

NEW-LOOK TOWN PLAN

Radical new vision for Louth is unveiled

REVOLUTIONARY new vision for Louth has been unveiled - including plans for pedestrianising the town centre, new parks, continental squares, and leafy riverside walks.

East Lindsey District Council commissioned the study, which took a fresh look at how Louth could be improved.

Consultants Matrix, based in

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London, revealed their radical ideas to civic leaders and council officers last Thursday.

Matrix's Tim Pharaoh, who helped draw up the masterplan, said: "Louth is already a gem - let's polish it."

"But it must remain a living community and yet very much an historic town."

Ideas for Louth's future included:

- Part-pedestrianising the main town centre, replacing kerbs and tarmac with paving. Vehicles would only be allowed to use roads such as Eastgate at certain times.

- Rationalising car parks. A leafy French-style square at the old BT Exchange, off Chequergate, for cars and people. It would lead towards riverside walks by the

Lud. Underground car parks could also be built at the site.

Other car parks would be abolished and better use made of the space. Kidgate car park could also be turned into a green terrace 'overlooking the rooftops of Louth'.

- Reducing over-engineered roads, for example the Upgate and Kidgate junction, and abolishing double yellow lines.

- Making streets close to the town centre 20mph zones and changing the flow of traffic to reduce bottlenecks - such as in Northgate.

- Reinvigorating local public transport services and retiring 'antique' buses.

- Creating a Meridian Walk for visitors and schoolchildren.

- Building parks and green areas - at the Gothams and on the corner of Aswell Street.

Roads by St James' Church would be shrunk and a church square created.

- Architecture encouraged which 'speaks about today'.

The Matrix study was funded to set a Townscape Heritage Grant in context. Around £1.5m will be invested in historical improvements if a bid is successful - work could begin next year.

Meanwhile, the Matrix's full vision for Louth could be added to the local plan and implemented within the next ten years.

- Turn to page 9 for more on the new look Louth. And what do YOU think? Write in now to: The Editor, The Leader, 12 Cornmarket, Louth, LN11 9PY.



New-look Louth?: How the former BT Exchange site in Chequergate could look in the future if consultants hired by the district council have their way. (Photo supplied)

A new look Louth fit for the 21st century

By Trevor Brookes
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AT THE heart of the radical proposals to transform Louth was the town's battle to survive the 'onslaught of metal on wheels'.

Consultants Matrix were commissioned to examine how Louth could be improved and consulted Charles Gardner and Tim Phoenix, who direct construction in Louth for 4 years.

"They said, 'It has survived the 20th century when there was so many damaging influences. It is remarkable'.

However, they added, "but we did not have to look very far before we found a way to improve."

Matrix argued our traffic is the cause of the main problem.

Mr Phoenix said: "More vehicles have been gradually accumulating, occupying a larger area."

"A fair proportion of the town is used for parking. Car is king in Louth."

Matrix said footpaths were so narrow in the town centre, shoppers had to walk in pairs.

Businesses also complained on motorways, especially in Loughborough. The consultants said at peak times

So, what do Louth Leader readers think?

● Lorna and Neil Macgregor said: "Urbanisation is a wonderful idea and giving people space to walk and shop is a great policy. The suggestions are all positive."

● Peter Hutton (pictured opposite) said: "We don't need to rebuild Louth with confused spaces and intricate walls. The town needs to be practical and we need more car parks. I also have mixed feelings about pedestrianisation. Shop front alterations and better road access for traffic is a better way."

● Brian Barker said: "I can see several businesses, where people

Your Leader went out on the streets to ask people what they think of the plans for a new look Louth.

are going? The shops really wouldn't work. They tried to reverse the traffic flow once before in Nottingham - it didn't work."

● Michael Crosswood said: "It is a matter of pedestrianisation. It's only having long lines of stationary cars, blocking everybody. The BT site suggestion sounds good. We just need to do something with the town - it's disappointing and traffic has got much faster. But it's not like to create walkways at the River Lode where it's a better location."



French flavour for car park

A BOLD proposal to build a

But Mr Gardner said: "It

new look for Louth.

Matrix say the district council should buy the former BT Exchange site, off Chappergate - building a French-style multi-car park behind and developing the building.

The firm's urban study identified the area as having potential to create a flagship park in Louth.

Director Charles Gardner said the idea would mean other smaller car parks in Louth could be introduced.

These include Kibson, which would, according to Matrix, be turned into a green terrace overlooking the middle of the town.

Matrix said the BT site would have even been more than 250 cars.

new car park. It would make a wonderful square, the kind you see in France, with new developments along it."

Matrix suggested the square would lead to a new road to the east.

The consultants even noted the opportunity to create an underground or multi-storey car park.

But East Lindsey's head of development control, Ian Drentham, had concerns about buying the land.

He said: "It is certainly difficult to get BT to negotiate."

REJOICE if you're a Louth



'Green square' plan for church

ST JAMES' Church could get a beautiful new green square if the district council shares the vision of consultant Matrix.

The firm said the church sits in a fine area of open space, but the road leading from Westgate to Allegate overshadowed the chance of creating a single church park.

Matrix said the road should be narrowed and side footways be added on both sides of Westgate, and along the eastern side of St James'.

East Lindsey's conservation officer Bob Walker said: "It would give St James' the space and dignity it deserves."