

Cotswold Town Centres Initiative

Executive summary

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Heartflood



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Heartflood were commissioned by Cotswold District Council in September 2025 to undertake work to support the economic health and vibrancy of Lechlade-on-Thames, Moreton in Marsh, and Tetbury town centres, particularly with regard to vacancy rates. The overall findings of the project include the following main results.

- Despite the inherent strengths of Cotswold District, businesses within each of the three centres studied are reporting significant barriers to their economic vitality
- The analysis of a range of information has identified a number of priority improvement measures which could begin to address the current challenges being experienced
- The willingness of businesses to become part of new groups to spearhead improvements in each of the town centres ranges from reasonable to encouraging

Whilst the main report contains detailed information, observation and analysis of the current circumstances with regard to each of the town centres, the overall recommendations from this piece of work are summarised on the following pages.



Recommendation 1

Immediately enact an ongoing suite of interventions to address the key issue of reducing the number of vacant business premises within each town centre.



ESTABLISH AN ONGOING PROJECT
TO REDUCE VACANT UNITS ACROSS
THE THREE TOWN CENTRES



ENCOURAGE THE PARTICIPATION
OF ALL THREE TIERS OF LOCAL
GOVERNMENT AND INCLUDE
LOCAL BUSINESSES, PARTICULARLY
PROPERTY AGENTS



GAIN THE DETAILS OF THE
LANDLORDS OF ALL CURRENTLY
VACANT PREMISES AND WORK
TO BRING THE UNITS INTO
ACTIVE USE



FORTIFY LOCAL PLANNING
POLICIES TO PRESERVE THE
REQUIRED CRITICAL MASS
OF BUSINESS PREMISES
IN EACH LOCATION



CONSIDER COMMISSIONING
EXPERT SUPPORT TO DELIVER
THIS SPECIFIC PROJECT

Recommendation 2

Support new business-led town centre groups in each location, including specific activities decided by the groups around all of the following.

Lechlade-on-Thames

Car parking improvements

More frequent public transport services

Marketing and promotion to project the town to a wider audience

More town centre events and activities

Greater lobbying, representation and championing of the town

Activities to reduce the number of empty shop units

Improvements to the appearance of empty shop frontages

Activities and events which focus on evening & night-time businesses



Moreton in Marsh

Car parking improvements

Schemes to save businesses money on overheads

Projects to improve traffic flow through the town centre

Marketing and promotion to project the town
to a wider audience

Social media campaigning

Greater lobbying, representation and championing
of the town

Litter removal and cleanliness

Increased floral planting

Tetbury

Car parking improvements

Activities to reduce the number of empty shop units

Marketing and promotion to project the town to a wider audience

New Christmas lights displays

Schemes to save businesses money on overheads

More frequent public transport services

More town centre events and activities

Social media campaigning

Recommendation 3

Ensure that, whilst each group will be business-led, strong partnership arrangements are embedded with public sector organisations and local community groups to create a balance of input toward the improvement projects.

Recommendation 4

Establish a priority to identify and allocate a degree of staff time and financial input from the three tiers of local government to ensure that momentum can be established and maintained towards the improvements.

Recommendation 5

Share this report with businesses and stakeholders in each of the three town centres, in order to embed a sense, and approach, of shared ownership and collective effort.

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