



Hailsham Neighbourhood Plan

Consultation Statement

Volume 2: Summary report of initial consultation

Troy Planning + Design

March 2026



Hailsham Neighbourhood Plan, Consultation Statement

Volume 5: Summary report of initial consultation

March 2026



Prepared by
Troy Planning + Design

33 Foley Street, London W1W 7TL

www.troyplanning.com

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Neighbourhood Plan and Design Code

Summary report of initial consultation



November 2024



**Neighbourhood Plan and Design Code
INITIAL CONSULTATION
Summary Report
November 2024**

Prepared for:

**Hailsham Town Council
Inglenook, Market Street, Hailsham
East Sussex, BN27 2AE
01323 841702
www.hailsham-tc.gov.uk
enquiries@hailsham-tc.gov.uk**

Prepared by:

**Troy Planning + Design
41-42 Foley Street
London, W1W 7TS
020 7096 1329
www.troyplanning.com
info@troyplanning.com**

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1. Overview

Form of consultation

Consultation on the review of the Hailsham Neighbourhood Plan and associated Design Code commenced in September 2024 running through to the end of October 2024.

The consultation took the form of a 'soft' launch to the review. The purpose of this was to help reintroduce the idea of the Neighbourhood Plan to the community but to attempt this being conflated with the Wealden Local Plan which had been subject to consultation in the Spring of 2024 (and where it is known that concern had been expressed about the scale of development proposed for Hailsham in this), as well as earlier activities undertaken by the District in respect of the future of the Town Centre (and, which, ultimately, did not progress).

The Neighbourhood Plan consultation was thus set in the context of presenting improvements to infrastructure, services and facilities in Hailsham delivered and supported by the Town Council over the last five years, funding for which was partially secured through an uplift in the Community Infrastructure Levy payable to the Town Council as a result of having a 'made' Neighbourhood Plan in place.

The consultation asked what change and improvements people would like to see in Hailsham in the future. It asked respondents to imagine that were the 'Mayor for a day' and to present their priority actions for Hailsham in terms of (a) new and improved services and facilities, (b) improved transport and access for everyone, and (c) improving the environment. Respondents were also asked to identify their number one priority for future change in Hailsham.

A two page survey form (Figure 1) was prepared and distributed in paper format to various local clubs and societies, as well as being made available in an online format for people to complete.

The consultation was advertised via the Town Council website (including the separate Hailsham Neighbourhood Plan website), various social media channels (e.g.: Facebook, Instagram and 'X'), and via the Hailsham newsletter, 'Our Hailsham' (Figure 2).



Figure 1: Print version of survey (Front)

Delivery of the projects has been made possible through use of funding payable to the Town Council by new development (the 'neighbourhood portion' of the Community Infrastructure Levy).

Many of the projects delivered were based on ideas identified through work on the Hailsham Neighbourhood Plan. This was prepared by the Town Council with your support. It is a 'Plan for the Community, by the Community'.

The Neighbourhood Plan was prepared before Covid. We are now looking to update it. We would like your ideas on how Hailsham can be made a better place for all.

Please tell us what your priorities are by completing the questions below. Please respond by **31st October 2024**

Imagine you are the 'Mayor for a day'. What would your priority actions be for change and improvement in Hailsham?

My top three priorities for new and improved services and facilities in Hailsham are:

i. _____

ii. _____

iii. _____

My top three priorities for improving transport and access for everyone are:

i. _____

ii. _____

iii. _____

My top three priorities for improving the environment are:

i. _____

ii. _____

iii. _____

My number one priority for future change in Hailsham is:

i. _____

Please tell us about yourself

Are you a (please tick):

☐ Resident

☐ Employee in Hailsham

☐ Visitor

☐ Other

If you ticked 'other' please provide more information here: _____

How old are you (please tick):

☐ Under 18

☐ 18-25

☐ 26-35

☐ 36-45

☐ 46-55

☐ 56-65

☐ Over 65

Please enter your postcode: _____

If you would like to be kept informed of progress on the Neighbourhood Plan please provide your email address: _____

Your privacy is very important to us and we endeavour to ensure any information is handled accordingly. Please see our Privacy Policy on the Town Council website: <https://www.hailsham-tc.gov.uk>

Figure 2: Print version of survey (back)

