lights match funding   |  |  | £2,000 |
| Community Transport              |  |  | £1,000 |
| Soham Festival                   |  |  | £1,000 |
| Community Hall feasibility study |  |  | £500   |
| Newsletter                       |  |  | £1,750 |
|                                  |  |  |        |

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### **Appendix C**

#### **Membership of Forum and Subgroups**

##### **Forum Membership**

Soham Community History Museum – SCHM

Festival Committee – FC

Community Hall –CH

Soham Design Group - DG

|                      |                | Representing                               | Additional group interests            |
|----------------------|----------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| Cllr. Rosemary Irene | Aitchison Ward | Town Council<br>Community Education        |                                       |
| Robert Dorothy       | Barnes Bedford | Local Retailer<br>Local Resident           |                                       |
| Cllr Peter           | Beer           | STC  | FC, SCHM                              |
| Cllr Nigel           | Bell           | District Council                           |                                       |
| Cllr Hayden          | Davies         | Soham Town Council                         |                                       |
| Peter                | Diver          | Local Solicitor                            | DG                                    |
| Cllr M               | Duckworth      | District Councillor<br>Company Director    |                                       |
| Cllr. Ms M           | Dwyer          | Soham Town Council                         |                                       |
| Cllr C               | Fordham        | District Councillor                        | Sports Centre                         |
| Cllr. Peggy          | Gibbon         | Soham Town Council                         | DG, SCHM, FC,<br>Railway Campaign, CH |
| Cllr. George         | Ginn           | Soham Town Council                         | DG, SCHM                              |
| Geoff                | Griggs         | Soham Staploe Rotary Club                  |                                       |
| Cllr. Cyril          | Hempstead      |  | STC                                   |
| Linda                | Homan          | Community Education, Soham Village College |                                       |
| Cllr J               | Humphreys      |  |                                       |
| Mr S                 | Johnson        |  |                                       |
| Donna                | Martin         | Chairman, Soham Community History Museum   | DG - Chairman                         |
| Cllr. John           | Palmer         | District Councillor                        | SSC                                   |
| Cllr. C              | Palmer         |  | STC                                   |
| Colin                | Palmer         | Local resident                             |                                       |
| Cllr. Tony           | Parramint      | District Councillor                        |                                       |
| Robert               | Peacock        | Soham Association of Trade and Commerce    |                                       |

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|            |          |  |  |
|------------|----------|--|--|
|            |          |  |  |
| Cllr. John | Powley   | County Councillor                                |  |
| Joshua     | Schumann | Soham Village<br>College Youth<br>Representative |  |
| Chris      | Scurrah  | Soham On-Line                                    | DG, SCHM,<br>Railway<br>Campaign,<br>Broadband |
| Mr M       | Stimson  | Resident   |  |
| Pam        | Taylor   |  |  |
| Yvonne     | Thresh   | Care and Repair                                  |  |
| Cllr. Anne | Tuite    | Town Council                                     | DG<br>SF<br>Community<br>Transport             |
| Terry      | Tuite    | Local Resident                                   |  |
| Mr and Mrs | Webb     |  |  |
| John       | Wignall  |  |  |

### **Working groups and the lead contact**

**Soham Design Group** - Donna Martin

**Soham Community Resource Centre Group** – vacant

**Community Newsletter Group** - Vacant

**Soham Rail Station Group** - Chris Scurrah, George Ginn

**Soham Festival Group** – Peter Beer

### **Affiliated Groups and lead contact**

**Soham Museum Project** – Donna Martin

**Soham On- Line** – Chris Scurrah

**SACT** – Robert Peacock

## ***Soham Business Plan (100304)***

### **Appendix D**

#### **Presentations to Soham Forum Meetings and Forum Events July 2001 – October 2003**

18/09/03 – **Annual General Meeting** – Fred Langford of Ely, Soham and District Dial-a-ride (ESDAR) outlined the proposed plans for the new Community Transport project, which seeks to provide transport for anyone who cannot access private or public transport.

