



Hailsham Neighbourhood Plan

Supporting Papers

Town Centre Analysis and Ideas

Troy Planning + Design



Hailsham Neighbourhood Plan

Supporting Papers: Town Centre Analysis and ideas



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Contents of this Supporting Paper

This document comprises copies of material and presentations prepared throughout the course of reviewing and updating the Neighbourhood Plan and which have helped inform ideas for inclusion within it and the separate Design Guidelines document. It has a focus on the Town Centre. The material includes:

- Analysis of the form and structure of the town centre, as prepared for the made Neighbourhood Plan, the findings of which remain relevant.
- A set of overarching objectives for change in the town centre, informed by the analysis and feedback received through the consultation process.
- Ideas and propositions for the town centre, including opportunities for making more efficient use of land.
- A case study example of change, showing how the some of the ideas outlined in the ideas and propositions section have been realised elsewhere
- Overview of the opportunities associated with the potential for part pedestrianisation of the High Street.

Analysis

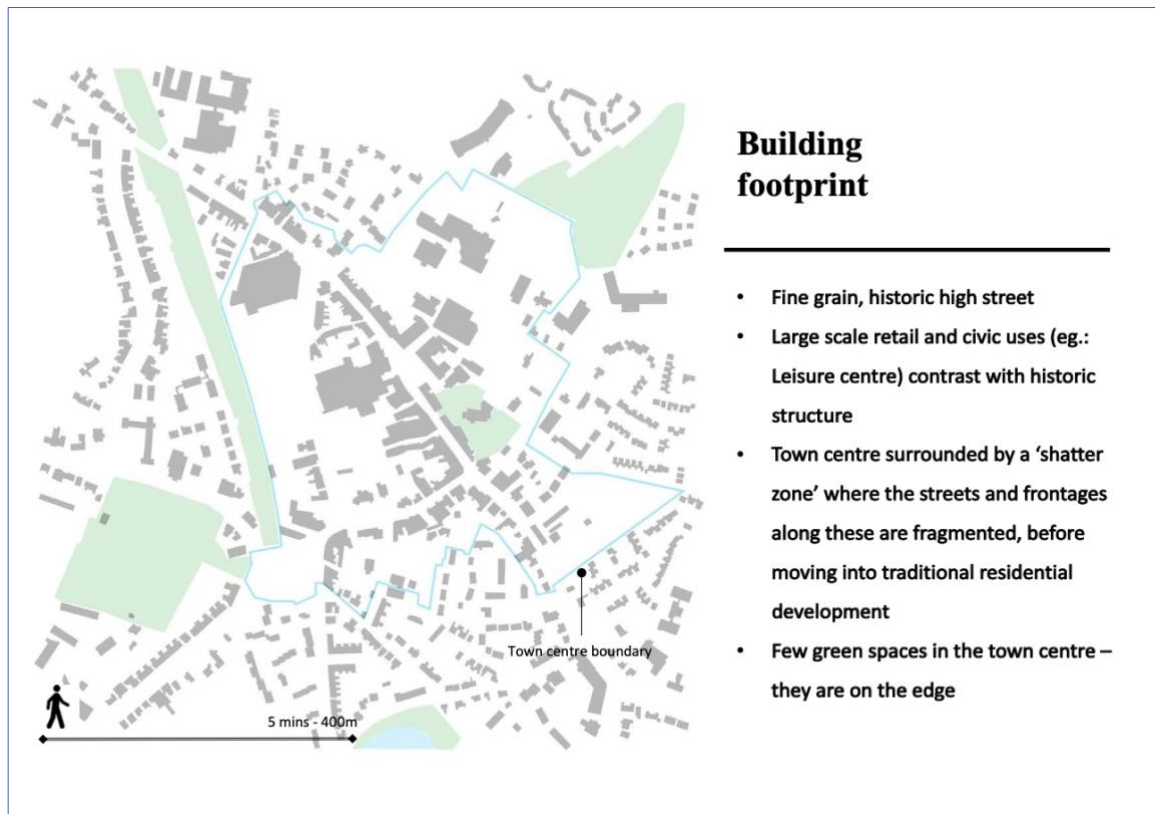


Figure 1: Figure ground and grain of the built environment

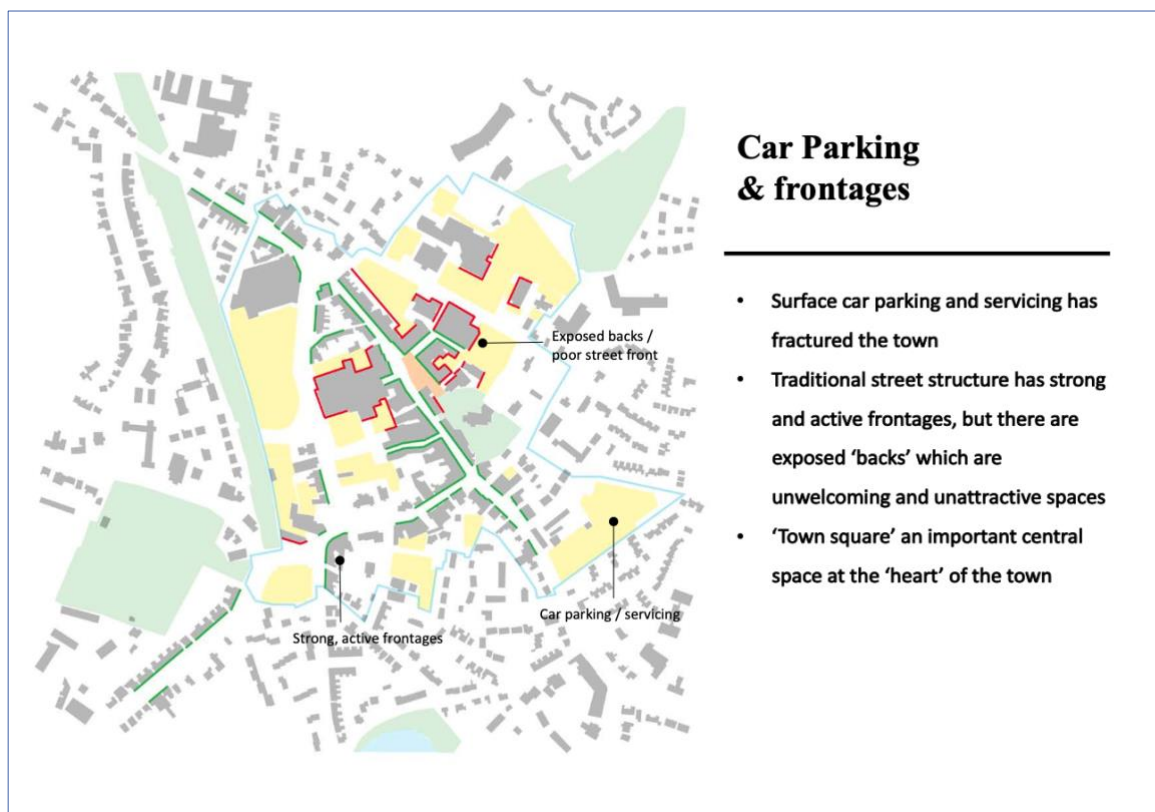


Figure 2: Land occupied by car parking and service areas, and relationship with urban grain

