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**Background**

The Council has published a series of background papers to accompany the Core Strategy - Spatial Development Options consultation (July 2009). These cover a range of issues and provide more technical or detailed information than is contained in the consultation document itself. They also provide links to the various published sources of evidence on which the development of the housing and employment options has been based.

The background papers are:

1. Wealden Profile 2009
2. Housing land availability
3. Development of the strategic housing options
4. Summary guide to evidence studies
5. Summary guide to town visioning and masterplanning
6. Rural settlement classification
7. Infrastructure position statement

These background papers can be downloaded from the Council's website or are available from the Council in hard copy at a charge to cover photo copying and postage/packing.

Should you wish to make comments on the contents of this document; please write to Head of Planning and Environmental Policy, Wealden District Council, Council Offices, Pine Grove, Crowborough, TN6 1DH or email ldf@wealden.gov.uk.
1.0 Introduction

1.1 At the invitation of Wealden District Council, the Town and Parish Councils of Crowborough, Hailsham and Hellingly, Heathfield and Waldron, Polegate and Uckfield have been developing local visions and plans for their areas. The aim has been to identify local priorities and development ideas, and to provide evidence of these for the Local Development Framework (LDF).

1.2 This Background Paper provides a summary guide to the visioning and masterplan work to date, and contains links to documents prepared by the various visioning/masterplanning groups.

Context

1.3 Over the past five years the planning system has been substantially reformed to embed community responsive policy-making and deliver sustainable development. The aim of this new spatial planning approach is to deliver positive social, economic and environmental outcomes, through working in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders and agencies that help to shape local areas and deliver local services.

1.4 The Government White Paper 'Strong and Prosperous Communities' described the role of local authorities as 'place shapers' and strengthens the notion that through strategic leadership communities can be brought together to build a vision of how to address and respond to challenges facing a locality, in a coordinated way. This can be done through partnership, by developing a joint vision and supporting and working with other bodies. The aim is to give local people and communities more influence and power to improve their lives and shape the places where they live.

1.5 As part of this approach Wealden's Town and Parish Councils have been preparing visions and plans for their area. Their purpose is to involve stakeholders and the community in helping build consensus about the future of an area and identify priorities for action. These bodies are well placed to represent local views and identity, and Wealden District Council is keen to embrace the views of local communities in its plan making within the Local Development Framework.

What is a masterplan?

1.6 A masterplan can take a variety of forms depending on the context in which a plan is to be used and what is wanted to be achieved. However, in general terms a masterplan is a process that seeks to establish principles of how a place may change over a period of time, physically, economically and socially.

1.7 The benefit of producing a masterplan is that it gives local people a share in the decisions as to what their town should look like and to help guide its future development. It provides an opportunity for the community to set out a vision of what is important, how new development can best be fitted in, the design and quality standards it should meet, how to preserve valued local features
and to map out the facilities and services that the community need and want to safeguard for the future.

**Components of a successful masterplan**

1.8 It is highlighted in Government Guidance\(^1\) that for a masterplan to be successful it should be:

- Visionary – it should raise aspirations and provide a vehicle for consensus building and implementation;
- Deliverable – taking into account likely implementation and delivery routes;
- Fully integrated into land use planning system, while allowing new uses and market opportunities to exploit the development potential of a site or area;
- Flexible – providing the base for negotiation and dispute resolution;
- The result of a participatory process, providing all the stakeholders with the means of expressing their needs and priorities;
- Equally applicable to rethinking the role, function and form of existing neighbourhoods as to creating new neighbourhoods; and
- Able to address multifaceted factors that can make an area more attractive, popular and successful.

**The format and current status of the Wealden Town Masterplans**

1.9 Each town visioning group is at a different stage in the preparation of its plan for its area, and the format of the various documents varies between towns. This was inevitable given that each area is unique, and has a range of different challenges and issues to face.

