

Heathfield Revitalisation Partnership

Healthcheck

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1. Introduction

1.1 A Heathfield Profile

Heathfield is a small, mainly residential town, lying in the heart of Wealden District. It occupies a prominent and elevated position on one of the main ridges crossing the High Weald, which permits extensive views both to and from the surrounding countryside. The town has a population of approximately 7,500 people and is an important local shopping, employment and service centre, serving a wide rural catchment area.

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.

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 gasholder 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 7,500) and with the surrounding villages it serves these numbers increase to over 12,500.

2.) THE HEATHFIELD PARTNERSHIP

The Heathfield Partnership – An Overview



Rupert Simmons ~ Heathfield Partnership Chairman of the Board

The **Heathfield Revitalization Partnership** is in essence, a group of volunteers who come together to seek ways and means to improve the prosperity and amenity of Heathfield. The “Founding Fathers” are the democratically accountable bodies of the Heathfield and Waldron Parish, Wealden District and East Sussex County Councils who work in Partnership with other local associations notably the Heathfield and District Chamber of Trade and Commerce to raise funds through bids for grants (be they local, national or European) to enable Heathfield to benefit for specific objectives.

For each of those objectives the Partnership as a matter of professional discipline, will have conducted a satisfactory business plan (which will incorporate suitable local consultation) in the course of winning the bid and then seek to execute or commission the work for the project in question. Examples of Groups currently represented on the Partnership are the Police, The Heathfield Community College, The Youth Club, Churches Together in Heathfield and many other Voluntary organizations including representation for the elderly and disabled.

There are 6 main Projects that are in hand at the moment and they are hugely varied in scale and direction: -

The regular Farmer's Market where we see local producers retailing directly to the Public. This is run by a very successful sub-committee and wonderfully supported by the Young Farmers and some of the Suppliers themselves.

Then there is the High Street programme working steadily through the town to improve its safety and appearance. The first stage to be completed was the western side of Station Road and the Southern side of the High Street. The most recent success has been the completion of the stretch from the Co-op to Streatfield Road. This is also very important to Traders and Landowners in that it now incorporates the necessity of being compliant with the Disabled Access Act. By improving the amenity of the Town we seek to improve footfall and raise the prosperity of the shops, which in turn will offer more choice and quality for the shopper.

Another Group is looking to encourage Inward Investment into the Town to ensure all the shops are vibrant and the industrial estates are maximized and that quality jobs are created wherever possible. Brochures and Web sites are designed to entice investment into the Town.

The Website is a project in itself to promote the whole community in all its aspects and is proving to be a tremendous success. There are computer pub-hub schemes to enable those without easy computer access or experience, the necessary opportunities where it is convenient for them.

Tourism is another critical factor and the project of enabling the NCR 21/Cuckoo trail to run through and on north from Heathfield is important. Already presentations to possible alternative routes extending North have taken place at both the Towns of Heathfield and Mayfield in public exhibitions. The finding of this thorough consultation process will be incorporated in to our Action Plan for tourism later in the year.

To help create a structure suitable for Fundraising we have created a Parent Company, limited by Guarantee, which has now been awarded Charitable Status and that should further enhance our capabilities. I now have the honour to Chair that Board and in doing so represent the County Council. Other Trustees are Rosemary Mays-Smith, Chair of the Partnership, and also, Chair of Tourism and High St Committees. Trevor Goldsmith, Chair of the Chamber of Trade and Commerce is also Chair for Inward Investment. Teresa Blaxland is Chair of IT Committee, Cllr Roger Ferry of Heathfield and Waldron Parish Council represents the Farmers Market at Board Level and three other Members, George Claydon MBE acts as Company Secretary Tim Hough is Treasurer and John Tolley bring specialist trust experience to the table.

The local authorities have always seen the Heathfield Partnership as the “flagship” of Partnership working. It has become a highly successful organisation that is gradually enhancing Heathfield and surrounding Hinterland by providing a range of diverse business opportunities, employment, training, shopping, low cost housing, leisure and tourism facilities and developing a sustainable environment for these services to grow for the future. The Heathfield Partnership never stops working for the people of Heathfield, and our hope for the future is that it will become the place to be.