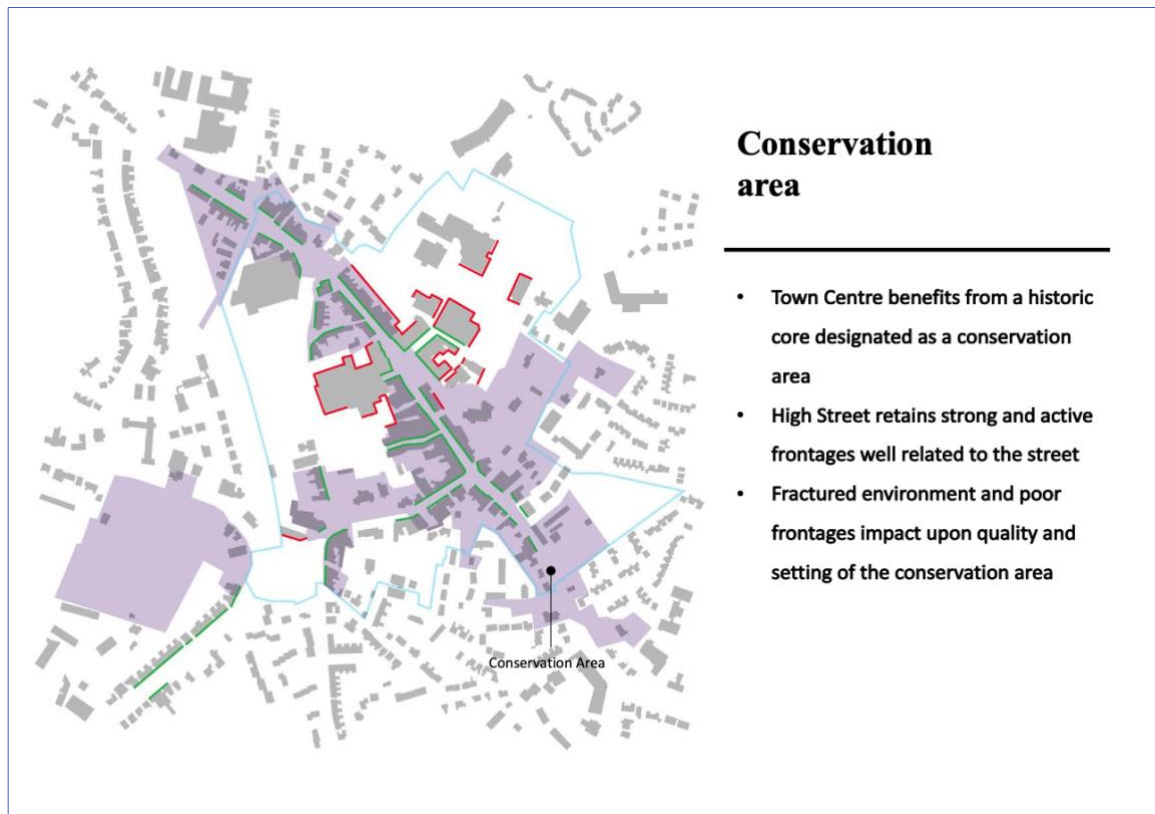


Figure 3: Extent of the conservation area

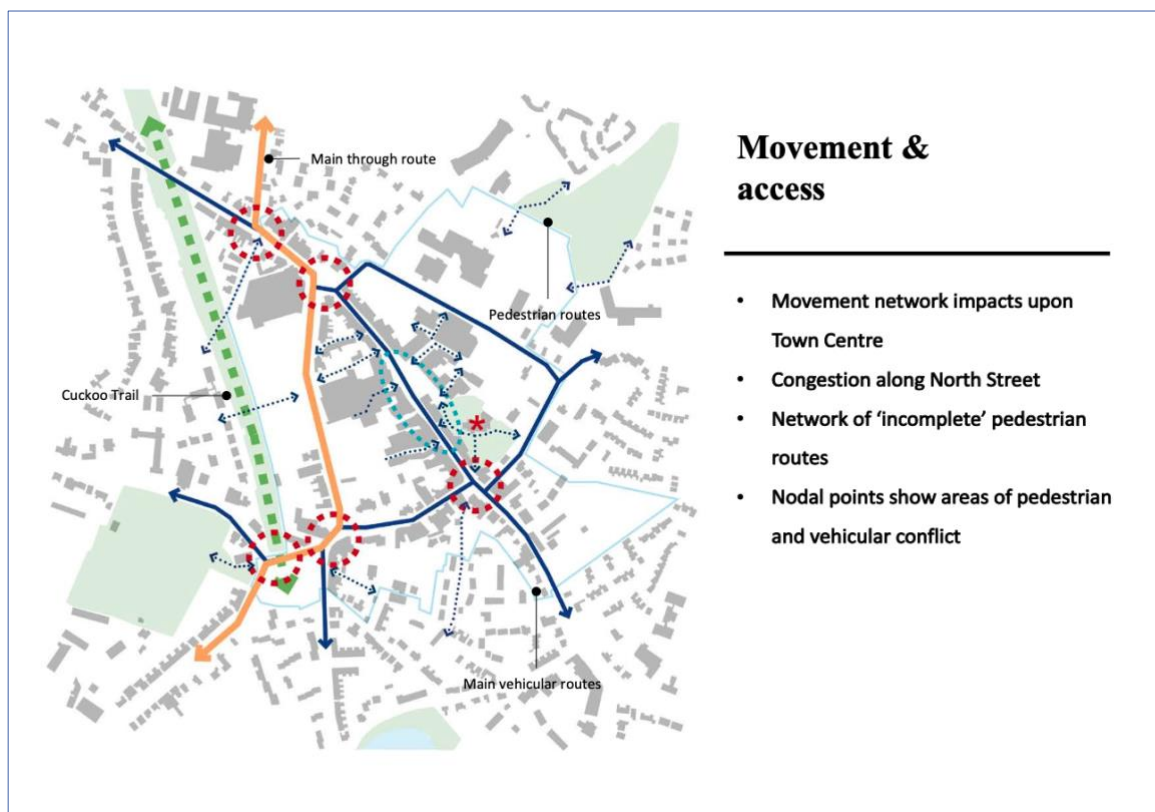


Figure 4: Movement network



Figure 5: Traffic noise

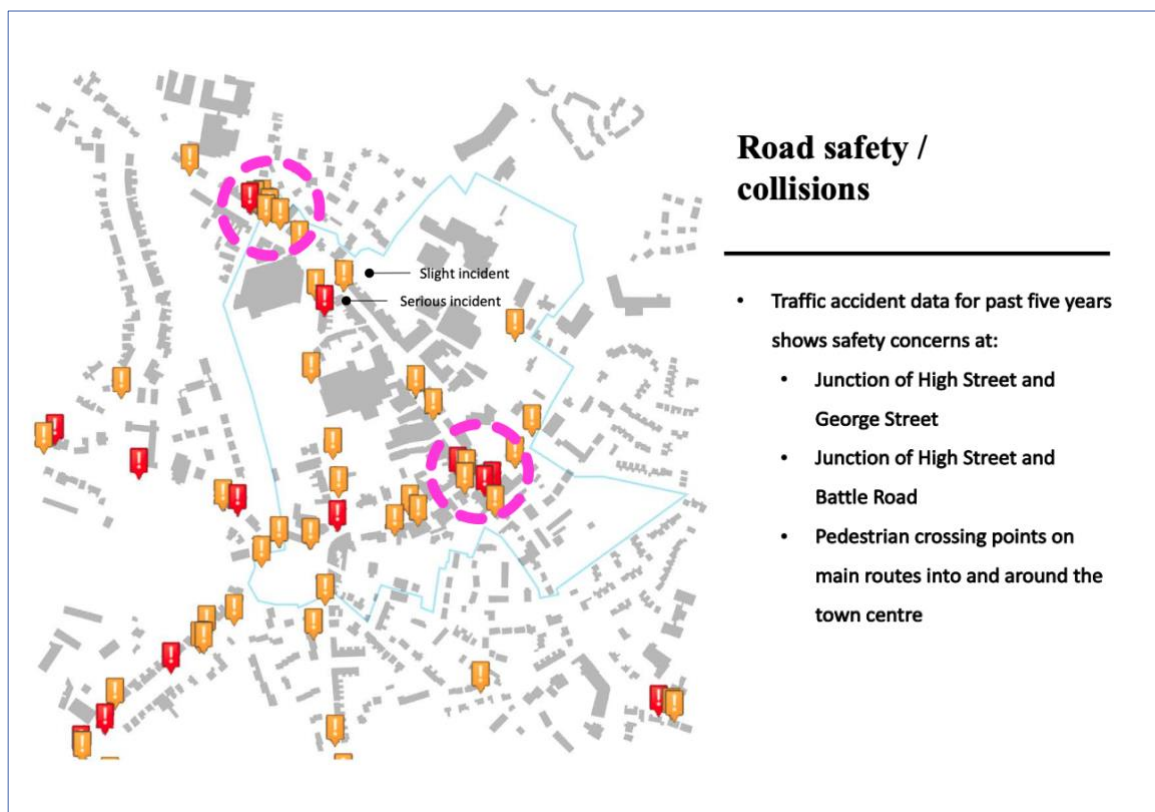
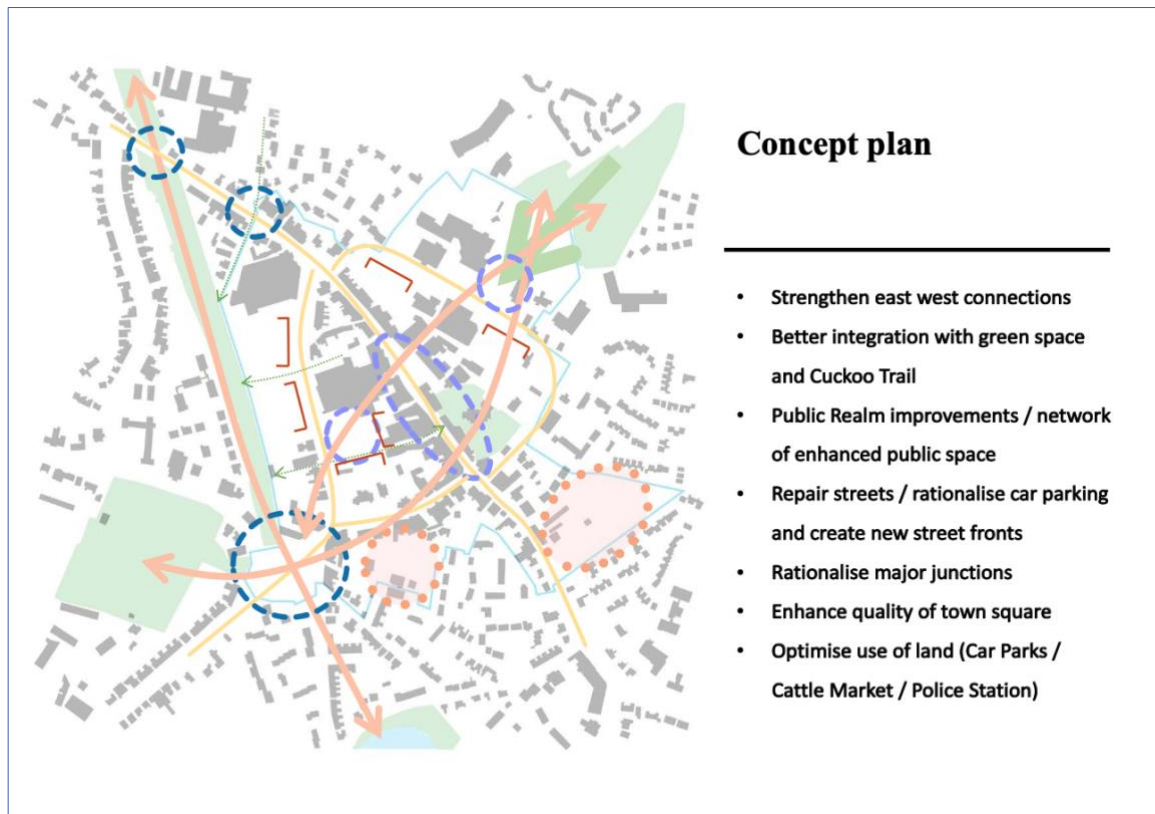