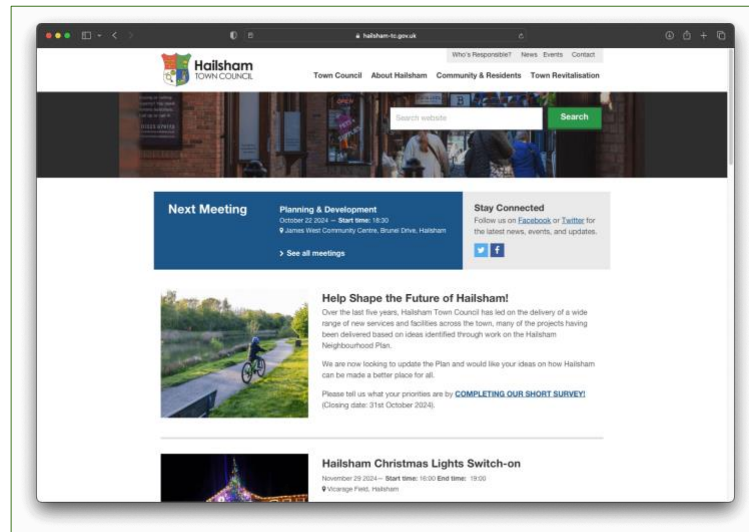
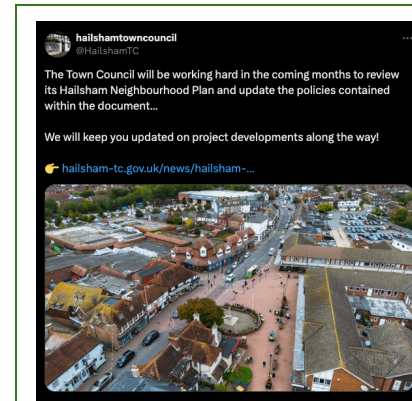
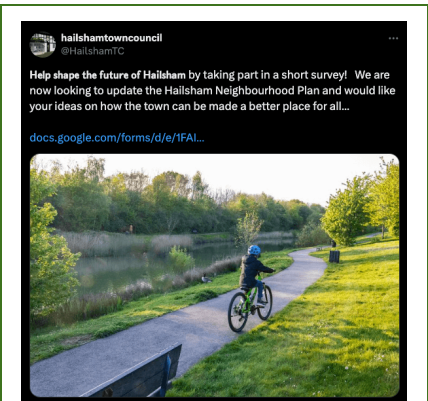
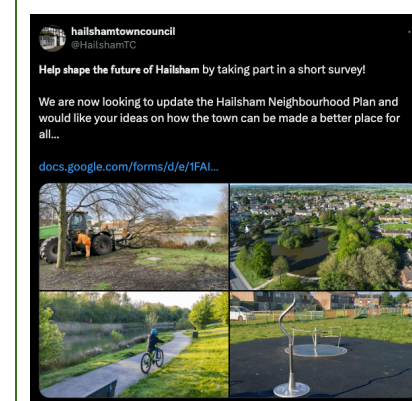


Figure 3: Selection of social media activity to advertise consultation

Summary of responses to survey

There were 115 responses to the survey from residents across all age groups and from people living across all parts of Hailsham. More than half of all respondents were aged 56 plus, indicating a need to reach out to younger members of the community.

Headline messages from the survey are summarised in Section 2 of this report. Based on these it also identifies potential links with policies and wider projects for taking forward in the review of the Neighbourhood Plan. They include:

- Support for new and improved social and community facilities, with an emphasis on healthcare provision.
- Improved transport choices for all and addressing concerns about traffic volume, congestion and speed.
- Protecting and improving the quality of the environment, providing new open green spaces for play and wildlife, and protecting the floodplain and surrounding countryside from new development.
- Improving the quality and experience of the town centre.
- Supporting efforts to promote Hailsham as a cleaner and safer town, particular in respect of waste, recycling and a local police presence.
- Concern about the scale of development that has taken place and which continues to take place in Hailsham, and that this has added to the infrastructure burden of the town.

Children's consultation

In addition to the survey local children were asked for their ideas during the 'Hailsham Lego Master Builder' event held in September, with children making use of Lego bricks and mini-figures to build and show their ideas. These are presented in Section 3 of this report and include a desire for more and better play, leisure and recreation spaces across Hailsham, as well as a wider variety of different types of play space.

The summary in Section 3 shows that the feedback is supported by green space assessments indicating there to be a lack of green and open space across Hailsham, in terms of quantum, quality and accessibility. Section 3 takes this feedback and analysis to present ideas for potential policies and wider projects in the review of the Neighbourhood Plan including:

- Requirements for good quality, accessible green space in new developments.
- Improvements to existing green spaces as well as access to those spaces.
- Wider opportunities for introducing a range of green space typologies into the existing fabric of the built-up area, through street greening and more effective use of public space.

2. Survey responses

Introduction

This section of the summary report presents analysis of and findings derived from the responses to the survey. Based on this it presents possible ideas for policies and wider projects in the review of the Neighbourhood Plan.

As part of next steps it recommends that greater clarity is provided as to the role of the Town Council as distinct from the District Council, particularly in respect of the allocation of land for new housing, and that further efforts are made to engage with young adults in Hailsham.

Key messages are summarised across the following pages, followed by graphical representation of the survey feedback.

Key Priorities for New and Improved Services and Facilities:

Public Toilets: Many respondents emphasised the need for more and better-maintained public toilets.

Healthcare Services: There is a strong demand for more GP surgeries, NHS dentists, and a minor injuries unit.

