

Heathfield Town Centre Environment and Design Strategy

Supplementary Planning Guidance



The Heathfield Partnership

July 2001

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Introduction

Purpose

This Strategy seeks to promote the revitalisation of Heathfield Town Centre and, in particular, to foster a high quality of environment and design.

“Design” is taken to embrace all aspects of how the town centre functions, how spaces and buildings relate to each other and how people use and travel through them.

The Strategy has been prepared and approved by *The Heathfield Partnership*.^{*} It has also been endorsed by Wealden District Council for planning purposes.

Approval of the Strategy has followed wide-ranging consultation, details of which, the feedback from it, and the main amendments made to the document as a result of the feedback, are given in “Appendix 1: Statement of Consultation” on page 35.

Further copies of the strategy may be obtained, priced £5.00, from the Planning Department, Wealden District Council or downloaded from the following internet sites:-
www.heathfield.net

*The Heathfield Partnership is a voluntary grouping of the local Councils-Parish, District and County, the Chamber of Trade and Commerce, the Community College, Community Association, Church Together in Heathfield, Sussex Police and other community interests.

Its aim is “to seek to improve Heathfield for the development and benefit of the local community through partnership action promoting appropriate economic, social and environmental development including the enhancement of services and amenities”

N.B. The strategy does not necessarily represent the views of the member organisations of the Heathfield Partnership.

Background

Since the Heathfield Partnership was established, it has given high priority to measures to help regenerate the town centre. Development of this Strategy is part of this ongoing commitment.

The town centre is the commercial heart of Heathfield, offering a range of shops and services for the town, as well as for people living in the surrounding villages and countryside. It also provides an important source of jobs, leisure opportunities, and a place to live. Therefore, the town centre is key to Heathfield's economic well being, as well as being critical in defining its identity or sense of place.

The economic health of the town centre took a major setback with the recession of the early 1990s, and has remained somewhat vulnerable since. Current trends in retailing and in the delivery of services are likely to put further pressures on the vitality and viability of small market towns such as Heathfield.

Every effort needs to be made to make the town centre as attractive a place as possible in which to invest, shop and otherwise use and enjoy if it is to rise to these challenges. Recent retail investments in the centre are a cause for optimism.

Also, national planning and economic development policies now give greater emphasis to supporting town centres, with particular attention being given to supporting market towns. Design quality and environmental attractiveness are recognised as being important in creating vibrant town centres.

Ultimately, the success of individual town centres will depend largely upon the local community working together. This strategy seeks to provide a framework for this.

Approach

As a first step, the **historical development** of the town centre is reviewed. This is considered important to an understanding of the town centre as it is today.

The second step is to undertake a detailed **townscape appraisal** in order to understand what makes the town centre work in urban design terms and what contributes to the character of the town centre.

The centre is broken down into twelve local character areas that each have their own distinct feel and contribute their own sense of place to the town centre. The analysis of these areas provides the “building blocks” for understanding the centre as a whole, and the key issues and problems arising.

The next step is to set out the **vision** for the town centre, drawing on the townscape appraisal, its historical development, the policy context and the considerable survey and public opinion work that has already been undertaken.

The development of the **strategy** flows from the vision and the appraisal. It defines key themes, identifies a number of areas for environmental improvement and a range of actions that are considered necessary to stimulate positive change of the whole public realm.

A key component of the strategy is the setting down of **design guidelines**. These comprise general design principles for all development, with more detailed guidance in relation to shop fronts and advertisements, street furniture and landscape treatments.

In all cases, the aim is not to stifle change, but to encourage sensitive development and change which contributes to the economy, character and amenities of the town.

Status

The Town Centre Environment and Design Strategy has been approved as **Supplementary Planning Guidance** by Wealden District Council. It means that the Council, as Local Planning Authority, will have regard to it when considering planning applications for development, including for advertisement consent and works to protected trees.

The Strategy is considered by the Heathfield Partnership to conform with and elaborate upon the Council’s adopted Wealden Local Plan shopping, design and transport policies, as set out in Appendix 2. In particular, it supplements Policy SH2 which encourages shopping development in town centres, with specific reference to making a positive contribution to enhancing their character and appearance. Policy EN27 emphasises the importance of development respecting the character of adjoining development and promoting local distinctiveness, with an appropriate high standard of design, materials and landscaping.

Historical development

Understanding the town centre's historical development provides valuable insights into its present form, and gives pointers to its enhancement.

Heathfield is very much a Twentieth century town, owing its existence to the coming of the railway in 1880. It sits astride one of the principal ridges of the High Weald, along which the A265 was an important cross-country communication route.

The station was built at the southern entrance of a 243m long tunnel under Tilsmore Corner, with the railway line running north to south. It is understood that this location was chosen to serve Old Heathfield, as well as Cross-in-Hand.

A review of the series of old plans shows that in 1875, prior to the building of the railway, there was virtually no development, yet by the turn of the Century the basic street pattern had been laid out. Essentially, the present layout of the town has evolved from the connection of the station to this east - west through route road. Where the connection was made, the High Street grew.

The town developed initially around the railway station, including the now demolished hotel, and around Tilsmore Corner. These were linked by the twitten that still serves as a vital link from Station Approach to the High Street. By 1910, development had consolidated along the High Street, mainly on its northern side, and Station Road. These were mainly imposing Victorian residences. Shops were also beginning to appear, as were community buildings.

A notable feature of this early period in the town's development was the discovery of natural gas near the station, which was exploited to light it and surrounding properties for some time. The gas holder was situated in the tunnel cutting.

Over the next 20 years, much of the town centre was built-up, with development intensifying along Tilsmore Road and Station Road, which had been constructed south-eastwards to the Hailsham road at the Prince of Wales.

There was an abundance of local building materials – timber and clay, as well as sandstone. These are reflected in the stock bricks, tile hanging and woodwork of buildings. A notable feature of the plan of 1910 is the heavily wooded setting.

The rapid growth of Heathfield in a short period gives it and the town centre in particular a strong Victorian and Edwardian character. While the town is relatively modern, it is surrounded by history - both cultural and natural.

By the time the railway, known locally as the Cuckoo Line, closed in 1968, the town centre very much resembled its appearance today.

The town centre is now established as the main commercial focus for the town (current population some 7,200) and the surrounding area.

Townscape Appraisal

Methodology

The appraisal breaks the town centre down into 12 smaller areas, determined on the grounds of having a particular and discernible character. These local areas are indicated on Figure 1. A summary of the respective area appraisals follows the overall appraisal. For further details of each of the local character areas, reference may be made to the townscape appraisals in the Consultation Draft document.