2.1) Background

Residents and local organisations whose aim is to work together to bring about improvements and benefits to the town of Heathfield and Waldron Parish formed the Heathfield Partnership in 1995. The Partnership was formed to take a proactive stance in the development of strategic plans that affect the Parish.

It should be noted that the Heathfield Partnership is a mature Partnership with a wide representation from the community. They have already successfully completed several projects and are currently working on a number of others. These are documented elsewhere in the Health Check.

2.2) Partnership constitution

The Partnership operates as a company limited by guarantee and was granted charitable status in spring 2003. The company’s name is the “Heathfield Partnership Trust Limited”.

The Heathfield Partnership Trust Limited A company, Limited by Guarantee,
No. 4350359 Registered Charity No. 1097521

Organizations from Heathfield and the surrounding communities sit on the Heathfield Partnership. The Partnership meets on a bi-monthly basis. The Partnership reports to the Trustees board also on a bi monthly cycle.

The following Partnership committees/sub groups have been formed within the Partnership to work on projects, which have been identified through the Partnership business plan, community consultation, and research and Partnership meetings:

- a) The Farmers Market
- b) The High Street improvement /Renaissance including Transport
- c) The IT & Education
- d) The NCR21/Cuckoo Trail and Tourism
- e) The Inward Investment and Commercial Regeneration

The committees meet on a monthly basis. The Trustees of the Partnership head up the committees and report directly back to the Trust Board and to the Partnership Members.

The sub group/committees are made up of the following groups:

Heathfield Partnership

Partnership Board

Committee Groups	Chair	Members
Farmers Market	David Turton	Farmers Young Farmers Landowners Traders/Crafts Le Marche Women's Institute
Heathfield High St/Renaissance	Rosemary Mays Smith	Volunteer Organizations Officers from County Council Officers from District Council Officers from Heathfield and Waldron Parish Council Councillors from County Council Councillors from District Council Councillors from Parish Council Chamber of trade Landowners Retailers & Charities
Inward Investment	Trevor Goldsmith	(Landowner and Businessman) Sussex Enterprise E.D.E.A.L Chamber of Commerce Officers from County Council Officers from District Council Officers from Parish Council Councillors from County Council Councillors from District Council Councillors from Parish Council
Tourism & NCR21/Cuckoo Trail	Rosemary Mays Smith	Volunteer Organizations Millennium Green Trust Chamber of Commerce Local Horse riders Asset Local Cycle groups Mayfield&FiveAshesParish Mbers Solicitor – Adviser – negotiator Officers from County Council Officers from District Council Officers from Parish Council Councillors from County Council Councillors from District Council Councillors from Parish Council SUSTRANS Landowners
ICT/Education	Teresa Blaxland	District Council Adult Education Councillors from County Council Councillors from Parish Council Youth Service Governing Body of H.C.C
Partnership Co-ordinator	Yvonne Hutchinson	Heathfield Community College Partnership Co-ordinator

In addition to this the Partnership calls on a much wider group of organisations for specialist matters who all give their time voluntarily or at a reduced rate. This advice has proved invaluable to the Partnership that relies on volunteers for all input. The groups are as follows.

Group	Name	Issues
Abbeyfields East Sussex Disabled Association CRATA SUSTRANS	Pam Warmesley Nicki Oakes Nicki Oakes Ray Blackwell	The Elderly Access issues Resident/Housing Cycling
Churches Together Heathfield Heathfield & Waldron Rotary Club and other Charities	Lee Smith Jack Hampton	Religious matters Business
Management Heathfield & District Agricultural Show ESCC RPA SRCC Charities in Heathfield	David Unsworth White Rupert Simmons Group Group Jack Hampton	Agricultural Local Member/Edu Rural issues Rural issues Volunteer issues
Consultant Consultant Consultant Consultant Consultant	Clarissa Hallings Pott Alan Staples John Tolley Yvonne Hutchinson Patrick Burnett	Community issues Finances Property & Finance Media & PR Legal

2.3) The Partnership's Objects

The Partnerships objects comply with their charitable status. The Partnerships' aim is 'the promotion for the public's benefit of urban and rural regeneration in areas of social and economic deprivation or stagnation in the town of Heathfield and the surrounding area within the Parish of Heathfield and Waldron, East Sussex by all or any of the following means:

Object No 1. The Relief of Poverty.