Recreational Facilities: Suggestions include upgrading the cinema, improving playgrounds, and adding more sports facilities like BMX tracks and skate parks.

Shops and Markets: Respondents want more diverse shops, including clothes shops and a proper market with stalls.

Key Priorities for Improving Transport and Access:

Public Transport: Improved bus services, including more reliable and extended timetables, and better bus stops.

Cycling Infrastructure: Better bike lanes and secure bike shelters.

Traffic Management: Addressing congestion, potholes, and illegal parking. Some suggested a park and ride scheme and others a new train station.

Key Priorities for Improving the Environment:

Litter and Waste Management: More bins, recycling facilities, and initiatives to reduce littering.

Green Spaces: Protecting and enhancing green spaces, planting more trees, and creating nature reserves.

Pollution Reduction: Reducing air pollution and promoting plastic-free and vape-free environments.

Number One Priority for Future Change:

Infrastructure and Services: Many respondents highlighted the need to match infrastructure with the growing population, including better roads, healthcare, and educational facilities.

Housing Development: A significant number of responses called for a halt to new housing developments until the infrastructure can support it.

Demographic Information:

The majority of respondents to the survey were residents of Hailsham.

The 56 – 65 age group was the most represented, followed by those over 65. There was also a fairly a significant representation from the 36 – 45 and 46 – 55 age groups. Younger respondents (ages 18 – 25 and 26 - 35) are less represented in the consultation, although engagement with the Hailsham Youth Service did generate some responses from the Under 18 age group.

Overview of priorities by age group:

Responses from the Under 18's indicate a desire for more youth-orientated facilities and activities, and also draw attention to the need for improved public transport.

Younger respondents (18 - 25) focused on recreational facilities and affordable transport.

Respondents aged 26 – 35 emphasised public amenities like toilets and pharmacies, reliable public transport, and environmental cleanliness.

Middle-aged respondents (36 - 45 and 46 - 55) prioritised healthcare services, improved transport infrastructure, and environmental enhancements.

Older respondents (56 - 65 and over 65) consistently highlighted the need for better healthcare services, road improvements, and environmental protection.

These differences reflect varying life stages and priorities, from recreational needs and affordability for younger groups to healthcare and infrastructure for older groups.

The consultation responses reveal a community deeply concerned with practical, everyday issues such as public toilets, healthcare services, and environmental sustainability. Transport and infrastructure improvements also feature prominently.

Additional Comments:

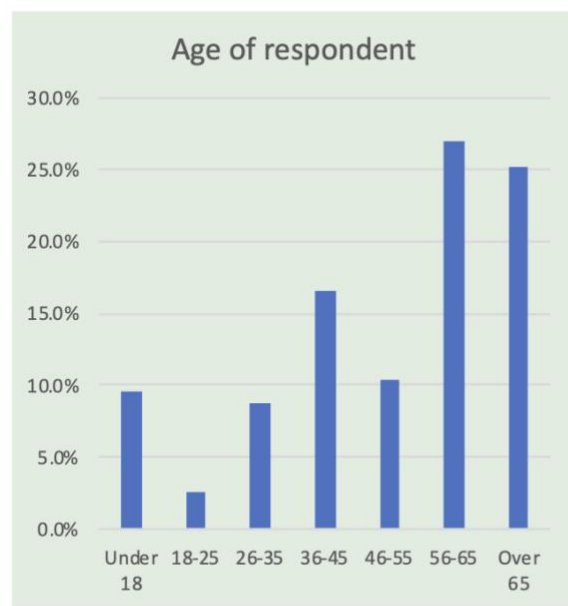
Community Engagement: There is a desire for more community events and better communication from the Town Council.

Safety and Cleanliness: Improved street cleaning, more police presence, and measures to tackle anti-social behaviour were also frequently mentioned.

Overview of responses

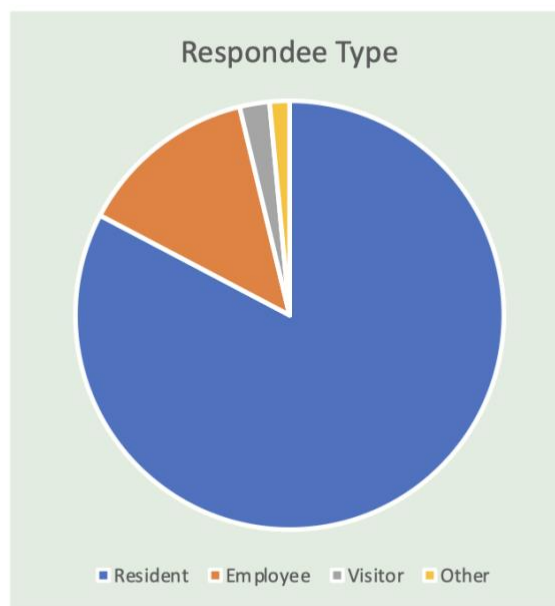
AGE (where provided):