1.10 The following sections provide a brief summary of the current progress on each of the town plans, a summary of how the local community was involved, and a summary of the key priorities, challenges and needs that have been identified so far.

In each case links are provided to the full documents.

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\(^1\) Communities and Local Government (September 2008) Devising and delivering masterplanning at neighbourhood level - some lessons from the New Deal for Communities Programme
2.0 Crowborough Town Centre Visioning Document

The aim of the approach

2.1 Crowborough visioning group began work in April 2008. Its aim to produce, through partnership working and community involvement, ideas and proposals to help guide the revitalisation and redevelopment of the town over the next 20 years.

Who is involved?

2.2 Crowborough Town Council has created a visioning group to aid in the production of its plan. The visioning group is made up of a number of representatives from Crowborough Town Council, East Sussex County Council, Wealden District Council, and the Crowborough Partnership (a local business network).

The plan process

2.3 The visioning group has produced a Crowborough Visioning Document as the first stage in the process. This followed several local public consultation events. These have included:

- An informal drop in session on 12th November 2008. This event gave residents the chance to have their say about the future of the town and provided an opportunity for the community to find out about the visioning group's draft proposals for a visioning document;

- A 'Town Centre Visioning' open day on 17th January 2009. The purpose of the event was to gain the community's views regarding Crowborough's future and to help develop a vision for the area over the next 20 years. The event was open to residents, local businesses and community groups; and

- Two Stakeholder workshops held on the 2nd and 21st April 2009. These workshops were run by an independent consultancy firm (Dialogue). The aim of the workshops was to build on the feedback received at the public events and to explore key areas in more detail and offer ideas on a range of topics.

2.4 In addition to the above, a visioning questionnaire was made publicly available and responses invited. This provided an opportunity for the community to provide feedback on the visioning work and the draft Crowborough Town Centre Visioning Document.

2.5 You may access the latest version of the Crowborough Town Centre Visioning Document via the Crowborough Town Council website - www.crowboroughtc.co.uk
Summary of key messages so far

2.6 The latest visioning document contains ten strategic aims and describes ways in which the key vision can be achieved. Work is continuing on the project. The ten key aims are described below.

The vision for Crowborough:

2.7 ‘A town of character, which encourages and retains business and people through strong community links and offers a high quality of life with a strong community focus. A town that encompasses the future whilst retaining its traditional values and strives to offers opportunities for all’.

2.8 To build on the above, the vision for Crowborough is of a contemporary market town with an 'up-market' image, known for its successful and varied shopping facilities and commercial opportunities, and offering an attractive and welcoming environment while maintaining its own local distinctive identity.

2.9 The visioning group wants to achieve an active and vibrant town centre through encouraging a mix of uses that will increase the number of people living and working in the centre, and visiting the town, all of which is set in an environment that residents are proud of.

Strategic aims for Crowborough:

Sustainable town with a sense of community

2.10 Crowborough as a town has all the elements (train station, employment, shopping and leisure facilities) to maximise its potential as a sustainable community. However, it is felt that there needs to be more of a cohesive approach in order to reach its maximum potential. Furthermore, it needs to ensure that the necessary infrastructure exists to support future growth and that any new developments or refurbishments incorporate high environmental design standards to reduce energy consumption and pollution, and to have a neutral impact on climate change.

Putting Crowborough on the map - building a place to visit and developing tourism

2.11 Despite Crowborough's beautiful setting, it is felt that tourism in the town has dwindled. The group suggests the need to develop a sense of pride in Crowborough and to encourage tourism by promoting the town as a place to visit, live in or in which to invest.

Improving the town centre

2.12 It is felt that the town centre can be improved by stimulating and encouraging a better retail and service offer, with more independent shops, encouraging a 'cafe culture' and improving the night-time economy. The aim is to create an active and vibrant town centre. The town centre should be improved by giving
pedestrians the priority within the town and by providing more civic open space.