Overall Appraisal

The overall finding is that the town centre does have a particular character derived from its location, topography and historical development, which makes it distinctive. It has a rather subtle, but still attractive early Twentieth Century character with many fine Victorian and Edwardian buildings. The Old Station and the Station Cottages are Victorian, and the red brick buildings, the church, Bank Buildings, and the oldest buildings on the north side of the High Street are Edwardian. Much of the rest of the High Street was built before the Second World War. It is these buildings that give Heathfield its gentle, period character.

This character varies across the town centre. Summaries of the main features of the respective local character areas follow this overview.

Another important finding is that the subtlety of the period charm of the centre, which draws on the small, largely domestic, scale and materials and tightly knit form, is somewhat eroded by a lack of cohesion of the buildings. This makes it vulnerable to insensitive change.

Key Townscape Characteristics

- Subtle Edwardian charm, although not always easy to appreciate.
- The main through route and short often straight connections to it, form the core of the town, giving long sight lines, good traffic flow and excellent 'legibility' (i.e: the property the town has that lets people know whereabouts in Heathfield they are).
- The retail trade is concentrated within a relatively small area close to free car parking.
- Human scale to the High Street, with two to three storey buildings and small scale detailing.
- A mix of development.
- Attractive period shops on the south side, with fine detailing, human scale and cohesive frontages.
- Fine buildings such as the Church, the Estate Agents opposite and the Old Station.
- A sense of cohesion is given by the materials used across much of the centre such as the local soft coloured old red brick, reinforced by careful new detailing such as the red brick paving, the green painted ironwork and the honey coloured paving.

Main Detractors

- The High Street is a very linear space - producing a sense of travel rather than arrival.
- The A-class road is barrier to pedestrian flow, reducing access across the town.
- The main High Street is a wide space between buildings in proportion to height of buildings - giving no feeling of enclosure and reducing sense of place.
- This configuration makes it easily dominated by traffic
- The lack of enclosure is added to by set back shop fronts and discontinuous frontages.
- There is a lack of a central focal point.
- Lack of gathering places, especially along the High Street, to provide refuge.
- There are few landmarks to reinforce 'legibility' and to celebrate local character.
- The unsympathetic, incongruous 1960's architecture to be found dotted along the north side of the High Street, detracts from local identity.
- Some poor or garish shop fronts
- Poor hard landscape detailing on privately owned forecourts, especially on the north side of the High Street, which also hinders mobility.
- Lack of sense of identity for the town.
- Poor streetscape quality, lacking unity of form, colour, scale and design.

Sense of Place

A sense of place stems from:

- its elevated ridgeline position, road layout and views.
- the similar age of most of the buildings, even though they are not historic and are interspersed with later additions and modern street furniture, signage and clutter.
- the small scale and tight knit form and vernacular architecture of much of the centre, although this reduces at each end of the High Street.

The sense of place is diminished as a consequence of the High Street being a very linear space; i.e. it is wide, straight and level. It is said to have "excessive optical width", which means that the buildings are too far apart in proportion to their height. These attributes produce a sense of travel rather than arrival.

Quality

The character of Heathfield is exemplified by the Victorian Old Station building and the Edwardian buildings of the High Street. The appeal of these period buildings is subtle and nostalgic.

However, the period buildings sit well with modern buildings that are designed with the same visual vocabulary; when the scale, the proportions of the openings, the materials, rooflines and scale of detailing are sympathetic. Post-modern architecture can blend with and intensify the cohesive townscape. For example, the new surgery fits in well with its surroundings, as the windows, and roofline up with its neighbours. The details of the façade have similar proportions and the red bricks blend well with the old red brick buildings.

Amenity and Access

The town centre incorporates some valuable local amenities. It has an excellent Youth Club, central library and now a Millennium Green, as well as the Parish Council offices. There is free parking and a wide range of shops and services.

It lacks a public house in the centre - an amenity that plays an important part in the evening socialising in most small towns. The town lacks an outdoor "hanging out" space designed specifically for young people.

The position of the Heathfield Millennium Green is somewhat removed from the High Street, while the centre itself lacks refuges within the bustle of the centre that could give shoppers the opportunity to relax for a short while.

Access across thresholds of shops is often very poor, due partly to the slope of the pavements. It is better on the flatter, south side of the High Street. The levels on the north side of the High Street, particularly on the private forecourts, are limiting to people with mobility problems and dangerous for visually impaired people. Connections for pedestrians across the town should be improved.

Landscape

Hard detailing within the town centre and particularly on the north side of the High Street needs a major overhaul. Poor landscape on privately owned forecourts disrupts the visual unity of the streetscape. Car parking across the pavements and on forecourts is both incongruous and potentially dangerous. It is also mostly illegal.

There are few areas of effective planting. That around the Co-op is fair, but for the most part, these are scruffy and badly maintained.

The planted baskets on poles have had a considerable impact upon the High Street. Tree planting has had some success in creating stopping places and shade for pedestrians. Much more could be done to enliven and enclose the streetscape with soft landscape, particularly tree planting.

Layout and Safety

Heathfield is doubly blessed by having a straight, level and wide road with long sight lines, together with short, straight roads leading directly from it. As we have seen in above, this layout gives the High Street good legibility, high pedestrian counts, and can help to ensure the success and safety of the town.

Such an enviable layout has only one drawback; the traffic flows well, but is too heavy to allow good pedestrian access across the High Street. When considering this problem, one should not 'throw the baby out with the bath water'. It is important not so much to slow the traffic, but to alter peoples perception of the space.

The road impinges on the townspeople in two ways. Firstly, it hinders access and cuts the centre in two. Secondly, it alters their perception of the town. The High Street is not theirs; it is just a footway beside an intimidating busy road. Both of these problems must be tackled.

Many things add to the pedestrians' perception that the High Street belongs to the cars; the width of the road, car parking on private forecourts, the expanse of tarmac where lay-bys and islands widen the road further, and the feeling that they have no 'refuge from the traffic'. From the drivers point of view, the width of the road, the distance between the buildings, the flatness and the straightness of the road makes them realise they can do the full legal speed in safety - it is a fast space. Clearly, the drivers' perception can be altered to make them reduce their speed, while not imposing a reduced speed limit.