The area houses a significantly higher than average number of disabled persons and middle aged/older former farm workers who are unemployed due to the general downturn in farming generally, and which was exacerbated by the combination of BSE and the recent foot and mouth epidemic that surrounded the area preventing movement of livestock etc.

We aim to create general purpose, sustainable job opportunities by regenerating the Town Centre, thereby attracting inward investment to the area, together with additional visitors and tourists, which will have a beneficial effect on the number of vacant shop premises and encourage their redevelopment into more modern three storey units providing retail, office and accommodation levels where appropriate. We will liaise between owners and planning authorities to achieve these objectives.

Object No 2. The Relief of Unemployment.

We will provide access to and training opportunities on computers. This will be achieved by providing a computer training centre and classes in Heathfield Youth Centre and Internet access in Heathfield and surrounding communities. These training initiatives will help to make the unemployed more 'employable'. To develop these initiatives we will liaise with the County, District and Parish Councils, local employers – including the Chamber of Commerce – and staff at the Heathfield Community College, who will be responsible for the 'training'.

Object No 3. The Advance of Education, Training or Retraining etc.

Our aims in these areas are broadly the same as those outlined Objective No 2 above. Additionally, we will work with the Careers Department of the Heathfield Community College to develop opportunities for work experience in liaison with local employers.

Object No 4. Provision of housing for those in need etc.

We will lobby local landowners to be sympathetic to local needs and liaise with them and planning authorities to meet the Town's Urban Regeneration aims by developing single and two storey High Street shop premises into three storey units comprising retail, office and residential levels – the latter level providing opportunities for housing to let. Similarly we will seek to persuade owners of older/empty premises to undertake refurbishment work to bring them back into occupational use.

Object No 5. The Provision, Maintenance and Improvement of Public Amenities.

The Partnership committees / sub groups are working on the following projects: the northwards extension of the National Cycle Route 21 (NCR21); High Street Improvements to Heathfield Town Centre; the Farmers Market

These initiatives/improvements are helping to revitalise Heathfield as a Market Town by influencing residents to shop locally and attracting visitors to the High Street shops and Town. In due course, this will have the effect of attracting inward investment to the Town.

The Heathfield Partnership employs a part-time Town Co-ordinator to help bring together all the various groups, to seek out and explore fund raising opportunities, to prepare grant applications, to inform, market and generally facilitate the work of the Partnership for the benefit of the Town. The Chamber of Commerce and the Parish and District Councils fund the salary for this post.

Object No 6. Preservation of buildings or sites of historical or architectural interest.

Along the NCR21/Cuckoo Trail, and its proposed extension to Mayfield, there are many brick built bridges from the Edwardian era that need to be maintained in a serviceable condition and to preserve the history surrounding the introduction of the Railway to Heathfield and beyond in the mid nineteenth century. The old Railway Station building to the south east of the town has now been converted to a retail outlet but the building has been preserved. The former railway tunnel from the old Station building, emerges to the northwest of the town at the start of the Millennium Green. This tunnel has recently had substantial restoration works done and now gives improved access to the Millennium Green. This will need further work, as the proposed NCR21 will include the tunnel. We will liaise with the Trustees of the Millennium Green Trust, local and district councillors, planning offices, historical societies and local groups etc., to carry these projects forward.

Object No 7. Protection and Conservation of the Environment.