- Representation across all age groups
- Half of responses from 56+ age groups
- More limited response from young adults (18 – 25 age group)



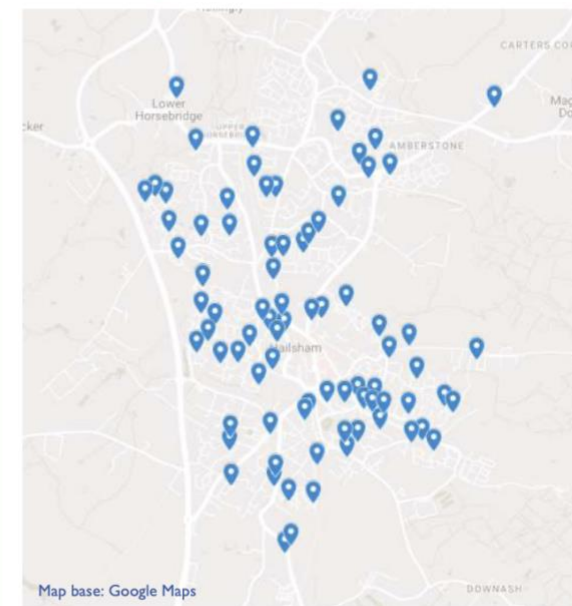
'TYPE' (where provided):

- Responses mainly from residents
- Some residents are also employees in Hailsham
- The 'other' responses were qualified as being 'visitors' and 'business owners'



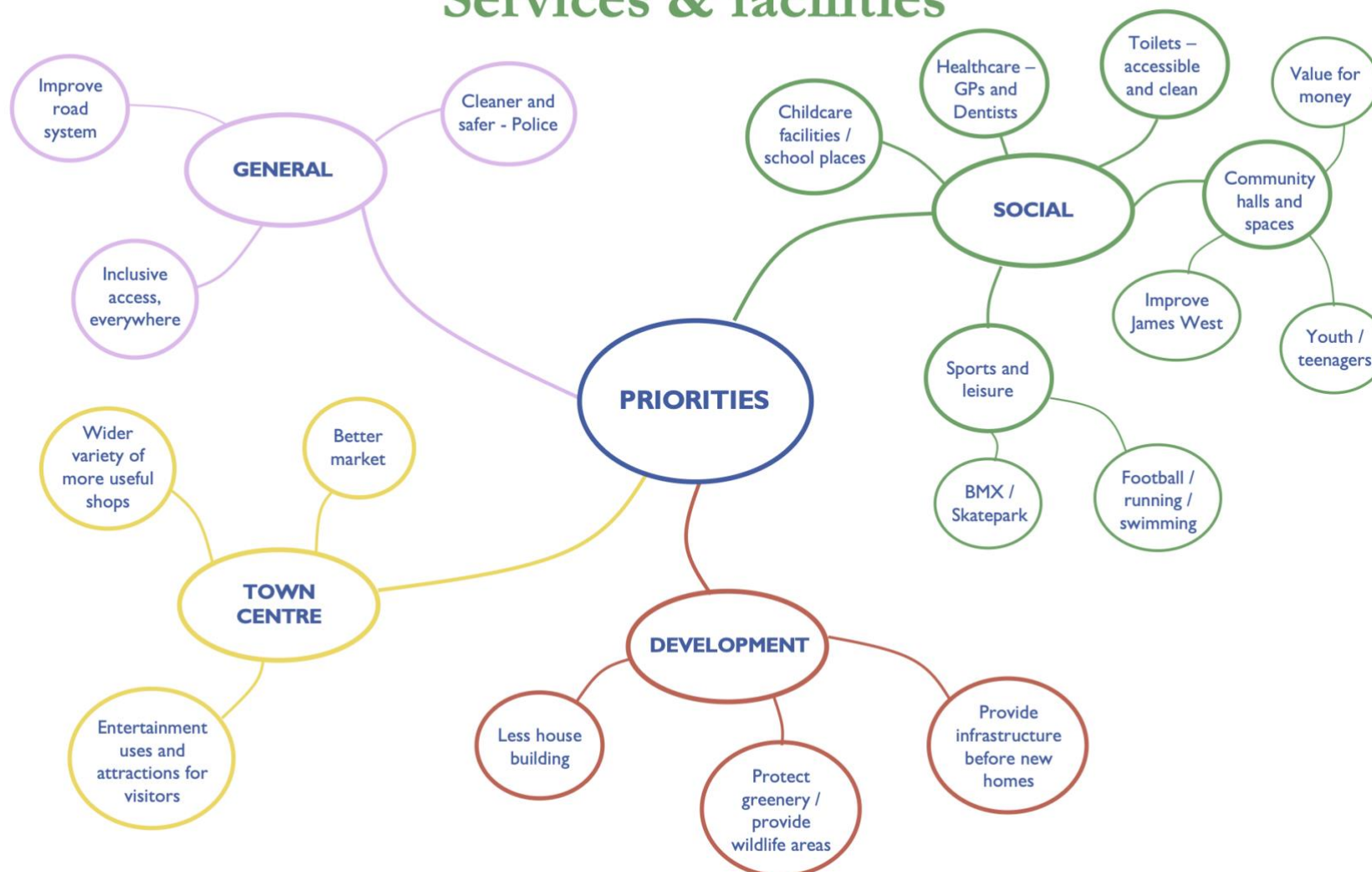
LOCATION (where provided):