Transport

At the moment, the most convenient form of transport to Heathfield town centre is the car. Free car parks, on-street parking, illegal but common pavement parking, and the fact that the High Street is on the through-route, offers great convenience to the car driver in Heathfield centre. This convenience is somewhat at the expense of other travellers and visitors to Heathfield, but such convenience for the car user makes Heathfield an attractive place to come and shop. Other users need special consideration to ensure their needs are met.

How the bus service serves the community needs a thorough re-appraisal. The current environment for bus users in the High Street is very poor. The north side of the street has a bus lay-by, but the shelter is of poor quality. Passengers boarding and alighting in the opposite direction (the south side of the High Street at the Mill Road end) are forced into the road by the presence of parked cars.

Bus services in Heathfield have seen several improvements in 1999. In January more journeys will be introduced, operated by 'accessible' low floor buses. Such vehicles will obviously be of little help to potential users in wheelchairs, and parents with buggies, if they are unable to negotiate parked vehicles.

Due to the Cuckoo Trail, and its connection with the National Cycle Network, the town has very good cycle access into the town centre. Every effort should be made to capitalise on this asset, and to encourage cycling in the centre.

Parking

Parking in the centre is good, as it is free and well distributed. On street parking makes the centre seem more cluttered with cars, and cuts passing travellers' views of the shops, but the benefit to the retailer of having easy parking available near their shops, for impulse buying, out-weighs these considerations. It is true that parking along the streets of the centre helps to narrow the street, and so is acting as natural traffic calming.

Parking in the centre could be rationalised, as the West car park near the fire station is the furthest from the middle of the town, yet it does not have long stay parking bays, whereas more central parking bays are long stay. A parking audit and study is necessary to ensure that the best use is made of the space available. Should long stay parking be near the middle? Parking for disabled people is badly sited in the town, with some obvious mistakes, such as high curbs next to bays, and bays blocking the only public convenience for disabled people. Clearly this needs addressing.

Local Character Areas

Each area has been assessed in terms of its main townscape features; main detractors; sense of place; quality; amenity and access; adaptability and diversity; vitality; landscape; development potential; and priorities for improvement. The following is a summary of the key townscape characteristics.

Area 1 Tilsmore Corner

- Western approach to, and edge of, the town centre
- Long view along the High Street
- Open, sprawling space, lacking sense of arrival
- Prominent mature trees by Fire Station
- Mix of larger buildings without unity of layout, form and design
- Cars dominate space
- Good access to car parks, toilets and Millennium Green
- Orientation of Co-op detracts from townscape value
- Opportunity for “landmark” building on opposite corner

Area 2 Western High Street

- Small area with pleasant village-like feel
- Shops on north side have attractive Edwardian character
- Wide footpath on north side provides refuge from traffic
- Good connections
- Some separation created both across High Street, due to traffic, and with the rest of the High Street, due to breaks in the retail frontages
- Some facades and forecourts out of keeping

Area 3 Central High Street

- Relative tight-knit core of the High Street
- Long terrace of period shops on side south creates a cohesive and vibrant whole
- Variety of buildings on north side with generally less vitality or harmony
- Cluttered, poor quality frontage areas on north side
- Space is usually dominated by the road, traffic and parked cars
- Good accessibility – crossing, bus stop, information panels, telephone
- Flower baskets work to good effect

Area 4 Church Corner

- Area frames the High Street/Station Road junction
- Unity of red brick Victorian buildings with terracotta detailing
- Narrowness of the High Street and scale of buildings gives enclosure
- Views towards the Downs
- Union Church and bank opposite junction are landmark buildings
- Strong sense of place, undermined by intensive car movements and associated difficulties crossing the road
- Smaller buildings out of scale and character

Area 5 New Parade

- Modern parade of shops marking edge of shopping centre
- Abundant mature trees at either end of New Parade, creating “pinch points”
- New Parade is incongruous in appearance
- Tarmac and vehicles erode feeling of refuge, poor sense of place
- Key services – library and bank – on south interrupted by Sorting Office
- Fringe feel, with long “footfall” despite its retail “attractions”
- Potentially reasonable accessibility – crossing, adjacent car parks – not fully realised

Area 6 North (Co-op) Car Park

- Backland area predominantly car parking
- Co-op store dominant with backs of vernacular High Street Buildings along ridge
- Mature trees frame area to north and west
- Important formal and informal linkages to High Street and to the Millenium Green
- Co-op tree planting and surface materials compliment locality, building harsh in appearance

Area 7 Streatfield

- Small mixed use area on edge of town centre
- Views down to the High Street
- Chestnut tree and Pine on ridge to north have visual impact
- Some fine early Twentieth Century Buildings, incongruous block on western corner of junction

Area 8 Cherwell

- Small transitional area including commercial premises and rear servicing areas
- steeply sloping to the High Street, the views from which add to High Street character
- Unity of design, scale and materials
- Proximity of Cherwell Road/High Street and Station Road/High Street junctions “ties in” this area to the town centre

DELETE: “NB The very recent.....residential character”

Area 9 Station Road North

- Good sense of place, stemming from unity of buildings, and scale relative to the width of the street
- In many ways, the natural continuation of the High Street
- Steeply sloping with views over the Weald towards the Downs
- Clear retail character remains despite being “punctured” by gaps and service uses
- Vernacular red brick buildings in scale with their setting
- General usual clutter – parked cars, hoardings, brash fascias
- Excellent accessibility

Area 10 Eastern Car Park

- Backland area of eastern parts of the town centre, mainly car parking
- Popular shoppers car park
- Fine views to east and south
- Linkages to Station Road are unappealing
- Lack of trees or vegetation to break up or screen car park
- Disparate land parcels gives unkempt feel

Area 11 Central Car Park

- Peaceful enclosed location occupied by well-used car park around backs of properties
- Linkages to Station Road, Station Approach and western end of High Street
- Mature trees to west and south soften the area and provide shade
- Under-utilised, unkempt rear curtilages of High Street shops
- Markets held here create more of a busy atmosphere

Area 12 Station Corner

- Busy, secondary area with district atmosphere
- Old Station is a landmark building which, together with Station Cottages of historical significance
- Varied mix of shops with several restaurants/take-aways
- Fair amount of pedestrian access from adjacent residential and employment areas
- Tunnel cutting offers a natural refuge
- Poorly landscaped area and harsh appearance of building adjacent to central car park entrance

Vision and Strategy

Vision for Heathfield

In its Forward Plan, The Heathfield Partnership has a clear vision about what it wants for the town. In general terms, the vision is to achieve a town that is:

LIVELY	- a focus for the community within a 15-minute drive time. The aim must be to have 'activity' taking place throughout the day and not just between 9.00 am and 5.30 pm - subject, of course, to consideration of local residents.
SAFE	- a place in which all sections of the community and visitors can enjoy without fear for the safety of themselves or their property.
SUSTAINABLE	- action should ensure that in the longer term the measures introduced will not place additional burdens on either the environment or resources.
ACCESSIBLE	- be as accessible as possible but recognizing that a balance needs to be struck between the different types of transport.
ATTRACTIVE	- a quality environment is essential and the town should be free from litter and graffiti and the landscaping, street furniture, etc, should be attractive and cohesive.
USER FRIENDLY	- facilities for all groups should be maintained, offering convenience and the highest ideas of service. Information about the town should be potential users.
DIVERSE	the town should offer a balanced variety of users, e.g. shopping, services, housing, leisure and culture.
RESPONSIVE	the town would be responsive to the needs of its resident community and its visitors.
DISTINCTIVE-	-retain the positive features of available in a variety of forms tailored to different groups of users and Heathfield and enhance them; seek to establish a distinctive feel to the town through a strong and well-managed identity; to recognise the position of the town relative to other towns in the Wealden District Council area.

It recognises that there are two main concerns to successful town regeneration: quality and convenience. Additionally, there is a need to achieve a sense of belonging and community pride and this can only come from being involved.

Vision for the town centre

The overall aim for the town centre is:

To foster a vibrant and attractive heart of the town, that enhances local character and is accessible for all users.

Six key environmental and design objectives are defined for the town centre:

1. *To strengthen its economic role as the commercial focus for the town and the surrounding area*
2. *To stimulate investment in a robust mix of retail, office, leisure and cultural uses*
3. *To raise the visual/design quality and generate a more positive image for the town*
4. *To foster local character and identity*
5. *To provide for safe and convenient access for all people, irrespective of their age, abilities or means of transport*
6. *To develop its role as the focus of the community*

A broad range of measures intended to deliver these objectives is set out on the following pages. Measures are listed under the objective to which they principally relate, although most measures contribute to several objectives.

Strengthening the economic role

Strengthening the economy of the town is the most important element for the regeneration of the town centre.

Providing an environment conducive to shopping, where walking around the centre is not rendered unpleasant by the dominating presence of traffic, is regarded as critical. The environmental upgrading of the south side High Street and the west side of Station Road/Station Approach is seen as having had a positive impact.

In terms of environment and design, the following measures are intended principally to boost trade across the town centre: -

- 1) Continue to upgrade the streetscape (including forecourts), to make the place more attractive. For practical purposes, a phased approach is proposed although this may be modified in the light of any changed circumstances (such as an adjacent development proposal):
 1. North side of High Street – Co-op to Streatfield Road
 2. North side of High Street – Streatfield Road to 'Trading 4 U'
 3. New Parade
 4. North side of High Street – 'Trading 4 U' to New Parade
 5. East side of Station Road to Budgens, including the car park access
 6. South side of High Street – Station Road to National Westminster bank

- 2) Promote improvements to the attractiveness and convenience of the main attractors through partnership with the appropriate organisations. (These include supermarkets, the library, Post Office, etc. Supermarkets are included as there is considerable "leakage" of trade elsewhere.)

- 3) Continue to provide for Farmers Markets in the central car park, and improve its facilities and accessibility (for details, see Accessibility section)

- 4) Encourage a diversity of attractors that broaden the appeal of the town centre. (The focus should be on retail investment, but a mix of uses can add vitality; offices and other service activities provide both jobs and potential customers, while high density housing provides the latter as well as life in the evenings and informal surveillance. See Investment section for details.)

- 5) Develop the Cuckoo Trail as a means of attracting visitors and patronage. This should include:
 - Make the link between the Cuckoo Trail and the town centre more attractive
 - Promote the northern extension of the Cuckoo Trail
 - Provide facilities for cyclists to move about and park bikes safely, including puffin crossings (see Accessibility for details)
 - Encourage developments that relate to the Cuckoo Trail (see also Development Opportunities)

- 5) Make it attractive for people to linger through creating resting and meeting places, including for outside eating, in the design of public places and provision of facilities.

Details of proposed streetscape improvements

A) Western High Street

This should incorporate the following elements:

- re-paving of the footway, as south side of the High Street
- better incorporate forecourt areas to shops, unify design and make more attractive
- co-ordinated street furniture, including seating
- light controlled pedestrian crossing in vicinity of existing refuge
- street trees in an avenue alignment (perhaps akin to Burwash)
- refuge area, incorporating seating, at the western end
- better access for the disabled
- redesign of the bus lay-by to improve safety and better utilise space
- build outs, speed “cushions” or similar at Streatfield Road junction to improve safety and ease pedestrian flow along the High Street

It is important that this area be designed in conjunction with that to the east of Streatfield Road (see below) as, in combination, they provide the main focal area for the town centre.

B) Central High Street-(in front of nos. 58-64)

This should incorporate the following elements:

- give a feeling of having arrived at the centre
- provide a gathering point, an enclosed area where people can rest and relax out-of-doors, but feeling that they are away from the traffic
- prevent intrusive and dangerous pavement parking
- soften area by a considerable increase in planting
- provide enclosure to the west by planting trees in front of nos. 64-60 where services permit
- have seating and associated furniture such as bins, good lighting
- a vertical symbol of congregation such as a piece of sculpture, flag poles
- be paved in a pattern of red paviers (presently used to edge the paving in the centre)
- ramps to replace existing steps
- consistent street furniture
- ultimately, replace the Pelican crossing with a Puffin crossing

C) The New Parade

This should incorporate the following elements:

- extend hanging baskets along the frontage
- signage to the rear car park and new markings
- improved pedestrian access to the car park by widening path and protecting by repositioned bollards
- footway improvements at the eastern end of the access road exit to make it easier and more attractive to walk past the shops
- preventing cars from mounting the kerb on to forecourts to improve appearance and safety
- improve planting scheme, replacing missing tree and filling planters

Encouraging investment

Heathfield town centre is very tight knit and surrounded by residential areas, except to the south-east, where the commercial and industrial areas of Station Road can benefit from its proximity to the town centre.

Research into retail potential carried out for Wealden District Council suggests that there is unlikely to be a demand for major retail floorspace growth, although there may still smaller scale development and other investment opportunities to improve the range of shops and services. While there is no sizeable open area with development potential, one of Heathfield's great strengths is that the retail trade is concentrated within a relatively small area.