There is considerable overlapping under this objective with those specified in objects 5 and 6 above. We intend to actively seek opportunities to protect and conserve the local environment in liaison with any other interested parties.



Object No 8. The Provision of Recreational Facilities for the Public at large.

Again, there is considerable overlapping in this heading with other objectives previously stated, particularly with regard to the projects concerning the National Cycle Route 21, the public 'Hubs' and the High Street regeneration works. Any other opportunities that may be identified for developing recreational facilities for the general public will be actively pursued.

Object No 9. The Promotion of Public Safety.

In liaison with the police, local residents and County, District and Parish councillors we will give consideration to a project concerning CCTV surveillance of the High Street if circumstances merit such a course of action.

These objects influence the development of Heathfield and its surrounding communities.

2.4) PARTNERSHIP PROJECTS

Funding

Heathfield Strategy - Regeneration of the town Refurbishment of the High Street key.

Farmers Market

Business development

IT training to basic qualification

Tourism

Pan European links

Town Web Site

2.5) Summary of projects

The Heathfield Partnership has successfully completed/implemented the following projects:
Community involvement to date

The achievements so far either in conjunction with other organisations or individuals includes:

- The recognition of the **need for an action** group to help stimulate the economy of Heathfield (achieved).
- The establishment of the **Steering Group** and its development towards a Company with limited liability and charity status (ongoing)
- The development of a **business plan** and its continued updating as a valuable tool to encourage initiatives and funding as well as the interest of the community as a whole (ongoing).
- Develop a **strategic plan** for the improvement of the North side of the High Street in conjunction with East Sussex County Council Landscape Dept. (ongoing)
- Further **exhibitions, meetings questionnaires and leaflets** on the strategic plan (ongoing).
- Develop **final stage plan for the North side** of the High Street in conjunction with Wealden District and East Sussex County Councils, which is in its final stages (ongoing).
- Provide hanging **flower baskets** for the High Street and Station Road and for annual seasonal decoration (ongoing).
- Provide a selection of **trees** for the High Street (ongoing).
- Successfully lobbied for **on street parking** in the High Street (achieved).
- Successfully lobbied for the Town to remain a **free parking zone** (achieved).
- Programmed action for the improvement of **street furniture** and a common theme throughout the town (achieved).
- Lobbying for the continuation of the **Cuckoo Trail** to be extended northwards and its integration into the Town (continuing).
- Support for the “**Tour de Heathfield**” annual cycle event and the English/French market “**Le Marché**”(ongoing).
- Establishment of the “**Heathfield Farmers’ Market**” which is held and organised on every third Saturday of the Month throughout the year with a combined “Chamber of Trade & Commerce/Farmers Market “ **Christmas shopping day** in December (ongoing).
- Appointment of a **Town Manager** to implement initiatives and to promote and market the town (achieved).
- Revised **business Plans** (ongoing).

Provision of a lighted **Christmas tree** as a centrepiece for the Town and fund raising into the possibilities of **Christmas town lights** display (ongoing).

2.6) Heathfield Business Plan

The Heathfield Partnership has had strategic plans to guide their activities since they formed in 1995. In 1995 Eastbourne District and Enterprise Agency (EDEAL) and the Heathfield Partnership produced an outline business plan to revitalise Heathfield. The projects identified in the plan include:

- 1) High Street improvements,
- 2) Creation of a landscaped garden and a restaurant between the bridge in Station Road and southern end of the tunnel
- 3) The construction of a town square
- 4) Public access to Heathfield Park
- 5) Heathfield Tunnel Repairs
- 6) The Creation of a Gas Museum (Heathfield was the first town in England to have natural gas for lighting).
- 7) A Heathfield Bus Service – A Bus Service Focussed on Heathfield
- 8) CCTV in Heathfield/Community Wardens

Further details can be found in Heathfield's Business Plan 1995. Some of these projects are already underway/completed or similar projects have been implemented. Other have not yet been realised

2.7) Heathfield Town Centre and Design Strategy - Supplementary Planning Guidance

The Heathfield Partnership worked towards the Heathfield Strategy and Renaissance, 'An analysis and framework for the revitalisation of the Heathfield Town Centre' over the last few years. The result of this work is the '**Heathfield Town Centre Environment and Design Strategy 2001**', which has been adopted as supplementary planning guidance by the District Council. The document outlines a vision for the town centre and provides design guidelines for new development.