Figure 6: Traffic accident hotspots



Concept plan

- Strengthen east west connections
- Better integration with green space and Cuckoo Trail
- Public Realm improvements / network of enhanced public space
- Repair streets / rationalise car parking and create new street fronts
- Rationalise major junctions
- Enhance quality of town square
- Optimise use of land (Car Parks / Cattle Market / Police Station)

Figure 7: Town centre concept plan

Objectives

Context

- Policy at all levels supports strong, vibrant, thriving local centres.
- This is essential for Hailsham, where the growth of the town and surrounding areas needs to be reflected through the town centre offer.
- Consultation messages from previous NDP and initial consultation on the review stress the need for improvements to the centre.
- Previous schemes (Wealden DC-led Aspires project) are not progressing. This envisaged significant redevelopment.
- In an era of climate change and resource efficiencies an approach that works with the fabric of the town is required.
- Principles within Aspires scheme remain relevant, e.g.:
 - Quality of open space, accessibility, healthy and active lifestyles, mixed uses and opportunities for town centre living, sustainable design
- These principles can be taken forward but a different design response needs to be put in place

Objectives:

Five overarching objectives are identified.

A series of policy and project ideas, and design interventions are presented in response to each – there is some cross-over between these.

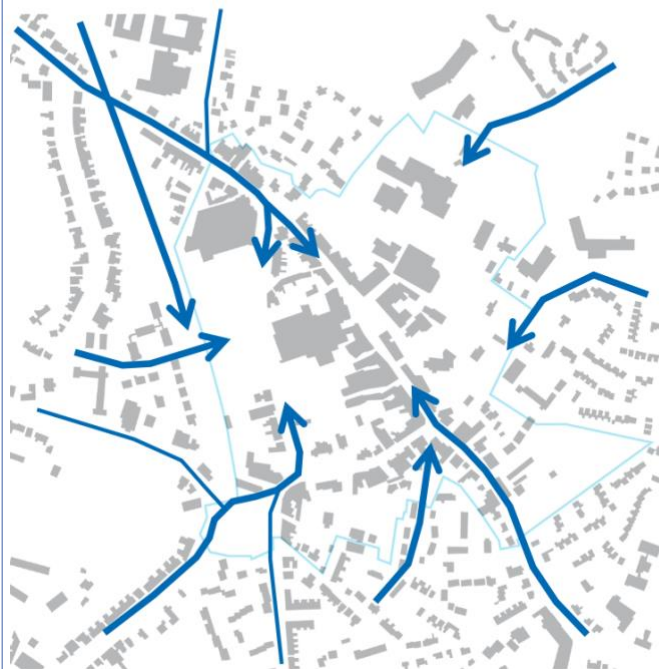
The objectives are:

1. An accessible town centre
2. A diverse town centre
3. A walkable town centre
4. A green town centre
5. A climate resilient town centre

These seek to put in place a framework that creates the conditions for an attractive centre that caters for the needs of all, which builds on its assets and can be taken forward incrementally, and with the potential for change and adaptability in the future

Figure 8: Policy context framing thinking about the future of the town centre and objectives for it

An accessible town centre



- Multi-modal access provides travel choice and opportunity
- A safe and well-connected walking, wheeling and cycle network enables this to become an attractive proposition and mode of choice
- New growth around town is well-integrated into the urban fabric and provides locally-based facilities, reducing travel needs and supporting reduced car use
- Good quality bus infrastructure and improved services enable use of public transport
- Travel by car remains an option with parking provided but rationalised, allowing for more effective use of land

Figure 9: Objective set 1

A diverse town centre



- A mix of uses within the town centre – both across the centre and within developments
- Support for windfall development that makes efficient use of land
- Provision of services, flexible work space, entertainment, culture and leisure uses brings diversity and activity at all times of the day, providing 'something' for all ages.
- Retail focus remains but other uses bring additional footfall
- Residential use incorporated in new development supports life and activity in the centre and helps meet 'windfall' housing figures for Hailsham in the emerging Local Plan
- Multifunctional public space allows for different activities to take place in the public realm
- Flexible building design allows for change and adaptability over time
- Design quality responds to the positive qualities of the urban fabric, in terms of historic growth, scale and massing of buildings

Figure 10: Objective set 2

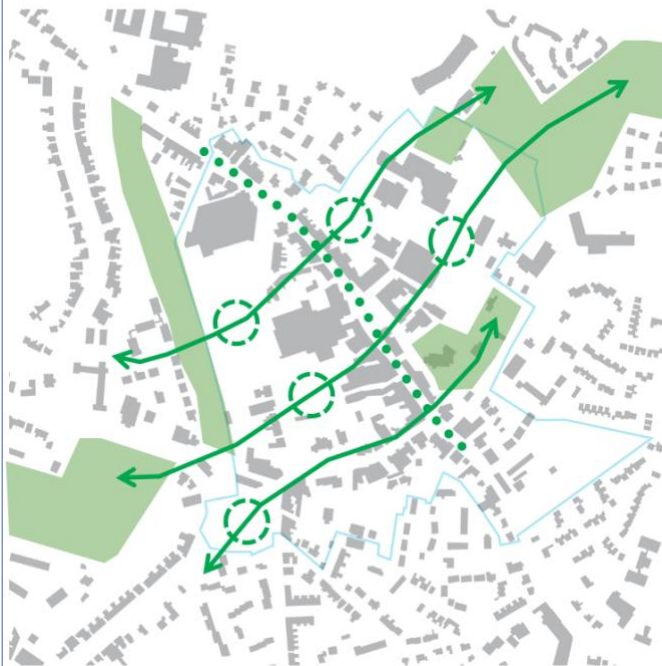
A walkable town centre



- A pedestrian friendly town centre
- Safe and attractive walking routes for all ages and generations
- Links between arrival points and the High Street celebrate the sense of arrival and journey between these and the High Street
- Streets and spaces are well defined benefitting from a mix of active development frontages that supports use throughout the day
- Sensitive lighting, wayfinding and public art help animate spaces, creating interest and sense of safety
- A pedestrian friendly High Street forms the backbone of the town (potential for part pedestrianisation during the day)
- Multifunctional spaces allow for different uses and activities in the public realm throughout the day and at different times of the year
- Possible realignment and restructuring of vehicular movements (e.g.: divert traffic away from the High Street) strengthens quality of walking experience