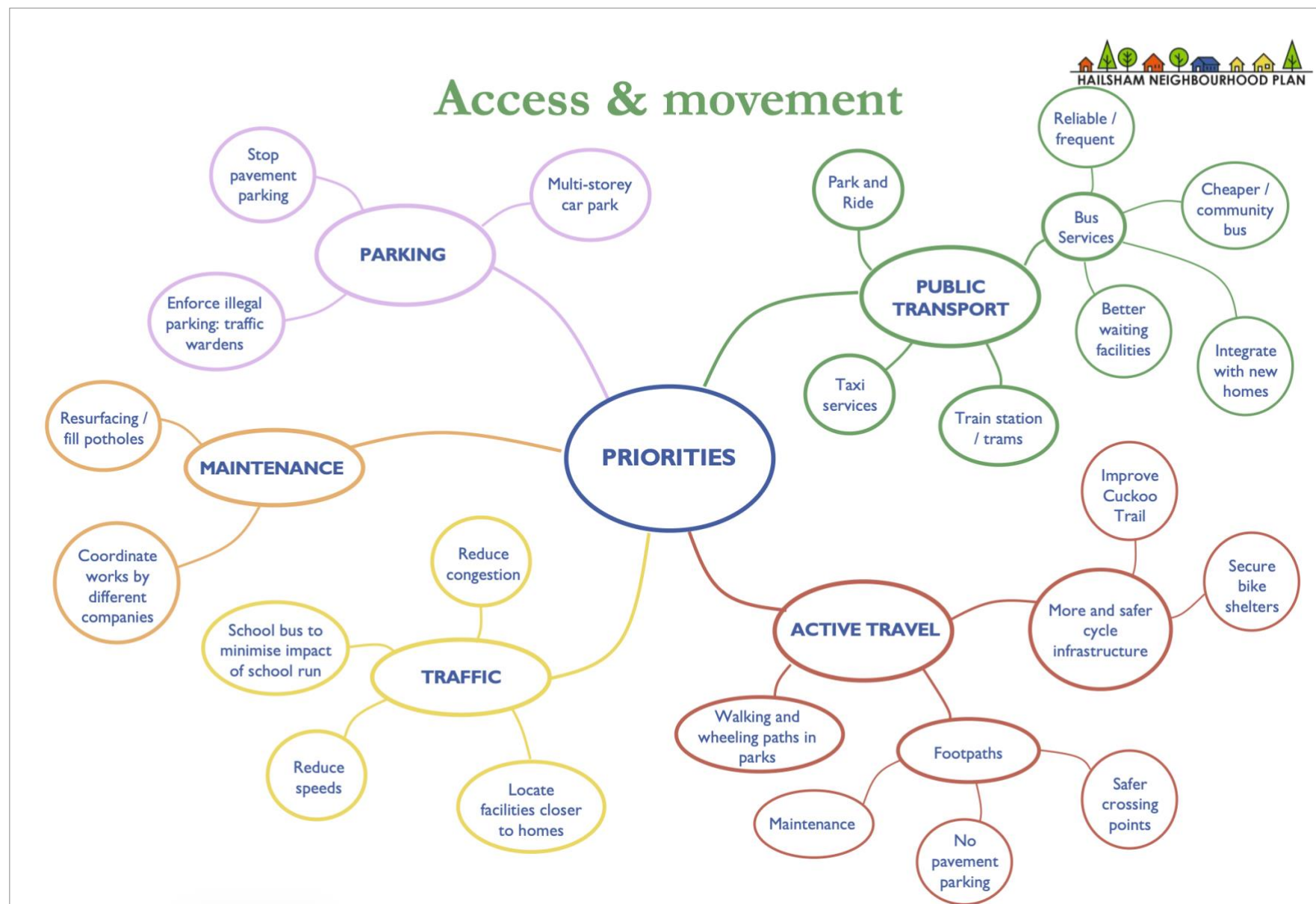
- Good spread of responses from across Hailsham
- Five responses from outside of Hailsham & Hellingly (Polegate x2, Horam, Uckfield, Heathfield)
- Messages thus based on 'local' matters