19/06/03 – Lesley Anderson, Development Manager for The East of England Development Agency, provided details of the Rural Renaissance Fund and gave an update in respect of the role of EEDA .

15/05/03 – Brian Smith, Director of Environment and Transport for Cambridgeshire County Council attended the Forum to provide the group with an insight into the background and approach of setting up a Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) in East Cambridgeshire and circulated the LSP consultation paper for discussion.

In May 5 Members of the Forum visited the CCTV Control Centre in Cambridge to see the new system in operation.

30/04/03 – **Retailers Update Event** – John Selby, Conservation Officer for East Cambridgeshire District Council in partnership with SACT and the Forum hosted an event, attended by representatives of 12 local business to publicise the success of the HERS bid which will provide £90,000 for enhancement works in the town over the next 3 years.

03/04/03 – P Omeroyd, Community Beat Sergeant at Ely and Julie Buck, Community Safety Officer for East Cambridgeshire District Council attended the Forum to update on various community safety issues, including CCTV.

03/04/03 – John Selby, Conservation Officer for East Cambridgeshire District Council attended the Forum to update the group on the recent Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme funding success, which will potentially provide £180,000 over three years for a scheme to enhance the retail core of Soham.

09/01/03 – Ray Harding, Executive Director, East Cambridgeshire District Council presented a proposal for delivering a Healthcheck for Soham, the Forum agreed that a healthcheck should be carried out.

21/11/02 – **Annual General Meeting** – During the well attended Open Meeting an Officer from the CCTV Control Centre at Cambridge attended to give an overview of the new CCTV system operating in Soham.

7/3/02 – Julie Buck, Community Safety Officer for ECDC gave a presentation on her work in the District and the Community Safety Strategy 2002-05. The focus is on partnership to achieve safer communities and priorities in Soham include community drugs education, anti social behaviour by young people.

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24/1/02 – Nick Abbey, City of Ely Perspective Design Group gave a presentation on the work of the Ely Design Group, how they got started, walkabouts, members of the group and their successes. As a result of this information the Forum have held a walkabout and a Soham Design sub group has been set up.

13/12/01- John Selby, Conservation Officer, ECDC presented a series of slides showing how improvements to the local environment can be achieved. He emphasised the need for greater partnership and co-ordination in tackling some of the problem areas in Soham and the role a small group can play in this, together with the potential funding sources available.

1/11/01 – Elizabeth Stazicker, Head of the Heritage Service, Cambs County Council provided information on the County Council's Heritage policies and the Archives, Archaeology and Museums Services in Cambridgeshire.

27/9/01 – Howard Gilbert, Principal, Soham Village College, provided details about the national framework for sixth form provision and the considerations which need to be taken into account before sixth form provision can be made at a college.

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### Appendix E

Soham Revival Scheme, the project is planned to run over 3 years and the indicative timetable is shown below.

| 2003/04   | 2004/05  | 2005/06  |
|---|--|--|
| Funding Package Completed   | Streetscape enhancement scheme commenced<br><br>i) signage<br>ii) street furniture (Phase 1) | Street Furniture Phase 2 implementation  |
| Installation of Phase 1 Tourism signage   | Development of Soham Area Resource Centre  | Improvements to community transport infrastructure                               |
| Consultation and design - Public Art/ Millennium Trail                            | Implementation - Public Art / Millennium Trail   | Tourism improvements actioned  |
| Development and implementation of 'Welcome to Soham' signage proposals            | Car Park Enhancements Phase 2  | High Street Upgrades   |
| Installation of festive infrastructure at key Town Centre sites                   |  | Implementation of cycle route network to serve town centre and industrial areas. |
| Website enhancements  |  |  |
| Business Support scheme – purchase of hardware and software                       |  |  |
| Car Park Enhancements –<br><br>i) signage<br>ii) design and layout at Clay Street |  |  |