Figure 11: Objective set 3

A green town centre



- A network of green streets and spaces across the town centre
- Connects the town centre with surrounding countryside and the landscape setting of the town
- A range of green infrastructure typologies provided, including street trees, grasses and wildflowers, green walls and roofs
- Provision of green infrastructure supports health and wellbeing, supports townscape quality, and contributes to biodiversity and resilience to climate change

Figure 12: Objective set 4

A climate resilient town centre



- Introduction of permeable surfaces help to manage risk of surface water flooding. Sustainable drainage that takes the form of raingardens brings added amenity and biodiversity benefits.
- Retrofit and refurbishment of existing buildings encouraged over redevelopment to reduce embodied carbon.
- New development to meet high sustainability standards, with the layout of buildings designed to give consideration to microclimatic conditions and air quality.
- Roofscape (on existing and new buildings) utilised for renewable energy generation and green infrastructure.
- Transport hubs and associated information support use of active travel networks to access and move around the town centre.

Figure 13: Objective set 5

Ideas and Propositions

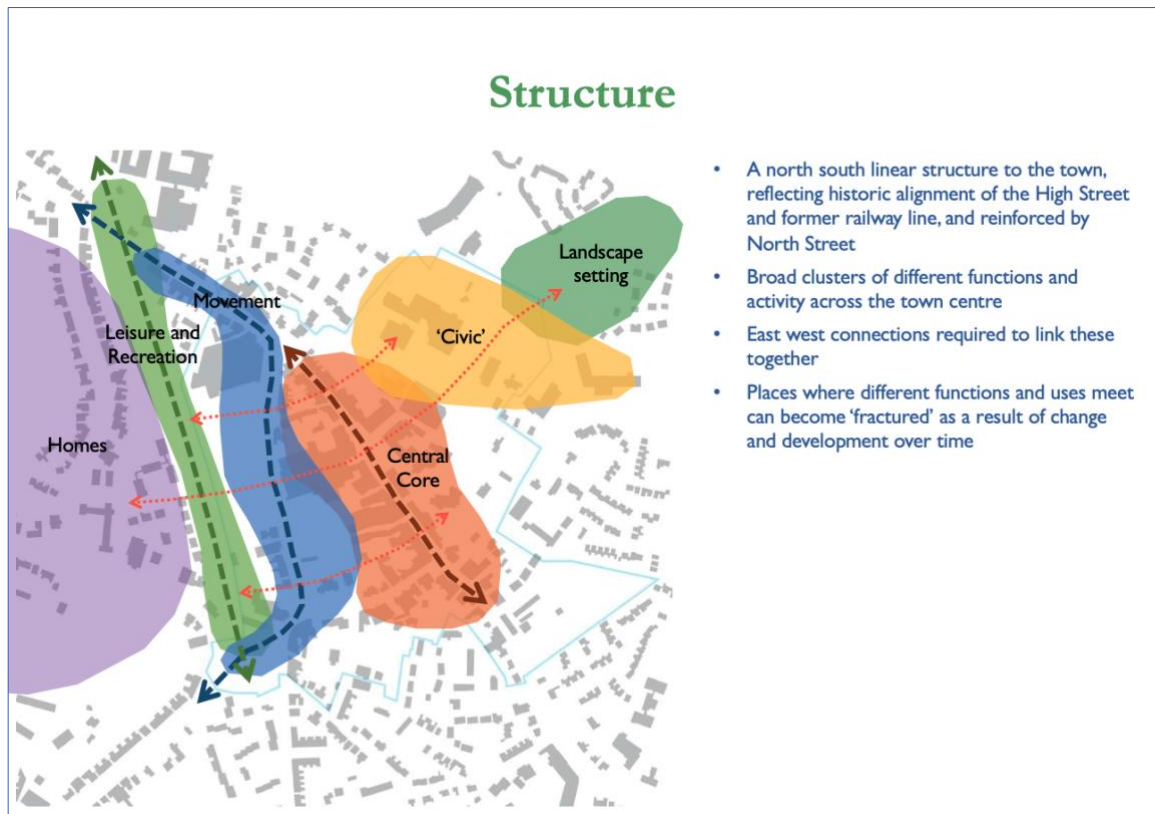


Figure 14: Broad structure of main activity areas and uses in the central area

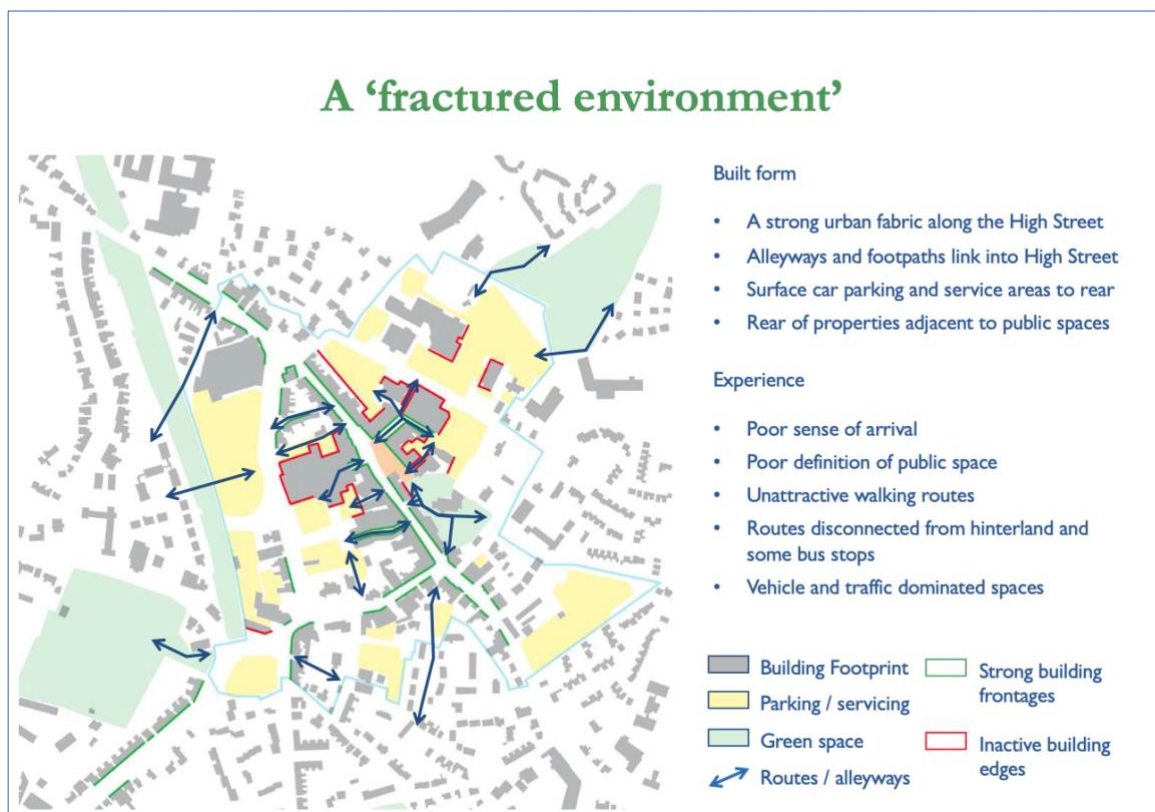


Figure 15: Fractured built form

Existing situation

Network of intimate routes and spaces linking with the High Street



Figure 16: Routes between car parks and the High Street

Existing situation

Experience of routes undermined by quality of 'arrival spaces'