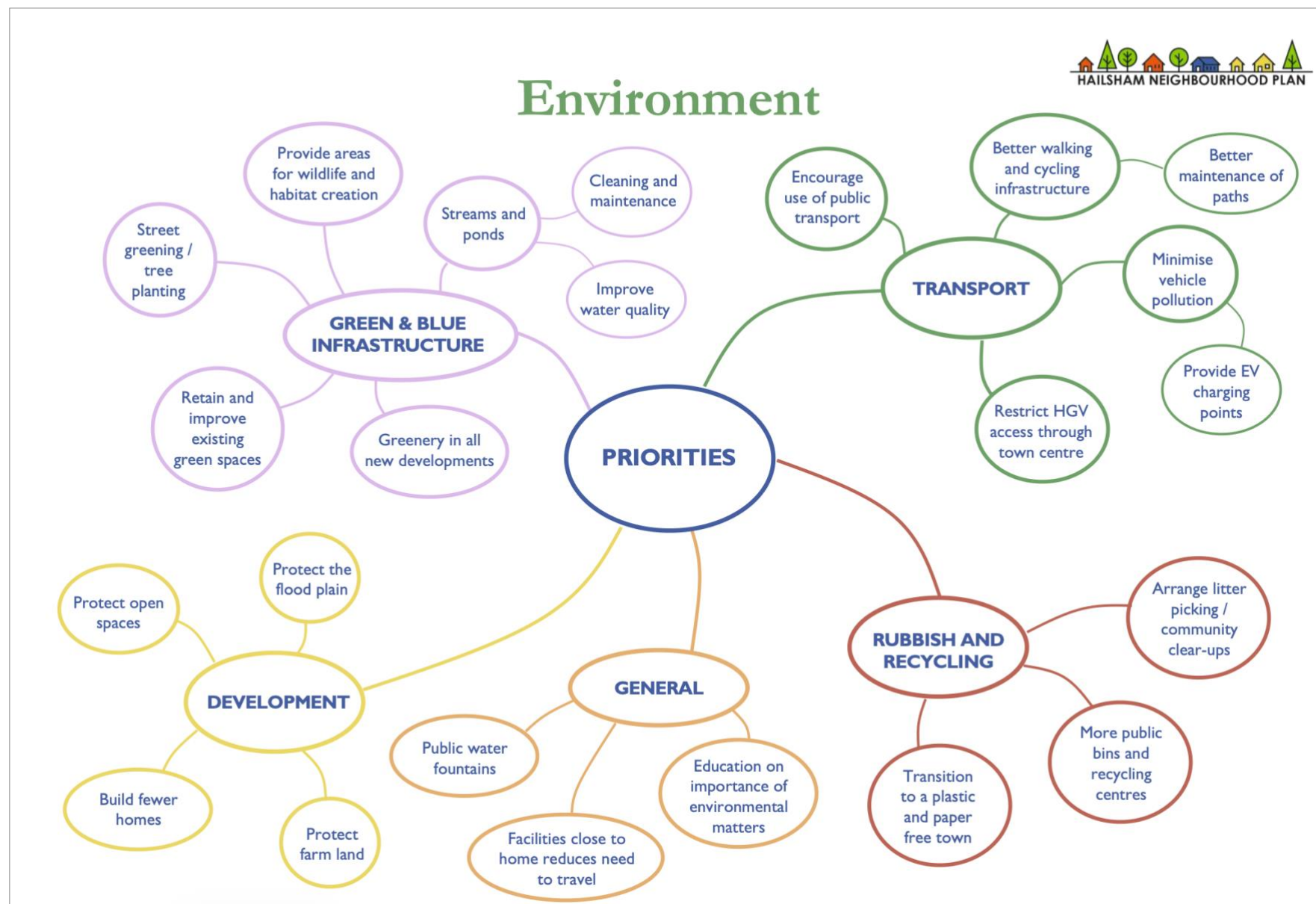
Based on 115 responses

Services & facilities





Environment



Headline messages

SERVICES AND FACILITIES:

- Overwhelming support for new healthcare facilities across Hailsham
- Other community facilities, including public toilets, school and pre-school places, good quality halls and spaces, sports and leisure facilities identified (*)
- Facilities should provide for all age groups

ENVIRONMENT:

- Green spaces (including areas of wildlife and biodiversity) should be protected and improved, and greenery integrated into new developments and existing streets
- Concern about impacts on the floodplain and water quality

ACCESS AND MOVEMENT:

- Strong support for improved bus services and associated infrastructure, including a Park and Ride facility
- Strong support for improvements to the network of walking and wheeling links
- Concern about the volume and speed of traffic in Hailsham, and the impact of on-street / pavement parking
- The quality of the transport network, including streets and footpaths, needs regular maintenance so it can be used by people of all ages and abilities

OTHER:

- There has been and continues to be too much new development in Hailsham – this has not been supported with new infrastructure
- The general appearance of the town centre and mix of uses in it could be improved
- There is a desire for a cleaner, safer town, including a strong emphasis on rubbish collection, recycling, and a police presence
- Hailsham needs to be an inclusive and accessible place for everyone
- Maintenance, value for money and communication is important