While it is not the role of this Strategy to propose the development or redevelopment of specific sites, there are believed to be potentials for further investment in the town centre that may be encouraged:

- 1) Opportunities for a café bar or public house in an area of high connectivity, perhaps at a "gateway" location, close to a car park or related to the Cuckoo Trail
- 2) Where development proposals come forward, encourage the intensification of development and, where appropriate, new landmark buildings. This should apply to all forms of development both in the town centre and the immediate environs, including housing. Low intensity sites are shown on the Townscape Appraisal although it is emphasised that their redevelopment is not inherent in the strategy.
- 3) Should sites or buildings ever become available for re-development, two to three storey buildings of appropriate design and materials should replace them to contribute to the vitality and attractiveness of the centre.

Raising the image and design quality

This involves measures to improve the image of Heathfield for visitors and townspeople alike. Physical works to enhance the character of the town are addressed in the next section.

- 1) "Gateways"
(Gateways will strengthen the sense of arrival into the town, and to intensify the boundary between the rural and residential surroundings and the urban centre, but also they should have an important effect on drivers' perception of the change of street priorities- see details overleaf)
- 2) Create a linked identity, perhaps centred on its history, the park or its potential as a cycling and walking centre, that is reflected on gateway signs, street furniture and perhaps, on a pub sign! (see Street Furniture for details)
- 3) Utilise empty shops even if only with its neighbours window display.
- 4) Set a high standard for the design of the built and external environment, using the Design Guidelines. The lack of enclosure in the High Street, architecture

that is poor in materials, style and scale, garish shop frontages and the mixture of street furniture, all erode the unity of the town centre. Modifying, refurbishing or replacing these elements, when the opportunities to do so arise, will strengthen the identity of the town.

- 5) Create a focal point/area for the town, linked with other areas for outside congregation and relaxation. (see Streetscape Improvements for details)
- 6) Promote tidying up of the physical environment, including through:
 - Adequate, suitably designed litter and dog bins
 - Effective refuse collection regimes
 - Removal or improvements to hoardings and poster sites
 - Proper management of trees and hanging baskets

Gateways

“Gateways” should be established at the following points, as shown on the Strategy plan:

1. western end of the High Street opposite Mill Road car park
2. eastern end of the High Street at the junction with Marshlands Lane/Firwood Rise
3. Station Road between Gibraltar Rise and Budgen’s service road
4. Station Approach at the bridge over the Tunnel entrance

The gateways should be composed of:

- A clear “pinch point” coupled with a town sign
- vertical elements which form a symbolic barrier at 45° to the traffic flow. (They could take the form of a small section of fence, the design of which echoes the town.)
- a change of road surface
- .consideration of a 20mph zone ??????
- the road could be raised into a shallow flat topped road hump, of 50mm only vertical displacement, coupled with ramps of 1 in 40.
- In respect of gateways at points 3 and 4 above, a crossing should be incorporated

Fostering local identity

Strengthening local character will help to differentiate it from competing towns. It will make it more attractive, giving it a better chance of attracting custom and investment.

- 1) Conserve and respect the key townscape characteristics identified in the Appraisal. They are the scale, form, materials and detailing of buildings, the tight urban grain, density of the centre, and the position of the centre upon a main through-route. The mix of development, the small-scale and proportions of the retail units all contribute to the local identity of Heathfield.
- 2) Take special care of the Edwardian landmark buildings with their fine detailing, human scale and cohesive frontages. The notable buildings include:
 - the old station
 - the period shops on the south side of the High Street
 - the Union Church and building on the opposite corner (estate agents)
 - the bank building facing down Station Road

Improving accessibility

The fact that the High Street is a main through road, with consequently high levels of vehicular traffic, brings about significant problems of pollution, noise, pedestrian/traffic conflicts and congestion that have a significant detrimental effect on amenity and enjoyment of the town centre.

One of the most effective ways to enhance the public realm is to increase the ease of pedestrian movements, especially across the High Street and reduce safety.

The convenience of access by the private car is recognised as a key factor for small towns like Heathfield. At the same time, in accordance with the principles of sustainability, a greater emphasis should be placed on introducing design solutions that encourage walking, cycling and the use of public transport.

From the point of view of the vitality and attractiveness of the town centre, primacy should be given to the needs of the pedestrian. Bus routes should be conveniently linked to the town centre and waiting areas well located so as to be safe, inviting and conveniently linked to the pedestrian network.

Traffic management can include the provision of adequate car parking for both shoppers and those working or living in the centre as well as effective signing. A visitor's perception of the town centre can be significantly influenced by how well they are directed to the facilities that it has to offer.

Access for people with mobility needs should form part of the town centre strategy to achieve optimum accessibility and convenience for all users.

An appraisal of the existing linkages and related issues is illustrated on Figure 3.

The main measures to improve accessibility are regarded as:

- 1) Improvements to the existing footpath system, including:
 - Pedestrian signs at arrival points, such as bus stops and car parks, and incorporating directions to key destinations such as places of interest and public buildings - Millennium Green, Cuckoo Trail, PO, supermarkets (-see also Design Guidelines)
 - Further improving the attractiveness of the Station Approach- High Street twitten by opening it up to the car park, extending the resurfacing, additional lighting and widening.
- 2) A pedestrian and cyclist crossing at the western end of the High Street. (This would assist shoppers crossing the High Street, as well as link the twitten with the proposed Millennium Green, giving an alternative to the Tunnel.)
- 3) An accessibility audit, involving people with a range of disabilities, as part of any re-design of the streetscape. Proposals should, where appropriate:-
 - modify streets to be accessible to mobility impaired people
 - involve consultation with groups of people with different disabilities regarding choice of materials and construction
 - ensure obstacle free paths and have regard to levels and the requirement for ramps to serve people who use wheelchairs
- 4) Improved bus access in the form of:
 - an improved bus lay-by on the north side of the High Street

- a new bus stop location on the south side of the High Street. The options for the exact location are currently being investigated. This should involve a marked “bus stop” and erection of a shelter
 - subject to the above, creation of a marked “bus stop” and erection of a shelter at the existing bus stop on the south side
 - bus shelters to be in keeping with the town centre design/colour
 - more accessible local bus information
- 5) Management of car parks to maximize accessibility, including through:
- integrating the management of public and private car parks
 - co-ordinated signage from the outskirts of the town centre and at the town centre car parks (It may be appropriate to reinforce the signing with town centre maps placed in key locations such as car parks, or public places with seating areas. There may be an opportunity to invite artists to design a distinctive map for the town centre.)
 - giving priority to shopper parking over long stay parking
 - reviewing the merits of allocating at least part of the Station Road West car park as short stay
- 6) Review the use of cycle racks and consider additional ones in key locations.
- 7) Pursue traffic calming measures along the High Street in the form of:
- Raising the pedestrian crossings*, with intervening speed cushions/ramps
 - Gateways (for details see Raising the Image)
 - Investigating the feasibility of a mini roundabout at the High Street/Station Road junction (to reduce speed, congestion and improve safety)

*Raising the pedestrian crossings in the town centre is primarily recommended as a way of creating an environment conducive to calm driving, and an awareness of others. It would improve safety and convenience for vulnerable road users and substantially alter the pedestrians’ perception of the centre.