**Improved infrastructure and transport links**

2.13 This includes improving and increasing accessibility to Crowborough for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport and also creating better links to surrounding towns and villages. This needs to be supported by reducing congestion and the impact of vehicles in the town centre.

**Pine Grove - the centre of future town centre development**

2.14 When the Wealden Council offices relocate, there is support for the development of this key location for housing, business space and a 'one-stop shop' civic centre for all public services.

**Protecting the natural and built environment**

2.15 Maintain Crowborough's landscape and historic character without suppressing the modern design of new buildings.

**Business and housing development**

2.16 Crowborough needs to attract more inward investment and provide more housing growth in order to meet the needs of its long-term residents and to ensure that Crowborough can be a good place in which to live and work.

**The local use of developer contributions**

2.17 Ensuring that future growth is supported with local and adequate infrastructure, and where appropriate this is provided for by developer contributions. This can also improve infrastructure and services within the town and can help meet leisure and recreational space needs.

**Affordable housing**

2.18 Increase the provision of affordable housing for those in need and especially for young people and families.

**Greater youth provision**

2.19 Improving recreation facilities and increasing opportunities and services for young people so that Crowborough is a town with services and facilities for all.

**Next steps**

2.20 Work on the project is continuing. Following public consultation the Crowborough Visioning Group will meet to discuss the work that has been undertaken so far and to work towards a final town visioning document.
3.0 Hailsham and Hellingly masterplan

The aim of the approach

3.1 In 2008 Hailsham Town Council and Hellingly Parish Council began work on a joint masterplan covering their Town and Parish. The purpose of the exercise is to provide a document that can inform and supplement the Wealden District Council Local Development Framework.

Who is involved?

3.2 Hailsham and Hellingly Councils began work on their masterplan after consulting residents within the Town and Parish about how best to go about the task. A masterplan steering group was created to oversee the preparation of the plan, comprising councillors from Hailsham Town Council, Hellingly Parish Council and Wealden District Council. Five working groups were also established with the purpose of looking at different aspects of the town’s infrastructure including education and training, healthcare, leisure and recreation, economy, roads and transport, water and drainage.

The plan process

3.3 The first stage in the production of the masterplan involved gathering views and opinions from the steering group and five working groups, and producing a draft Hailsham and Hellingly Masterplan. This was produced in May 2008.

3.4 The draft Masterplan provided an overview of the current position of Hailsham and Hellingly, the spatial vision, and a detailed synopsis of the issues, challenges and requirements of the area for the future. These were presented under specific topic headings.

3.5 Following publication of the draft, public exhibitions were held on the 20th and 21st June 2008. These sought views on the draft masterplan and attendees were given the opportunity to comment by filling in a questionnaire. The responses were then feedback into the masterplan process, and the final version of the Hailsham and Hellingly Masterplan was published in January 2009.

3.6 The final version of the Masterplan is available on the Hailsham Town Council website: www.hailsham-tc.gov.uk

Summary of key messages

3.7 The key issues, challenges and opportunities outlined within the Hailsham and Hellingly Masterplan are summarised below.

Roads

3.8 Concern that the local road system cannot accept more traffic created by the continued development of houses and industry. The plan suggests that it is important that an in-depth study is undertaken to look at the road capacity
prior to planning permission being given for any further expansion of the town. In addition, the creation of relief roads should also be considered.

**Transport**

3.9 It is suggested that a circular bus route is required within Hailsham and the surrounding areas to link the residential parts of the town to the employment and retail centres. This would then allow better access to the town’s facilities and countryside, and for more people. In addition, the current public transport service should be more integrated so that different transport modes can interlink. For example, buses and trains at Polegate.

3.10 Hailsham would like a rail link to be investigated in the future or alternatively an option for a monorail to link Hailsham and Polegate. This would further improve accessibility to and from Hailsham.

3.11 Although Hailsham is relatively flat, the study notes that very few people cycle. On this basis, more and better cycle ways should be created to encourage more sustainable transport movement. Similarly, there is also a need to create footpaths in the more peripheral parts of the town where they do not exist. It is suggested that developer contributions could be used for this purpose.