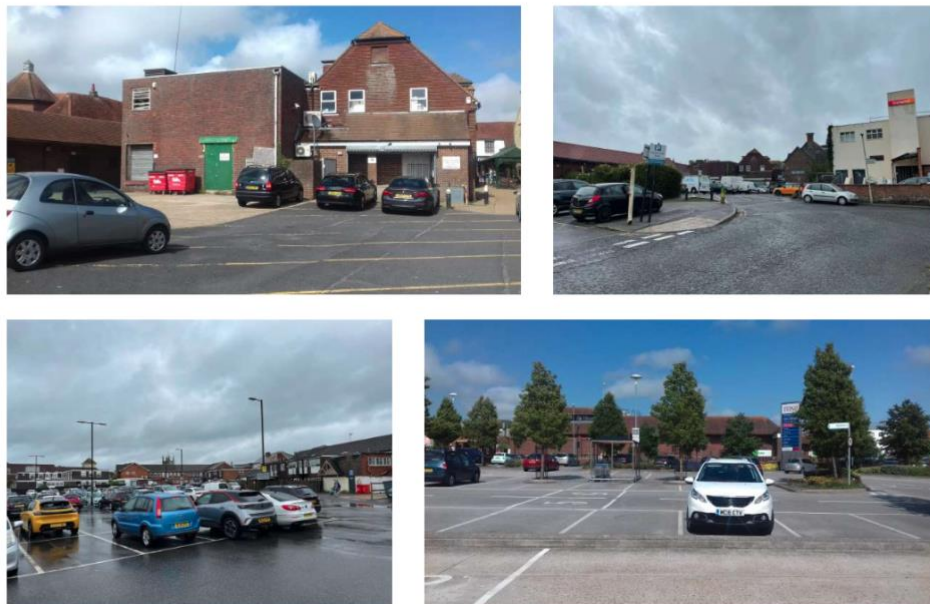


Figure 17: Arrival spaces in the town centre

Proposition

Mixed use windfall dev't + rationalisation of parking = repaired urban fabric

- The emerging Local Plan supports proposals for windfall development (291 homes) over and above allocated sites.
 - Should this be directed to the town centre, supporting reuse of previously developed land in close proximity to services and where the population resulting from the development can help strengthen the vitality of the centre?
 - Mixed use development incorporating both commercial and community uses would strengthen the role and function of the town centre.
 - Provision of new community uses would respond to consultation responses in respect of the need for additional facilities
- This would require the existing use of land to be reconsidered.
 - Is there a need for so much surface car parking?
 - Could this be rationalised, involving the release of some land for development?
 - If the loss of spaces needs off-setting, could this be combined with provision of a multi-storey car park linked with other mobility solutions?
- Redevelopment of land would help support provision of new and improved routes through to the High Street, repairing the quality of the urban fabric as well as the existing street environment.

Figure 18: Ideas informing change in the town centre

Proposition

Mixed use infill development and courtyard space repairing backland sites



Eccleston Yards in London combines new development (including retail and commercial space) with the opening up of the rear of existing properties and new 'kiosk' style buildings to reinvigorate an under-used backland space and attractive courtyard environment, which is accessed via existing 'alleyways'



Figure 19: Example backland development

Proposition

Mixed use infill development and courtyard space repairing backland sites



Image source: Google Streetview capture © 2024

Above: The Furlong Centre in Ringwood is a new shopping street on the site of a former cattle market. It provides a new route into the town centre between the main car park and superstore, with development arranged to address the rear of existing properties.

Right: Redevelopment of two adjacent sites on Railway Street in Chelmsford. Both were surface car parks and now include ground floor retail with housing above. They have helped repair the street environment along an important walking route to the station.



Image source: Google Streetview capture © 2024



Image source: Google Streetview capture © 2024

Figure 20: Example backland development

Proposition

Rationalising / reprovding car parking space



This multi-storey car park in Utrecht is co-located with a bus and rail station. It operates as a Park and Ride site. The ground floor of the development includes retail and restaurant uses, creating an active frontage to the street.



Image source: Google Streetview capture © 2022

This multi-storey car park in Miami has retail uses and active street frontage at the ground floor. The car park structure is set back slightly from the retail frontage and wrapped with green walls.

Figure 21: Example of multi-storey car parks wrapped with active development edges

Proposition

Wayfinding as art and orientation



Clever use of artwork is made in and around the Eccleston Yards development, reinvigorating blank walls and spaces in a fun, co-ordinated and informative way. Such an approach could be utilised in Hailsham to reinvigorate blank walls and gable ends, adding interest to the street scene