To keep traffic speed down and to keep the drivers aware of pedestrians, elements additional to the gateways should be placed along the High Street, at intervals of not more than 150 metres. It is recommended that flat-topped road humps be used, with vertical displacements of only 50mm, and ramps of 1 in 40. Because these are low, with 2 metre long ramps, the main impact of these will be visual. They can be used in conjunction with Puffin crossings.

- 8) Investigating traffic calming on Station Road to help pedestrians to cross safely
- 9) Promotion of a new twitten from Station Road West car park to the High Street (This would help to increase footfall in the central area of the High Street. However, as it involves private land, it needs the landowners agreement.)
- 10) A new twitten running from Station Road East car park to the High Street. (To increase footfall in New Parade, aid pedestrian access, including disabled)
- 11) The enforcement of traffic controls to cut down on the illegal parking coupled with the services of a Traffic Warden if possible.

Developing a community focus

As well as being the commercial heart of the town, the centre should be the focus of community life. This is already being achieved through initiatives such as Le Marche

and Le Tour and, more recently, the establishment of the Millennium Green. Also, the Parish Council offices, Youth Centre and Library, are situated on the High Street.

Use of the Tunnel and south cutting

1. The current proposal for a skateboard park in the south Tunnel cutting, being promoted as by the Parish Council, will offer a facility sought by younger people in the community. This recognises that the site is near the centre.
2. It will be important that the layout of this area recognises that it is an essential access to the Tunnel and the Millennium Green beyond.
3. Also, provision should be made for the interpretation of the railway and gas history of the town here (or in the Millennium Green) Potential uses should be designed to complement one another.
4. The Heathfield Tunnel itself is unique and potentially a place of interest. Again, interpretative material is needed to capitalise on this.

IT centre(s)

5. Early work on behalf of the Heathfield Partnership has identified the need for access to some form of information technology facility geared both to younger people and for the purposes of encouraging life-long learning. It is an objective of the strategy to achieve this in the town centre either by one centre or a number of smaller centres.

Bar-bistro

A pub is normally a main point for social gathering, yet as already noted, is lacking from the centre itself.

Sculptures and other public art

Public art can add interest and local distinctiveness to the town centre and particularly enhance gateways, focal points and public spaces and along key circulation routes. Designs should complement the specific location in terms of scale, relationship to movement and activity and the character of the space.

Good opportunities for public art are:

- Outside Trading-4 U
- On the side walls of the Co-op and Budgens store, subject to landowner consent
- At the New Parade

Christmas Lights

The desire for Christmas lights to add to the vitality of the town centre and boost trade was highlighted through the consultation process. This is being pursued by the Heathfield Partnership.

Design Guidelines

Design principles applicable to all development

In addition to meeting the general requirements of the planning policies set out in Appendix 2, all developments in Heathfield town centre should:

- respect the qualities of the site and its setting, as highlighted in the townscape appraisal;
- retain and/or respect the essentially late Victorian/Edwardian character, in particular the landmark and other notable buildings, and groups of buildings, as appropriate;
- seek to reflect the tight “urban grain” and, where possible, intensify land use in terms of the density, scale and massing of development, whilst maintaining the character of the locality;
- complement the local context in terms of orientation, building and roof lines, detailing and materials (Within the overall design context, there is the opportunity for architectural innovation, including on “gateway” sites);
- maintain or, where practicable, improve opportunities for safe, convenient and attractive pedestrian movement, together with access by cycle and bus, particularly through those measures highlighted in the Strategy;
- create and help define spaces that enhance both the buildings they face and overall streetscene, and in a manner consistent with the Strategy;
- ensure that hard and soft landscape treatments complement local townscape features, in line with this Strategy and Design Guidelines. (This also applies to highway and parking areas, street furniture, on street and off-street parking areas and signage)
- make effective provision for the needs of mobility impaired people in the layout and design of both buildings and external areas

Shop Fronts and Advertisements

Shop fronts are an important visual element in the street scene. Their design can do much to contribute to, or detract from, visual amenity. There is a balance to be struck between responding to the modern day needs of shopping and advertising and retaining the visual integrity of the street. Sensitive shop front design can itself help to create a more attractive place to shop.

In many cases, it will be appropriate to reflect the traditional architecture of the buildings in the design of shop fronts. However, there may also be opportunities to allow for more contemporary design that is nevertheless sensitive to the traditional style. General principles which apply to shop frontage design are:-

- shop frontages should be in keeping with the character of the street and the individual building
- shop frontages should contribute to the liveliness of the streetscene, yet at the same time complement the materials, form, style and colour of the building of which they are an integral part
- they should relate to the vertical and horizontal proportion of the building
- a robust frame around a display window is encouraged to create the impression of visual support to the upper storeys of a building
- retain traditional details
- the colours and materials used in the design of shop frontages should be in keeping with the building and the general range of materials and colours traditionally used in the vicinity (see also guidance on advertisements)

The vertical division of display windows and the incorporation and treatment of elements such as fascias and stallrisers, will determine how successful the shop front relates to the scale and proportion of each individual building.

The design of fascias:-

- should be in scale with the height of the building;
- should not cut across more than one frontage;
- should not encroach above the first floor level and obscure upper floor windows and architectural details,
- the design of fascias should be integral to the design of the shopfront and building. (Modern materials such as aluminium or perspex are best used with caution and only where they will complement the building and area.)

Stallrisers provide a visual base to the building and raise the height of the display window making it easier to see. Their design should relate to the style of the building and to the height of the shop front. The height of the stallriser should be in proportion to the amount of glazing.