**Water, sewerage & drainage**

3.12 A review should be undertaken to assess drainage and sewer capacity of both of Hailsham’s sewage treatment works prior to any further development being permitted in the area.

**Retail**

3.13 The plan describes a long-term vision for Hailsham as a retail centre. This includes supporting Hailsham as a 'niche' town for destination shopping and experiences and retaining its retail focus. It suggests identifying new types of retail 'destination shopping', and supporting a limited pedestrian priority High Street. Overall there should be local control over parking, and improvements to the visual appearance of shops and the whole shopping experience.

3.14 The plan outlines a number of ways in which Hailsham as a town could meet its vision. These include:

- Re-development of the shopping centres in the town centre;
- Identifying areas in the town centre that would be suitable for retail development to provide additional shopping space;
- Increasing the amount of housing, offices, and leisure facilities;
- Improving the quantity of retailers within the main shopping centre and the quality of retail facilities;
- Increasing the likelihood of investment in new retail facilities;
- Requiring a high standard of design for town centre development;
- Encouraging a mix and diverse range of uses in the town centre;
- Encouraging small scale convenience shops within or on the edge of existing neighbourhood centres;
• Preserving the Hailsham Market as a commercial market.

**Employment Land**

3.15 Provided that the allocated sites are retained as employment land, the plan considers that there is sufficient employment land available and that any future growth should be concentrated on the presently unoccupied sites, and thereafter at Hackhurst Lane. Should there be a requirement for additional business land, then a well located site with good access should be identified to attract the necessary investment and business development.

**Housing**

3.16 The plan identifies that constraints currently exist to the further provision of housing within the town. However, should these constraints be overcome and should Hailsham be allocated future housing growth, it is believed that the most sustainable housing site options would be land east of Battle Road and land at north Hailsham.

3.17 Additional housing development in the town could result in substantial developer contributions that could be used to improve local infrastructure.

**Healthcare**

3.18 The plan proposes a review of health requirements for the area. Should this identify additional demand for health services then the plan proposes the development of a Diagnostic Treatment Centre with GP surgeries running alongside it. Developer contributions could be involved.

**Education & Training Skills**

3.19 The plan outlines that more primary and secondary school spaces are currently required within the Hailsham area. Should future housing development be located in the area, additional spaces will be needed. The preferred option to meet any additional need for class-room space is to improve and expand the existing schools. However, should this not be possible, the location of sites for education purposes should be assessed based on the location of any new housing developments.

3.20 There is a need for more locally based vocational and skills training.

**Leisure, recreation & the arts**

3.21 In relation to sport and leisure, the plan would like to see the development of more and better facilities. This would include the provision of sports pitches and associated facilities, the possible expansion of the leisure centre to include different uses, and a cycle and running area (fitness trail) into a green network. Consideration should also be given to locating a site for a football stadium.
3.22 The plan identifies that there are not enough parks within Hailsham and proposes a park within any development east of Battle Road, with a new civic centre located within the park, together with the provision of a suitable performance venue and other public facilities.

**Next Steps**

3.23 Hailsham and Hellingly intend to update their masterplan as the Wealden Local Development Framework progresses. This will involve Hailsham and Hellingly undertaking further public consultation in order to gain the communities’ views.

3.24 From May 2009 the community has been invited to take part in an on-line poll where participants can vote for their first priority to improve the town of Hailsham out of a set of eight options. These include town centre development, traffic and transport, and additional housing.

3.25 Full details of the poll are available via the Hailsham Town Council website at www.hailsham-tc.gov.uk

3.26 In addition to this, Hailsham has also recently sent a questionnaire to each household within the town with their quarterly newsletter. The questionnaire seeks views in relation to shopping within the town and how it could be improved. The information will be used to inform the evolving Hailsham and Hellingly Masterplan.