(*) Messages in respect of open space, sports and leisure facilities aligns with findings from children's consultation during Lego event

Taking this forward

POLICY AREAS:

- Strengthen social and community infrastructure policy in made NDP (plus review infrastructure plans and delivery mechanisms), including provision of uses in accessible locations
- Strengthen approach to an integrated sustainable transport offer, locations and routes for improvements
- Support delivery of a connected network of green spaces across Hailsham, providing a range of different green space types, and incorporating flood mitigation measures
- Strengthen requirement for development to be well integrated, reduce car travel, and provide supporting facilities
- Strengthen approach to town centre mix and appearance

WIDER PROJECTS:

- Explore implementation of wider traffic management measures and parking policies with the Highways Authority
- Support multi-functional use of existing facilities and green spaces
- Explore wider climate change initiatives such as the circular economy
- Encourage community pride and ownership through local events and volunteering (including litter picks)
- Explore measures that strengthen safety, including liaison with the police

COMMUNICATIONS:

- Clarity needs to be provided as to the role of the Town Council as distinct from WDC (e.g.: Local Plan, housing figures and allocations) and others (e.g.: highways maintenance, emergency services)
- Explore opportunities for engaging with young adults

3. Children's consultation

This section presents the ideas suggested by children at the Lego Master Builder event and links this through to analysis of green and open space provision in Hailsham to present ideas for policies and projects in the review of the Neighbourhood Plan.

It takes the key findings (a desire for more, better, and more varied play, leisure and recreation facilities), and links this to open space studies and assessments which indicate there to be a lack of green space, and access to this, in Hailsham. Potential ideas are then explored in terms of how this might be taken forward in policies and wider projects in the review of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Children's comments



Hailsham Lego Master Build event
(Sept 21st)

'Wants' for Hailsham:

- 'Themed play war station'
- Junior mini tennis court
- Minecraft play park
- Mini truck driving circuit
- Fire-breathing tiger statue
- Boating lake with pedalos
- Helicopter play park
- Riding school / pony park
- Treasure Island play park
- Waterslide park and fountain
- Tunnels and terrain park
- Superhero Play Park

In summary:

- Better / more / wider variety of play, leisure and recreation spaces
- Aligns with WDC assessment of Open Space and Natural England assessment of access to green space



WDC Open Space

Table 14.2: Summary of accessibility and quality standards

Typology	Accessibility	Quality
Parks and gardens	No gaps in provision	Three out of three sites rate below quality threshold
Natural & semi-natural	No gaps in provision	Two out of three sites rate below quality threshold
Amenity greenspace	No gaps in provision	Nine out of 13 sites rate below quality threshold
Play provision	No gaps in provision	Six out of 15 sites rate below quality threshold
Allotments	No gaps in provision	One out of two sites rate below quality threshold

Table 14.3: Summary of quantity standards

Typology	Quantity (Sqm)		
	Available	Required	Balance
Parks and gardens	100,800	119,870	-19,070
Natural & semi-natural	83,100	431,985	-348,885
Amenity greenspace	85,300	126,655	41,355
Play provision	13,600	11,309	+2,292
Allotments	11,200	22,617	-11,417

* Extract from WDC study comprising evidence to the emerging Local Plan

September '22 Open Space Study:
Parish summaries

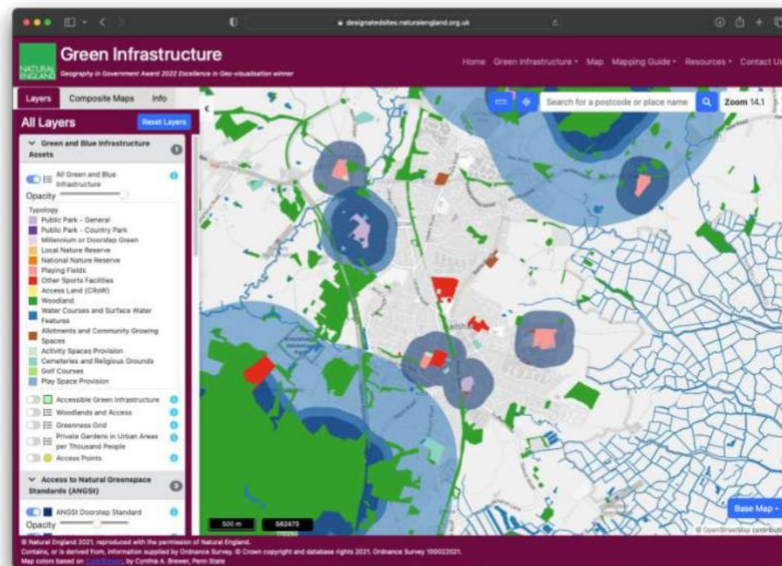
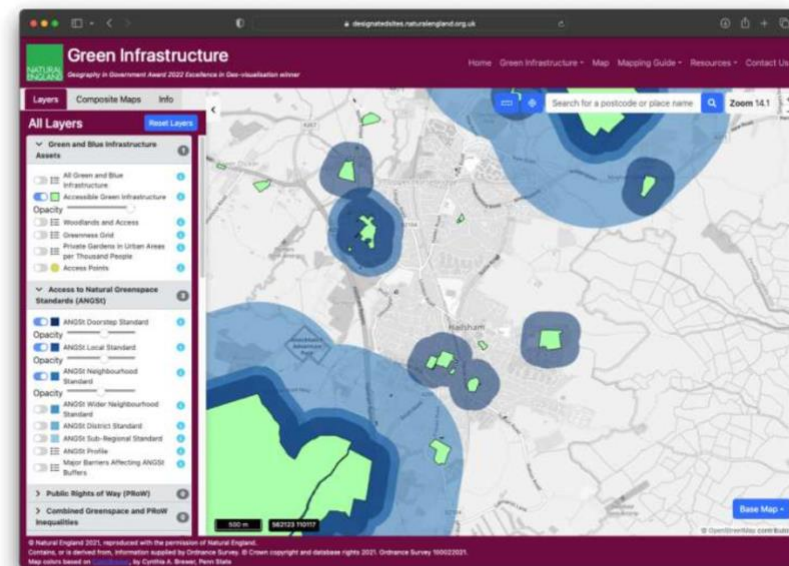
Suggests that there is sufficient
access to all open space typologies