Figure 22: Example wayfinding



Figure 23: Potential backland development sites in the town centre



Figure 24: Potential multi-storey car park locations

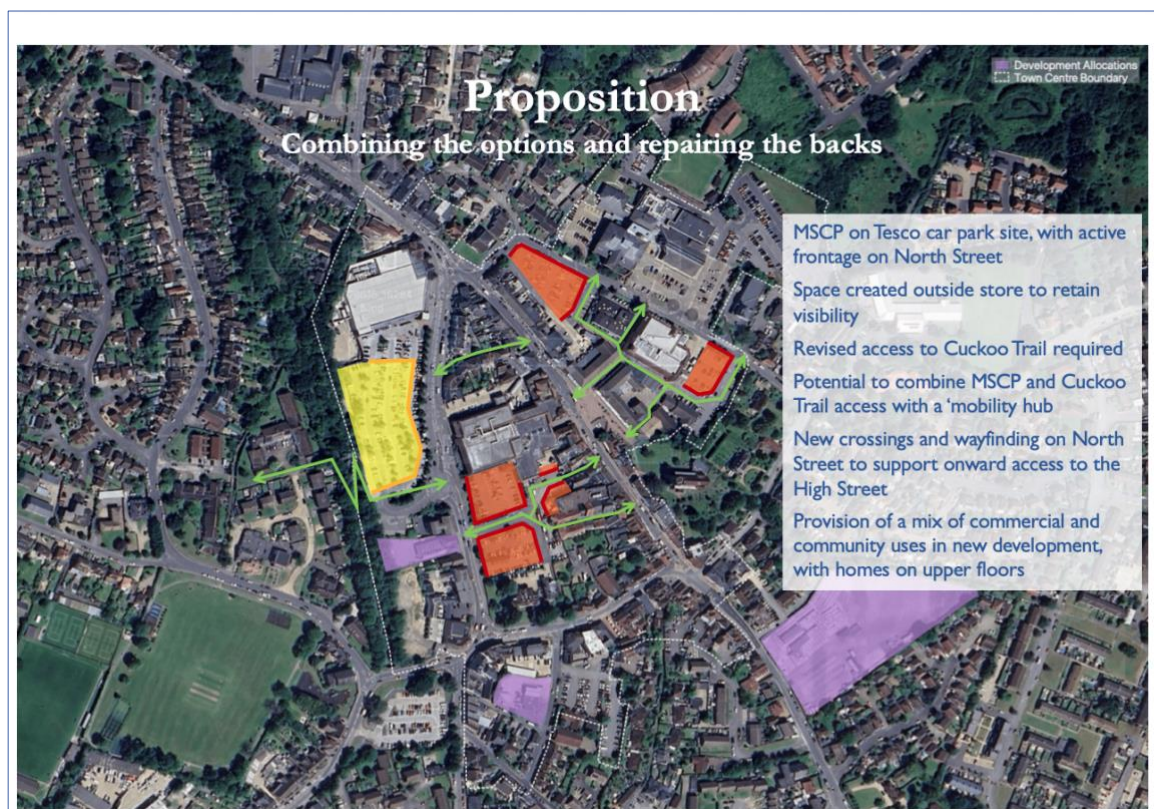


Figure 25: Potential framework for change and development in the town centre

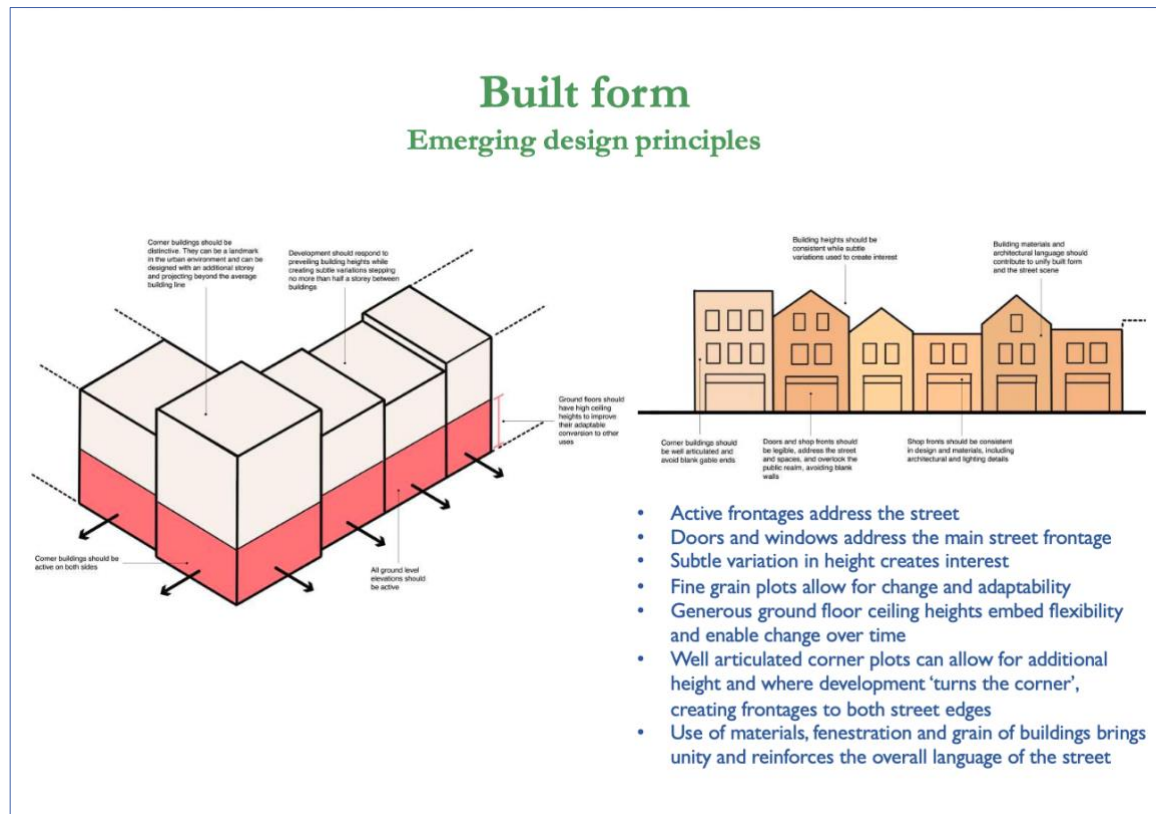


Figure 26: Principles for mixed use development in the town centre

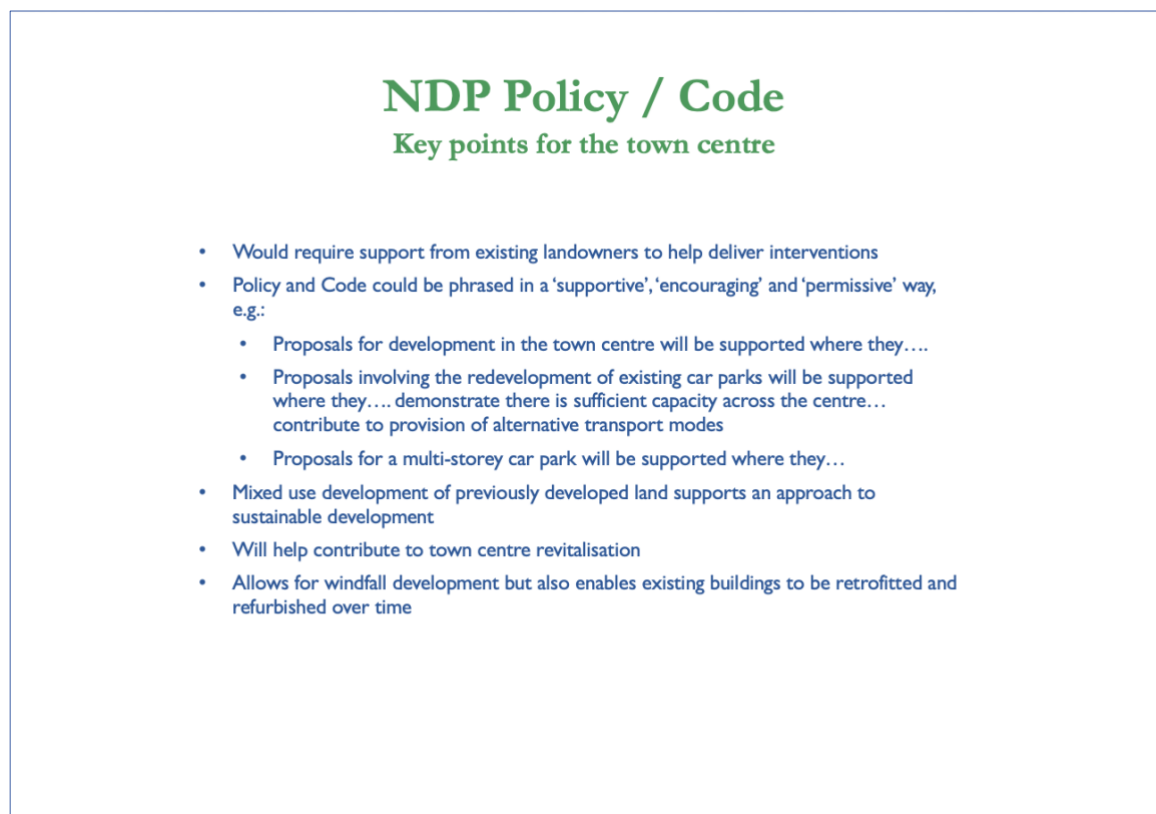


Figure 27: Key points to help inform policy development

Case Study

Town Centre case study

Bond Street development, Chelmsford

Opened in 2016

Transformation of 'backlands', surface car park and servicing areas behind the High Street

Reconnecting historic High Street and town centre with riverside, creating new commercial floorspace and public space, cinema, restaurants and new riverside walk

Development extends a historic route through from the High Street which originally terminated in an area of car parking

Scale of development consistent with High Street buildings

Basement car parking provided as part of development, with service yards concealed behind development frontages

286 car parking spaces in total (originally 550 spaces)



View along new 'retail street' towards historic link through to the High Street

Figure 28: Summary of case study of backland mixed use development

Town Centre case study

As it was



Extensive area of surface car parking

New retail street extends from and connects with buildings in image to the right



Bond Street site prior to development. Image source, Essex News Live: <https://www.essexlive.news/news/essex-news/look-back-bond-street-celebrates-2046216>

Figure 29: Before images of example development site

Town Centre case study

Before and after



Before (2014) and after (2017 / 2024) images. Source: Google Streetview image capture © 2025

Figure 30: Before and after images of example development site

Town Centre case study

As it is today



Figure 31: Images of example case study

Case studies

Key messages

Redevelopment of surface car parking

New commercial development that strengthens the retail core and historic heart of the town

Public realm scheme on High Street leads into new development area, helping to link the two elements together

Development responds to historic route structure

Creating an attractive new retail environment linked to natural assets

Has resulted in new job creation and an economic boost for the town

A 'draw' for the town – an attractive place that people want to visit and spend time in



The route through to the High Street

Figure 32: Key points from example case study to help inform ideas in Hailsham

High Street Pedestrianisation

USING CONSULTATION FEEDBACK TO INFORM THE VISION, OBJECTIVES AND IDEAS IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Consultation messages

Improve the quality and experience of the town centre
 Improve the cleanliness and maintenance of public areas
 Pedestrianise the High Street to create a more pleasant shopping experience
 Attract a diverse range of shops
 Encourage markets and services that attract visitors
 Create safe environments for people walking and cycling

Extract from vision

"...our town centre is a bustling hub of independent shops, cafes and cultural venues, offering a diverse and engaging experience for residents and visitors alike..."

Relevant NDP objectives

"To enhance the quality, attractiveness and overall experience of the town centre, making this a pedestrian friendly environment that offers a range of services and activities throughout the day"

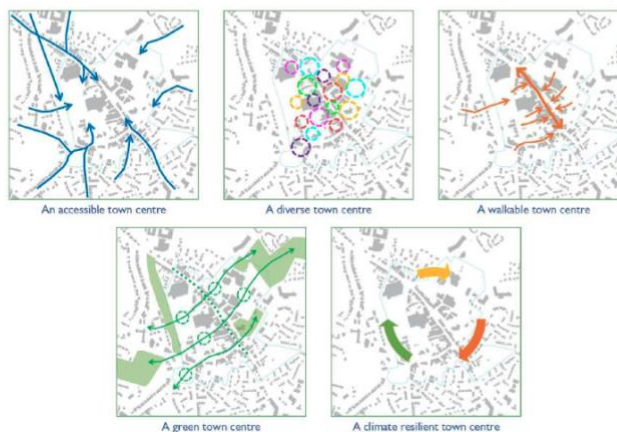


Figure 33: Link between consultation messages, the Neighbourhood Plan vision and town centre objectives



Figure 34: The High Street today



Figure 35: Illustration of how the High Street could be

CONCEPT AND CONSIDERATIONS

Summary of ideas

Part-pedestrianisation during business hours: vehicular access allowed at other times

A shared surface between buildings

Feature paving to define key activity areas

Materials colour palette responds to historic setting

Tactile and contrasting paving used to define vehicular space – designed for slow speed to support pedestrian priority

Establishment of a furniture zone

Multifunctional use of space in furniture zone allowing different use at different times of the day (e.g.: dining, market stalls, tree planting, parking, servicing).