3.27 Questionnaires are also available from a number of shops located within the town.
4.0 Heathfield & Waldron Parish Council - Vision for the Future

The aim of the approach

4.1 Heathfield and Waldron Parish Council produced a visioning document for the future of their area in April 2008. The intention is to inform the preparation of plans under the Wealden District Council's LDF process.

Who is involved?

4.2 The visioning task was lead by Heathfield and Waldron Parish Council’s Planning Committee.

The plan process

4.3 The process involved discussions within the Parish Council and various consultations with residents and businesses.

4.4 The visioning document outlines priority objectives for the area and elements of Heathfield and Waldron's vision which is 'to continue to live in a green, vibrant and safe community'.

4.5 You may view a copy of Heathfield and Waldron Parish Council’s visioning document at: http://www.heathfield.net/

Summary of key messages

4.6 The key messages from Heathfield and Waldron's visioning document are summarised below:

Promotion of business

4.7 The continued promotion of business development including broadening the range of employment opportunities and ensuring that there is enough space for businesses to expand.

Central Weald position

4.8 To maintain the area’s prominent and central position, to protect the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) as far as possible and to keep Heathfield as an attractive and vibrant community.

Landmarks of Heathfield

4.9 With Heathfield having its own characteristic features it is important to preserve its historic character and identity. This would include preserving buildings and landscape features within the area.
Service centre
4.10 The retention of the town as a service centre. This would include the retention of emergency services, professional services (including health) and free parking in order to encourage economic sustainability for businesses, employees and residents, and to provide a service centre for the surrounding villages.

Community facilities
4.11 There is a need for an increased provision of leisure facilities, including a swimming pool and more allotments. Furthermore, the existing community facilities need to be adequately maintained.

Affordable housing
4.12 Additional affordable housing is required to keep young people in the area and to ensure a mixed and cohesive community. Alongside this, improved or expanded infrastructure is required, particularly health services education, public transport and recreational facilities. Also, serious consideration should be given to issues such as energy resources, drainage and the road network.

Public space preservation
4.13 Continue support to the maintenance and enhancement of public areas such as the business hub of the High Street and the public open spaces. It is thought that this is particularly important as the A267 means the appearance and identity of Heathfield are highly visible.

Improved bus services
4.14 Public transport needs to be improved and enhanced to support more sustainable travel and to improve accessibility to and from other Wealden main towns and outlying satellite villages.

Traffic impact
4.15 Improved public transport and better roads would ease traffic pressures in and around Heathfield. Also, further traffic improvements can be made in the High Street by the active policing of illegal parking. This would reduce the often experienced traffic jam and would improve the town centre environment.

Cycle route extension
4.16 To benefit local businesses and increase the health and leisure facilities of the area, the National Cycle Network 21 should be extended to provide a route north from the Cuckoo Trail.
5.0 Polegate Town Masterplan

The aim of the approach

5.1 Polegate Town Council began work on its masterplan for the area early in 2008. The objective is to provide a strategic document to guide future development and to inform the production of Wealden District Council's LDF.

Who is involved?

5.2 The first stage in producing Polegate's Masterplan involved creating a Working Group to input ideas and evidence into the masterplanning process. The Masterplan Group was led by the Town Council and formed of residents who attended the 2008 Annual General Meeting.

The plan process

5.3 A number of issues were considered during the 2008 Annual General Meeting at which residents were asked to discuss in groups matters relating to Polegate. This included discussing community infrastructure, economic performance and leisure and recreation. In addition, a number of spatial vision objectives were outlined.

5.4 Following the consultation exercise, the gathered information was used to produce Polegate's Town Masterplan which was made publicly available in July 2008.