This document has guided Heathfield's High Street Improvements and other town centre regeneration projects and continues to guide the development of current projects.

The contents of the design strategy came out of Public Consultation in Heathfield

The key findings of the vision for the town are outlined below. Further details of these points can be found in the Heathfield Town Centre Environment and Design Strategy 2001

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*

3.1) Strengthening the economic Role

This document stated that '*strengthening the economy of the town is the most important element for the regeneration of the town centre and that 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*'.

More specifically it recommended the following to boost trade in the town centre:

- 1) Continue to upgrade the streetscape, including forecourts.
- 2) Improve the attractiveness and convenience of the main attractors.
- 3) Improve the facilities and accessibility for the Farmers Markets.
- 4) Encourage a diversity of attractors that broaden the town centre's appeal
- 5) Develop the Cuckoo Trail as a means of attracting visitors and patronage.
- 6) Make it attractive for people to linger.

3.2) Encouraging Investment

Research into retail potential carried out for Wealden District Council suggests that there is unlikely to be a demand for major retail floor space growth, although there may still smaller scale development and other investment opportunities that would improve the range of shops and services. Ideas include:

- 1) **A café bar or public house** in an area of high connectivity e.g. Near The Cuckoo Trail (Heathfield currently has no such place in the town centre).
- 2) **The intensification of development and, where appropriate, new landmark buildings**

3.3) 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 and include can achieve this:

- 1) Developing gateways
- 2) Utilise empty shops.
- 3) Set a high standard for the design of the built and external environment
- 4) Create a focal point/area for the town.
- 5) Promote tidying up of the physical environment.

3.4) 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. This can be achieved by:

- 1) Conserve and respect the key townscape characteristics.
- 2) Take special care of the Edwardian landmark buildings

3.5) Improving accessibility

The main measures to improve accessibility are:

- 1) Improvements to the existing footpath system
- 2) An accessibility audit
- 3) Improved bus access
- 4) Management of car parks to maximize accessibility
- 5) Review the use of cycle racks and consider additional ones in key locations.
- 6) Pursue traffic calming measures along the High Street
- 7) Investigating traffic calming on Station Road
- 8) A new twitten from Station Road West car park to the High Street.
- 9) A new twitten running from Station Road East car park to the High Street.
- 10) The enforcement of traffic controls

3.6) 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. Other initiatives to achieve this include:

- 1) Skateboard Park in the South Tunnel cutting.
- 2) Interpretation of the railway and gas history of the town
- 3) IT centre(s).
- 4) Bar-bistro. A pub is normally a main point for social gathering yet, as already noted, is lacking from the centre itself.
- 5) Sculptures and other public art. Public art can add interest and local distinctiveness to the town centre
- 6) Christmas Lights. Christmas lights to add to the vitality of the town centre and boost trade were highlighted through the consultation process. This has largely been achieved.
- 7) Street Furniture

3.7) High Street improvements (see attached before and after photos)

The Heathfield Partnership has worked towards the Heathfield Strategy and Renaissance, 'An analysis and framework for the revitalisation of the Heathfield Town Centre' over the last nine years. The result of this work is the '**Heathfield Town Centre Environment and Design Strategy**', which has been adopted as supplementary planning guidance by the District Council. The revitalisation of the town has been the primary aim of the Partnership during this process and the revitalisation of the town and stimulating the economy is the most important element in the regeneration of the town centre.

For practical and financial reasons a phased approach to the town centre improvements has been taken. To complete these improvements the Heathfield Partnership has worked in liaison with the Highway Authority, the Parish Council, the Chamber of Commerce, the South East Economic Development Agency, ESCC, WDC, East Sussex Disabled Association, the Countryside Agency, retailers and the general public) and the general public – by way of questionnaires and public meetings.