BUT

- The quality of a large proportion of the open spaces falls below thresholds
- The quantity of provision of open space types falls below standards

With additional growth will come
greater pressure on existing spaces

Green infrastructure



Natural England online Green Infrastructure mapping:

- (L) Map of all open space types overlaid with Access to Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGSt)
- (R) Map of accessible green infrastructure overlaid with ANGSt
- Doorstep, Local and Neighbourhood ANGSt buffers mapped

The ANGSt standards:

- Doorstep: A green space of at least 0.5ha within 200m
- Local: A natural greenspace of at least 2ha within 300m
- Neighbourhood: A natural green space of at least 10ha within 1km

Much of Hailsham does not benefit from local access to green space: has implications for health, leisure, social exclusion etc

Options

Policy for new development:

- All new development to provide green / open space in line with established standards
- Green / Open space to be integrated within development and designed to incorporate a range of typologies and allow use by different age groups, abilities and genders
- Location of new green / open space to be accessible to new and existing communities via walking and cycling network

Projects for existing green spaces:

- Identify opportunities for improvements to green / open spaces – both to facilities and diversity of green space type
- Improve access to existing spaces through identification of new / safer / more direct walking and cycling routes

Wider opportunities:

- Introduce pocket parks and green infrastructure within existing spaces and streets, through rationalisation of space
- Remodel large road junctions / wide streets to include street tree planting and raingardens
- Remodel 'left over space' to include opportunities for community food growing
- Introduce parklets – potentially on a trial basis at first – to introduce and test locations for small green spaces
- Identify existing residential streets – through collaboration with residents – which might have the potential to be transformed into play streets, so taking greenery into local areas

Examples



(L) Remodel junction:

- Introduce new areas of greenery on otherwise 'wasted' space
- Improve setting of buildings
- Integrate with improved access to surround streets and spaces

(R) Reuse space:

- Diversify areas of mown grass
- Providing a diversity of green space types, including places for play, biodiversity, relaxation, sustainable drainage and food growing
- Enhance setting of street environment



Examples



Retrofit existing street:

- Transform residential street into a 'homezone' or play street
- Introduce areas of greenery within the street and adjacent to homes
- Allow for parking and access, but with a focus on people
- Improve doorstep access to green space



4. Conclusions

The initial consultation launch sought to understand priorities for change in Hailsham and which can be used to help inform the review of the Neighbourhood Plan, the focus of policies and wider project ideas within this.

The feedback has revealed the need for improvements to the quality and range of social and community infrastructure in Hailsham, including ‘essentials’ such as public toilets and healthcare, as well as parks and amenity space. Improvements to the quality of the environment were also cited as were the need to address local transport issues, with many respondents highlighting the need for improved public transport services, walking and cycling infrastructure. These can all be taken forward within the update of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Concern was also raised about the volume of new housebuilding that has and continues to take place in Hailsham and, closely linked with this, the lack of infrastructure to support this. Although it is not the role of the Town Council to be establishing housing growth targets for the area (and which is undertaken by Wealden District Council through the Local Plan), the Neighbourhood Plan can be used to help draw out the potential benefits of growth for the town, particularly in terms of improvements to the quality and range of infrastructure, as well as identifying environmental improvements to be embedded in any future growth strategy.

Other ‘non-planning’ matters were also raised, including concerns about safety and litter. Although reference can be made to these in the Neighbourhood Plan, other initiatives may also need exploring to help address these.



Neighbourhood Plan and Design Code

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Hailsham Town Council
Inglenook, Market Street, Hailsham
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