5.5 Should you wish to read the full report including Polegate's spatial objectives then you may do so via the Polegate Town Council website at: http://www.polegate-tc.co.uk/

Summary of key messages

5.6 Polegate's Masterplan outlines eight spatial vision objectives summarised below:

- Ensuring that the location of development is coordinated and meets Polegate's service and employment needs;
- Taking advantage of Polegate's transport infrastructure for the provision of employment and facilities;
- Improving and redeveloping the rail station and adjoining town centre land
- Improving the environment and space available for buses, cyclists and pedestrians;
- Improving gaps in Polegate's housing stock with the provision of good quality houses and facilities;
- Protecting Polegate's landscape setting;
- Providing new parks and open spaces; and
- Maintaining strategic gaps between Hailsham, Polegate and Eastbourne.
5.7 In addition to these vision objectives, the masterplan identifies a number of different challenges, needs and proposals for the future of Polegate. A summary of these is provided below.

**Shopping and retail centre**

5.6 Polegate would like to continue and improve its role as a service centre by attracting larger retail units to the area and by redeveloping / regenerating the High Street and railway station transport hub area. For this reason the siting of new housing development is seen to be critical to the prosperity of the town centre.

**Employment land**

5.7 There is support for a high quality business park to the north of Dittons Road in order to provide additional and local employment opportunities in the area.

**Housing**

5.8 Polegate would prefer the option of locating new housing in a new settlement at Berwick, however, support would be given for approx 800 units, of a broad spectrum, to be located on land south of the bypass in order to create sustainable development. Strategic gaps between Polegate, Hailsham and Eastbourne should be preserved and new infrastructure would be required to support any new housing.

**Transport, roads and parking**

5.9 Improvements to the traffic system are required, especially in the High Street and at the Cophall roundabout. Furthermore, a footbridge link is required between the north and south sides of the town together with better rail links between Polegate and Pevensey. It is also felt that a shuttle service between Polegate and Eastbourne would be of benefit. The town supports the premise of re-opening the Hailsham railway line and also the Lewes to Uckfield railway line for the purpose of reducing road traffic. There is also an identified need for more car parking spaces in the town to alleviate resident parking problems.

**Healthcare**

5.10 Polegate would like to see better health care facilities through the provision of a health centre and a centrally-located polyclinic. In addition, it is recognised that better and more local facilities for the elderly are required.

**Education, training and skills**

5.11 Polegate would support the provision of a school catering for children from nursery to 6th form age should additional school places be required as a result of new housing development. The town would also like to see the further development of adult education in the area.
Leisure and recreation

5.12 The plan would like to see the further development and expansion of the town’s leisure facilities. This would include the provision of more sports pitches, a youth / sports club, a replacement community centre, the extension and creation of cycle ways and the creation of a park.

Water and sewerage

5.13 Should it be required, Polegate would like the provision of a new sewerage treatment plant to be in place prior to any new housing development.

Next steps

5.14 Whilst the aim of Polegate's Masterplan is to be used as a foundation for future proposals for the development of Polegate, the masterplan is seen as a working document and will be subject to reviews and amendments. Polegate Town Council aims to continue its consultation process to ensure that the masterplan is representative of the wider community.
6.0 **Uckfield Town Centre Masterplan**

**Introduction**

6.1 Uckfield was the first of Wealden's towns to begin work on a town masterplan. The initiative derived from Wealden District Council’s work on the LDF and from the acknowledgment that there are specific spatial challenges inherent to Uckfield. These reflect the way in which parts of Uckfield have been developed in the past, and because the town may be expected to grow in the future. Local recognition was given to the masterplan process to help address challenges and to help manage the future in a coordinated way.

**The aim of the approach**

6.2 The aim of Uckfield's Town Masterplan is to develop a strategy for the town which will provide a framework for future decisions, and with the purpose of revitalising, regenerating and improving the area, thus creating a more sustainable community. It is intended to feed into the work on the LDF.

**Who is involved?**

6.3 An Uckfield Town Centre Steering Group was created made up of representatives from East Sussex County Council, Wealden District Council, Uckfield Town Council and the East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service (each a landowner in the town). The purpose of the group is to oversee the production of a masterplan through partnership working, with the aim of enhancing and improving the town.