So far town centre improvements have included re-paving areas of the town centre, making it more accessible for people with mobility difficulties and traffic calming, which has been achieved by additional crossing places. Seating areas have also been provided in the High Street, together with trees and flowering baskets, which have improved the appearance and ambiance of the area

The first phase of improvements to be completed in 1996 was the south side of the High Street; the second phase completed in 1998 was from Tilsmore Corner to Station Road. These improvements were funded by East Sussex County Council (ESCC) and Wealden District Council (WDC).

Having successfully completed these improvements the Partnership were encouraged and supported by local traders, landowners, retailers and residents alike to continue this proven path which was bringing a continuing "feel good factor" and sense of place to the town centre.

Phase 3 of the town centre improvements was the first sector of the north side of the High Street. These improvements were funded using £95,000 from Heathfield's SEEDA Market Towns money as well as matched funds from ESCC, WDC, The Co-op and The International Tree Foundation – completed 2002.

These visual and environmental enhancements to Heathfield town centre have improved its image and extra footfall has been recorded in the affected shops thus boosting the local economy.

The evidence for increased footfall is to be seen in the investment by traders in their shop fascias. All shops in this regeneration stretch are competitive.

3.9) Shop Local Campaign

The shop local campaign involves the promotion of Heathfield retailers, activities include:

- Promotion of Heathfield retailers. This is a project started in 2002 aimed at providing the Town's main shopping area with festive lighting for the Christmas period and other celebratory events. The Heathfield and Waldron Parish Council together with The Heathfield Partnership and The Chamber of Trade are providing the main thrust of this project.
- Local companies have already taken the initiative in setting up the basis for 'shop local campaign' in which all services and traders are encouraged to buy from each other, replicating the 1950's and 60's co-operative.
- Website promotion of local businesses – Local businesses are now being listed on www.Heathfield.net to promote their goods and services. The first purchase was made in spring 2003 to a Heathfield shoe shop, which was able to provide special size shoes. Further sales have been recorded through the Internet. This project is coordinated by the IT sub group

3.10) The Farmers Market

The Partnership have established and now manage the Farmer's Market which now runs with up to 27 stalls. This relies totally on using volunteer labour including the Young Farmers, for the benefit of local farmers, nurserymen and smallholders and some arts and crafts producers and manufacturers. It is run on similar lines to other Farmer's Markets in Sussex and indeed nationally. Produce is locally grown and/or produced, and the contents of products must be locally sourced whenever possible, thus supporting local businesses. The Farmer's Market is now established as a regular monthly event in the Town and is beginning to be well supported by the local community. The traders have acknowledged the increased footfall of shoppers to the Town.

The Partnership have assisted the Farmers Market by providing £1000 funding for their stalls which was raised through Le Marche an annual Anglo-French market event in Heathfield. The Partnership also bought a trailer for the market stalls costing £1500.

3.11) Local Produce

By buying local, countryside products that are produced in an environmentally responsible way, you are directly helping to conserve the landscape, wildlife and historic features of the area. Your purchases also support local jobs, community services and the rural economy.

The benefits are:

- *Fresher, more nutritious food*
- *Reassurance of knowing who produces goods and how*
- *Less long-distance transport, energy use, packaging, waste and storage*
- *The preservation of our unique, irreplaceable landscapes.*

Buy local meat.

The freshest, tastiest meat and dairy products come from local livestock grazing the traditional pastures of our region in fields maintained by local farmers.

Mass-produced meat and milk bring environmental and animal welfare problems, local business closures and more heavy lorries on roads.

Buy local timber

The Wealden region has up to three times more trees than the English average. Broad-leaved woodlands, many ancient, are home to wildlife - and a place of work or leisure for people.