Considerations

Routing of bus services and access to these

Servicing and taxi access

Impact on businesses

Wider traffic impacts on the town centre

Encouraging alternative travel modes

Figure 36: Summary of ideas for the Town Centre

PROOF OF CONCEPT

Hailsham Community Run



Figure 37: The Hailsham Fun Run showing that the High Stret can be closed to traffic

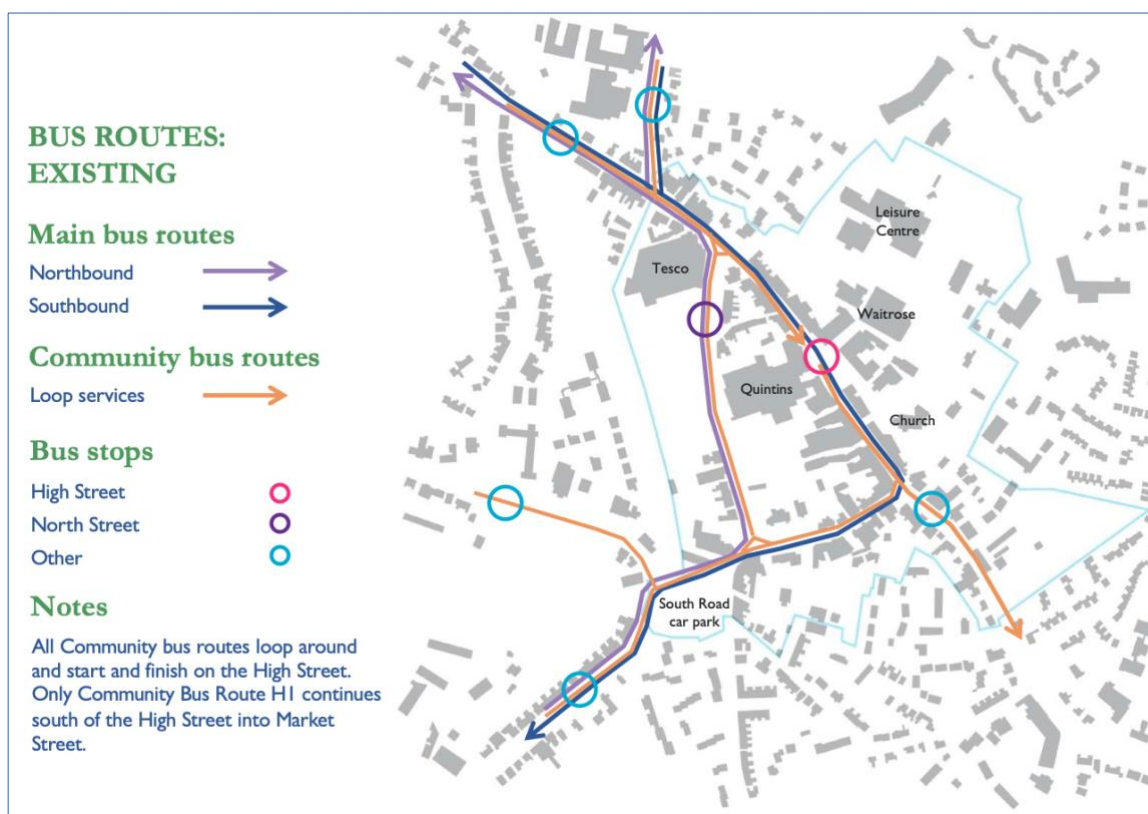


Figure 38: Existing bus routes servicing the town centre

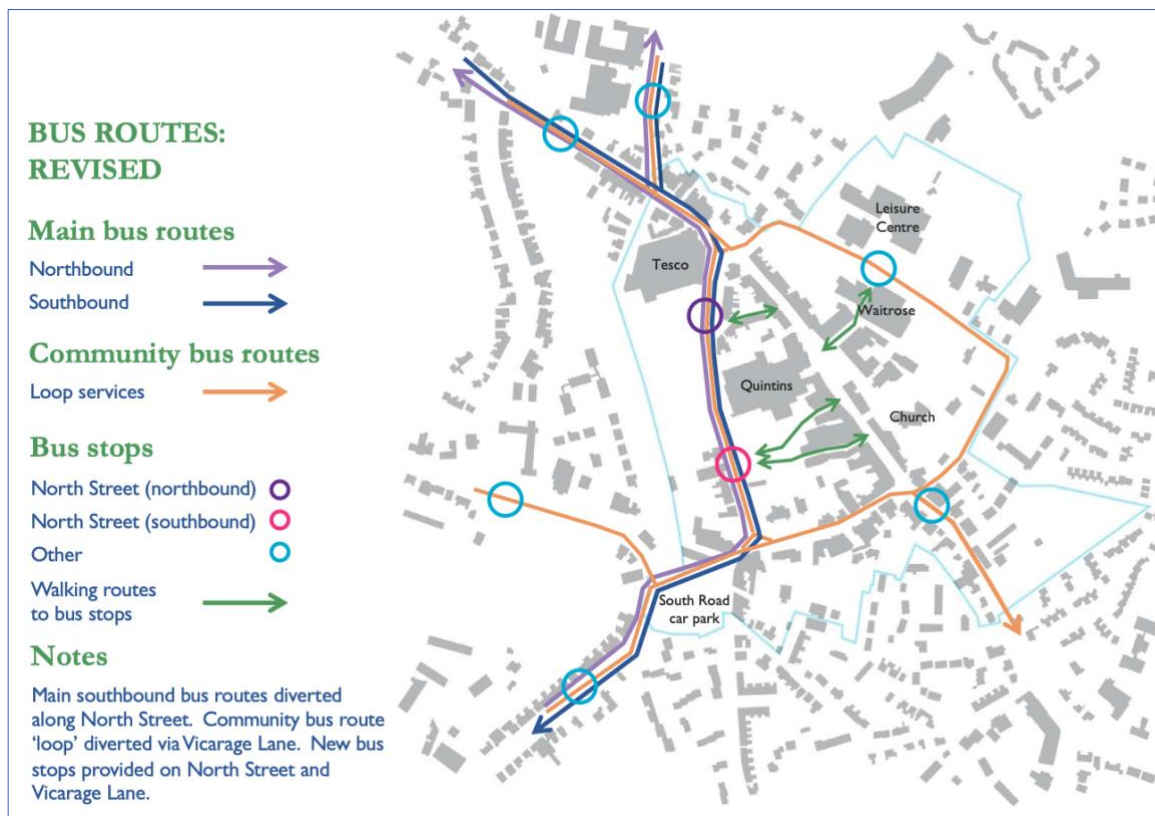


Figure 39: Potential bus service re-routing should the High Street be pedestrianised