**The plan process**

6.4 Work on the masterplan began in December 2006 when a community questionnaire was sent to every household in Uckfield. In addition, a “Vision for Uckfield” Design Day was held which was jointly organised and run with the Royal Institute of British Architects. The purpose of the design day was to gain people’s views on how they would like to see Uckfield and the surrounding area develop, present the results of the community questionnaire, and explore Uckfield's potential for improvement.

6.5 Following this initial public consultation, Uckfield Town Council produced a proposal document for a town masterplan. The report outlined a vision, draft objectives and themes for the future of the town and identified a number of initiatives that would support the identified key proposals. The proposal report was agreed by the steering group and Town Council in August 2007.

6.6 Work on the plan has continued and more recently GVA Grimley (planning consultants) have been instructed by the Uckfield Town Centre Steering Group to develop a masterplan for Uckfield. Further public consultation was undertaken to take the masterplan into its next stage. This was in the form of a further community questionnaire and open days towards the end of 2008. The purpose was to generate and investigate a number of proposed scenarios for the future development of the town.
Summary of key issues, challenges and needs

6.7 **The vision** for the future of Uckfield town centre is that of a contemporary market town with an ‘up-market’ image known for its successful and varied shopping facilities and commercial opportunities, offering an attractive and welcoming environment, maintaining its own distinctive identity and acting as a hub for surrounding towns and villages.

6.8 A number of **objectives** have been identified to achieve the vision. In summary these are:

- To maximise the economic and social benefits for local people;
- To develop and integrate town centre attractions providing retail development;
- To improve the standard of design in the town centre;
- To create a safe, distinctive and pedestrian-friendly environment;
- To progress riverside development that takes account of flood risks;
- To provide an accessible town centre with a traffic management system; and
- To provide a well-developed infrastructure designed to cope with future expansion not just current needs.

6.9 The report also outlines a more detailed appraisal as to how these objectives could be met. Proposals include:

**Developing and integrating the town centre**

6.10 The plan introduces a mixture of regeneration and new development to improve the town centre. This includes the introduction of new retail floorspace and the development of other uses in the town, the provision of a focal point in the vicinity of the High Street, investment in the development of a new prime location for public space, retail, and commercial development, and also the development of the river frontage.

**Transforming key linkages and connecting the town’s attractions**

6.11 The aim is to promote a more connected town centre, to improve access for people. This would involve reducing traffic congestion, improving the town's key linkages and developing a town square to link existing facilities.

**Reviving the High Street and improving design**

6.12 The revival of Uckfield's High Street is seen to be important as it is envisaged that this will form the key link to the town's facilities. This would involve improving its physical appearance and redeveloping unsightly buildings. The plan suggests making the town’s Conservation Area more distinctive and developing the river frontage as secondary 'quarters' to serve niche markets such as crafts, food and so on.
Providing for safe and attractive town living

6.13 The plan promotes its town centre for residential use. This would assist in increasing natural surveillance and indirectly improving safety and security within the town.

Developing clusters of leisure activity for a range of users

6.14 The plan proposes to achieve a successful evening economy for a wide range of users by encouraging up-market restaurants and venues as part of a town square and river frontage development.

Improving access and parking

6.15 To improve accessibility and to encourage more people to visit the town, Uckfield Town Council proposes to work with East Sussex Highways Authority and transport operators. Improvements suggested include improving the key gateways and linking these better with the core of the town, increased and improved public transport options including the reinstatement of the Uckfield/Lewes railway, improvements from both the north and south road access and providing the right balance of parking spaces.

Next steps

6.16 The next stage in the development of a town masterplan for Uckfield is underway. The results of the public consultation exercises will be used to finalise a more detailed masterplan. Further public consultation is proposed in the near future which will provide a further opportunity for the community to be involved in the process.

6.17 Should you wish to view the latest plan document or gain further information then you may do so via the Uckfield Town Centre website at: http://www.uckfieldtc.gov.uk/