Other elements also need to be considered in order to achieve an appropriate design of the shop front. These include doors, canopies and blinds, measures to make access easier for people with particular mobility needs and the incorporation of security measures. Advice on shop front security is provided in circular 5/94, 'Planning Out Crime'.

Signs and advertisements are inherent in town centre environments, but they also need to be in sympathy with the character of the building and surroundings.

Covering the display window with a proliferation of advertising posters or boards can detract from visual amenity and is best avoided. Garish, internally illuminated signs should also be avoided.

In the design of signs and advertisements, particular attention should be paid to:-

- location, size and proportion
- materials and colours that are sympathetic to the centre. Colours such as terra cotta, brown, cream, maroon and dark green will be a more appropriate palette than lime green, orange and magenta, chrome, yellow or bright turquoise for instance, particularly when used together
- sizes and styles of lettering, colour and materials that ensure signing makes a positive contribution to environmental enhancement of the town centre
- the desirability of avoiding the unnecessary proliferation of signs

Street Furniture

The collection of lighting, signing, seating, bollards, railings, waste bins and telephone kiosks can have a significant impact on visual amenity within a town centre. to enhance the character of the streetscene.

- Use the corporate street furniture, paving, railings, in the standard Heathfield colour - Dark Green (Trade British Standard 14 C39).
The chosen design approach to street furniture provides a co-ordinated scheme of street furniture, materials and signage to harmonise with the town centre. This is illustrated on the following pages
- provide good street lighting that better illuminates the main roads, without causing light spillage, and appropriate lighting of pedestrian areas with a design of columns that reflects the local character.
- reduce the amount of “clutter”

Landscape treatments

Trees and soft landscape schemes may be used to define street spaces and activities, and can make a positive contribution to the setting of buildings.

Tree planting associated with development should:-

- implement/complement the landscape provisions of the strategy, as appropriate
- reduce the optical width of streets
- define/enhance boundaries between public and semi-private space, e.g. between pavements and forecourt/parking areas in front of office buildings;
- where appropriate, enhance gateways into the town centre;
- frame views, including by creating or helping to define “pinch points”;
- soften predominantly hard spaces, including the Station Road East car park;

- enclose and screen spaces
- .

The siting of trees and choice of species should take into account:-

- visual appearance: shape, seasonal interest, the way in which they will complement or contrast with adjacent buildings and surface finishes;
- ultimate height and spread of the species;
- impact on highway safety, so as not to obscure sight lines, street lighting, or to impede traffic flow;
- ability to withstand possible vandalism and other damage;
- the need to ensure they do not become obstacles to pedestrians, or to people with mobility needs;
- pollution tolerance;
- the need for adequate ground preparation and irrigation;
- tree protection and separation from underground services;
- land ownership;
- future maintenance of trees and their replacement;
- the landscape character of the town and its AONB setting.

Semi-mature/mature trees will help create an immediate visual impact in the streetscene and are likely to be able to withstand damage more effectively than younger specimens. The choice of species should include those with a clean stem, to provide sufficient clearance above the carriageway to help avoid visual and physical obstruction.

Implementation

This strategy has been developed on the basis of the measures being achievable within the next 5 years. However, as a voluntary body with only very limited resources of its own, the Heathfield Partnership recognises that implementation will be substantially dependent upon the actions of other organisations and individuals.

These may take the form of:-

- The responsible authorities taking on board the strategy in the carrying out of its duties (e.g. East Sussex County Council as Highway Authority and Wealden District Council as the main provider of car parks);
- Other organisations, businesses and individuals taking account of the strategy in pursuing their own objectives (e.g. land owners in maintaining their properties and forecourts, businesses in the design of their shopfronts or provision for the disabled);
- Local authorities and other bodies (whether public, private sector or voluntary), as part of their remit to secure economic regeneration, community development and/or environmental enhancements (e.g. Wealden District Council and Heathfield & Waldron Parish Council core funding for the Partnership);
- The District Council as Local Planning Authority using its development control powers to ensure that development proposals are in line with the strategy, as it has been approved as Supplementary Planning Guidance. With the exception of larger proposals, this will normally be through the application of the Design Guidelines.

The Heathfield Partnership will seek to work with all appropriate bodies to secure funding for initiatives that advance the strategy. Indeed, many of the measures require a number of organisations and/or individuals to be effective. It is envisaged that mini partnerships or working groups of interested parties may be formed to develop initiatives such as streetscape improvements.

Appendix 1 – Statement of Consultation

This statement focuses on the processes and methodology involved in consultation, highlights the response received and sets out the alterations made to the strategy as a result. As preparation of the Supplementary Planning Guidance has been a two-stage process, there have been two phases of consultation. The first phase followed publication of a Consultation Draft document in May 2000. This included:

1. Well-attended public exhibitions held over three days. This was advertised via posters, leaflets (see below), local press coverage, and a radio slot. They attracted around 250 people. Comments from these exhibitions were collected.
2. The distribution of leaflets to Parish Council offices, the library, local shops, offices, surgeries, the community centre, and at the exhibition, to be made available to the public. These outlined the strategy and proposals for the town-centre revitalisation and included a reply slip for people to give their views. Sixty-five leaflets were returned and also a number of letters.
3. A presentation for all town-centre businesses and traders. A further presentation was also given as part of an open meeting held by the town's Chamber of Commerce.

With regard to the public exhibitions, the main issues raised included traffic and parking. Comments related to support for traffic calming, the difficulty in crossing the High Street, the retention of free parking, the enforcement of controls over parking, a need for youth facilities (such as a cinema, swimming pool, and cafe) and retail improvements (i.e. no more estate agents, building societies, charity shops, more "High Street names", a wider range of shops and more specialist shops).

With regard to the leaflets, 80% of those returned showed support for the proposals. The issues raised the most included traffic and parking, the revitalisation of the economy of the town centre, the provision of new community facilities, and the general appearance of the town. There were letters received showing support for the proposals. There were also several letters opposing the proposal for the New Parade involving tree planting and market stalls on the forecourts (from New Parade owners and occupiers). These letters have been taken account of and the proposal has been deleted from the strategy.

With regard to the presentations, the main issues raised included the general economy of the town, and suitable premises for expansion in the area. Other points raised included the lack of youth facilities, business rates, and a lack of a cohesive community effort.

A report analysing all forms of comments received was compiled and considered by the Heathfield Partnership.