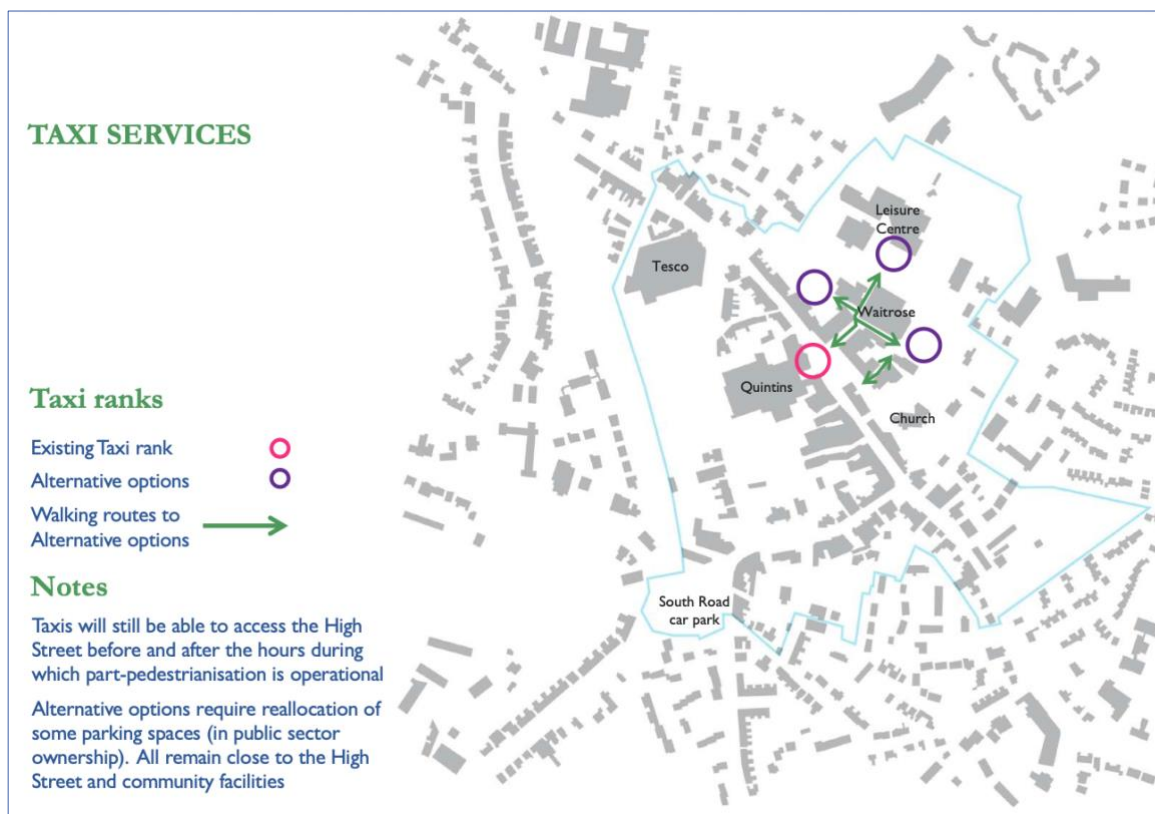


Figure 40: Potential relocation of taxi ranks should the High Street be pedestrianised

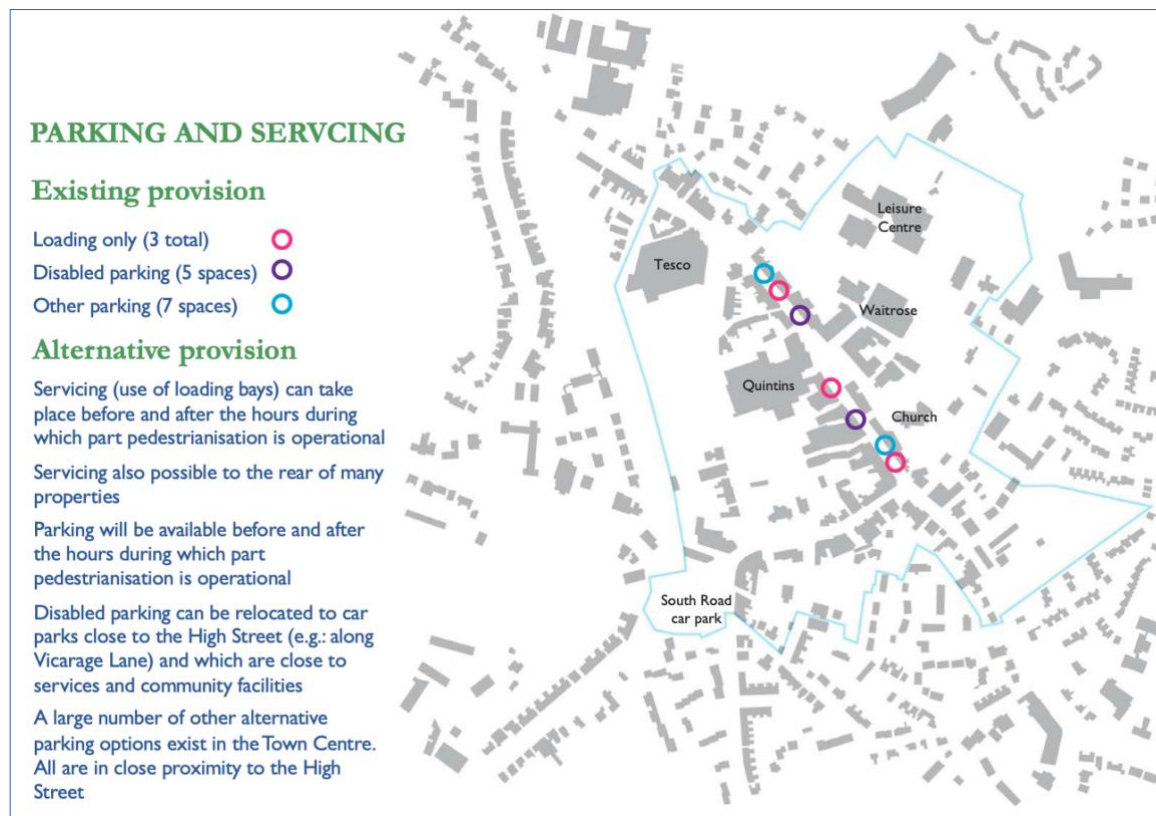


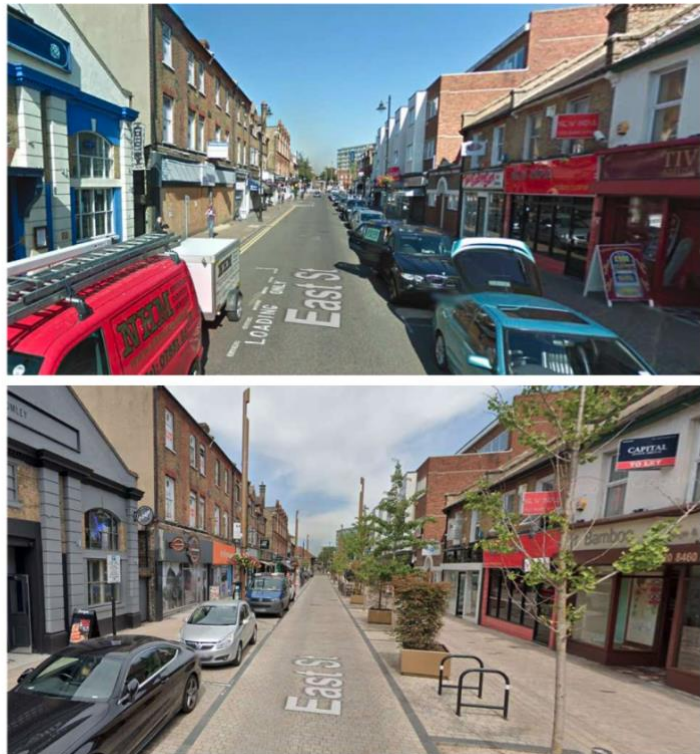
Figure 41: Potential relocation of disable parking and servicing areas should the High Street be pedestrianised.



Figure 42: The impacts on parking and benefits of pedestrianisation

EXAMPLES

East Street, Bromley Village



East Street, Bromley, before (2009) and after (2019). Image source: Google Streetview Image Capture © 2025

Figure 43: Example pedestrianisation schemes

EXAMPLES

Auray, Brittany



Auray, Brittany, France, before (2016) and after (2024). Before image source: Google Streetview Image Capture © 2025

Figure 44: Example pedestrianisation schemes

EXAMPLES

East Street, Shoreham



Figure 45: Example pedestrianisation schemes

PART-PEDESTRIANISATION

Summary

- Consultation messages express desire for improvements to the town centre including a pedestrian friendly High Street
- A public realm scheme would improve attractiveness of the High Street and create multi-functional space enabling different uses at different times of the day / week
- Options exist to re-route bus services with limited impact
- Servicing / loading can take place before or after hours during which part-pedestrianisation is operational
- Limited existing parking provision can be relocated and with disabled parking bays still being close to the High Street
- Taxi-rank can be relocated in close proximity to the High Street and town centre services
- Research indicates the economic, social and environmental benefits of such schemes
- Examples of similar schemes elsewhere indicate that these schemes can be successfully delivered
- Existing events in Hailsham involving closure of the High Street demonstrate this is possible



Figure 46: Summary of key points in respect of pedestrianisation for consideration in the Neighbourhood Plan



Hailsham Neighbourhood Plan, 2025 - 2042

Supporting topic paper: Town centre analysis
Collected presentations



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