A further Draft Strategy, in the form of Supplementary Planning Guidance, was then produced in March 2001. This was based on the Consultation Draft, but included amendments in response to the feedback received from public consultation. It also refined down the many ideas and options previously put forward for debate, and took account of the on-going work of the Heathfield Partnership and other bodies. The design guidelines were also bolstered both in terms of the overall principles and in the guidance on shopfronts, street furniture and landscaping.

The second phase of public consultation followed the draft SPG document. It included:

1. Extensive press coverage of draft Townscape Appraisal, Accessibility and Townscape plans.
2. Presentations to the Chamber of Commerce AGM and the Rotary meetings (comments from these meetings were collected).
3. The distribution of summary/explanation leaflets.
4. Plans being shown in the library, Parish Council offices, on the heathfieldOnLine.com and heathfield.net internet web pages.

The member organisations of the Heathfield Partnership were also consulted during both phases of public consultation. These include Parish, District and County Councils, the Chamber of Trade & Commerce, the Community College, Community Association, Church Together in Heathfield, Sussex Police and other community interests.

A range of comments was received in response to the above consultation. These included suggestions for road calming at the top of Station Road, a better range of shops, an indoor swimming pool, more leisure activities, a library, artwork, more bins, the imposition of traffic wardens, illegal parking, traffic measures, wheelchair access, and general appearance related improvements (e.g. more trees). Recognising that while not all the above matters are land-use related, the following comments received are included in the strategy as amendments to the draft SPG document:

The enforcement of traffic controls to cut down on the illegal parking coupled with the services of a Traffic Warden if possible.

The amendment of Area 8 in the Townscape Appraisal to take account of recent residential development of the area.

Looking further at options for a new bus stop on the South side of the High Street.

A desire for Christmas Lights in the town.

Investigating traffic calming on Station Road to allow pedestrians to cross safely.

Wealden District Council's Strategic Planning and Economic Development Committee resolved on the 6th June 2001 to adopt the Strategy, as amended in para.13 of report GB1021.0001, as supplementary planning guidance (Minute 01WM/265), insofar as it related to land-use matters.

Appendix 2 Key Wealden Local Plan policies

The following policies are taken from Wealden District Council's Local Plan, adopted in December 1998. The Design Guidelines in the strategy are regarded as consistent with these. Other policies in the Local Plan may also be relevant to individual development proposals within the town centre.

Design

EN27 Proposals for development will be permitted when the following layout and design criteria are met:-

(1) the scale, form, site coverage, density and design of the development and the use of materials and landscaping should respect the character of adjoining development and, where appropriate, promote local distinctiveness. The design, materials and landscaping should be of an appropriate high standard;

(2) the proposed development should not create an unacceptable adverse impact on the privacy and amenities of adjoining developments and the neighbourhood by reason of scale, height, form, noise and traffic movements;

(3) the proposed development should ensure a satisfactory environment for the future occupants, including adequate provision for daylight, sunlight, privacy, garden space and/or appropriately landscaped amenity areas;

(4) the proposed development should not constitute an unacceptable backland or 'tandem' form of development;

(5) regard has been paid to crime prevention measures whenever possible and appropriate.

Shopping issues

SH2 Within the main shopping areas, as defined on the Proposals Map, new development and the redevelopment or conversion of existing properties for shopping uses will be encouraged and permitted when the following criteria are met:

- (1) the proposed development makes a positive contribution to enhancing the character and appearance of the town centre;
- (2) for larger scale proposals, where appropriate, a comprehensive approach to development is taken;
- (3) satisfactory rear service access is provided wherever possible;
- (4) contributions are made by developers towards highway improvements should these become necessary because of the additional traffic generated.

SH3 Within the main shopping areas, as defined on the Proposals Map, proposals for the conversion of ground floor shops for financial and professional purposes within Use Class A2, food and drink purposes within Use Class A3 or other service uses will only be permitted where the following criteria are met:

- (1) there is no disruptive effect on the shopping frontage through a concentration of non-retail uses;
- (2) provision is made for a window display appropriate to a shopping frontage which is in keeping with the character of the shopping area;
- (3) there is no detrimental effect on the character or amenities of the area through smell, litter or noise.

SH5 Within the main shopping areas, as defined on the Proposals Map, proposals for the use of existing premises above ground floor level for business purposes within Use Class B1 will be encouraged and permitted. The conversion of ground floor premises to business use within Use Class B1 will not be permitted.

SH6 Within the main shopping areas, as defined on the Proposals Map, proposals for the use of existing premises above ground floor level for residential purposes will be encouraged and permitted. The conversion of ground floor premises to residential use will not be permitted.

Transport issues

TR3 Planning applications for new development will be permitted where the following criteria are met:

- (1) the proposed development does not create or perpetuate unacceptable traffic conditions;
- (2) a satisfactory means of access (vehicular, cycle and pedestrian) is provided to meet Local Planning and Highway Authority standards;
- (3) where appropriate, the provision of suitable public transport facilities.

TR11 In major development schemes, particularly in town centres, developers should provide covered and secure cycle parking areas.

TR13 The Council will seek to secure the provision of safe and convenient pedestrian routes in new developments, which should link to the existing footpath network where appropriate.

TR14 Throughout the Plan period the Council will review the need for off-street parking spaces, and the level of parking to be provided as part of development proposals, in the light of the objectives of reducing the need to travel, especially by car, and of improving public transport. New car parks will only be provided when the review shows a need for them, and where resources and sites are available.

TR15 In Crowborough, Hailsham, Heathfield, Polegate and Uckfield, and other settlements where deemed appropriate, the Council may accept commuted payments for vehicle parking spaces by agreement with intending developers where:-

- (1) there is a need to provide a reasonable number of parking spaces which cannot be met on individual sites but which can be met in a reasonable time in proposed public car parks nearby;
- (2) the settlement in which the development is proposed appears in the Council's approved car parking capital programme.

Landscaping

EN14 In appropriate cases, the Council will require landscaping, including surface treatments, to be carried out as part of development proposals. Where required, such schemes should:-

- (1) seek to retain existing trees, significant hedgerows and other valuable site features;
- (2) normally comprise primarily native species;
- (3) complement the scale and character of the proposed development and the locality;
- (4) have regard to associated nature conservation benefits;
- (5) be implemented at the earliest practicable opportunity and thereafter satisfactorily maintained during the early years.

Advertisements

EN30 Advertisements and signs should not detract from the character of their surroundings or, where appropriate, the style, scale and proportion of the building, and should otherwise be acceptable in terms of amenity and public safety. In this consideration, the Council will also have regard to the need to avoid an inappropriate proliferation of signs.