We ransack tropical rainforests to import hardwood timber. Oak, ash and sweet chestnut trees stand unused and unmanaged all around us. In protecting our landscape we are seeking to encourage our Farmers to diversify and by doing so create supplementary income for their on going farm and protect the landscape which is so precious to Tourism in the region. Another benefit is the Farmers Market, a direct retail outlet that provides a high profit margin for the Farmer with a lower purchase price for the public.

Buy local fruit.

Our region was once truly 'the Garden of England'. Traditional orchards thrived alongside beds of berry bushes, seasonal fruit-pickers and wildlife. Today, 40% of our orchards have disappeared, a few 'supermarket-standard' apples dominate and we import 80% of the pears we eat.

Viniculture – Up until recently St Georges Vineyard Waldron - a very successful producer of red and white wine, which was growing in reputation, had to close for personal reasons however the Vineyards have now been taken over by Plumpton Agricultural College and by training these potential vitalises it could well be a stimulant for the growth in the potential Farming industry especially with the gradual change in the climate.

3.12) The Website

The IT group set up a website June 2002 to provide an information service on Heathfield. The website, www.heathfield.net lists events, attractions and groups. It also has a business directory and links to other key websites.

3.13) Arts and Performing Arts Status for Heathfield Community College

The Partnership supported the community college with their bid for arts status by providing funding information, which resulted in the community college gaining £5000 of the £50,000 needed for the bid for arts status.

The Partnership was support of this initiative and the conscious of the wellbeing it will bring to the community.

3.2.1) Projects Partnership is currently working on

3.2.2) Phase 4 High Street Improvements

The Heathfield Partnership is now planning the fourth and final phase of the town centre improvements which will take place on the East side of Station Road and complete improvements to The High Street. The Partnership is providing £11,000 towards a Feasibility Study and has applied to WDC for the remaining £5000, which is needed to fund the design of the next phase of the High Street improvements. Work will take place on the East side of

Station Road and complete improvements to the remainder of the High Street thus enabling the whole town to benefit from the improvements. The Partnership is currently looking for sources of funding to complete Phase four.

3.2.3) Pub Hubs

The Pub Hubs project aims to help Heathfield and 8 surrounding villages to overcome problems of poor public transport facilities, the lack of services and shops in the area, poor communication and access to information in the area by providing a new FREE information, education and entertainment service using IT and the internet.

The project will provide basic computer training skills for non-users of computers in the area by running courses to help people improve their career prospects and earning potential. A full security package will be installed restricting access to inappropriate data with an automatic software upgrade.

A Pub Hub is a self-contained computer unit (consisting of monitor, keyboard, computer and software housed in a secure unit), which will be available in public places for people to access. Computer software from the Internet will be used on the computer to minimise costs.

At present a Pub Hub prototype funded by Wealden DC is being piloted by the young farmers group (this group consists of members of farm workers families who were hit by the foot and mouth crisis).

8 pub hub units will be set up in Heathfield and approximately the same number in the surrounding villages of: Waldron, Cross-in-Hand, Punnetts Town, Cade Street, Broad Oak, and Old Heathfield in addition further surrounding Villages are involved through Leader+ and these include Horam, Rushlake Green, Dallington and Warbleton.

The first 4 units will be set up in the Youth Centre, which will be the main hub for the project and will be where the training delivered by adult education takes place. The remaining units will be set up in public places where people can learn by doing on the Internet. Access to the Internet will be through the Heathfield portal therefore the Pub Hubs project will also serve as a local information service for users.

The total cost of the project (which includes setting up the pub hubs and training programme for the first year) is approximately £106,912 the Partnership have applied for £80,483 from the WARR Partnership – funding will mostly come from Leader+ and SEEDA Leader fund. The Partnership will contribute £26,429 in kind costs. It is hoped that the project will commence in summer 2003.

3.2.4) NCR21/Cuckoo Trail Northern Extension

The Cuckoo Trail is part of the N.C.R.21, which will eventually run from London to Paris. It is a traffic free route for walkers, cyclists and horse riders and currently runs from Polegate to Heathfield. Over 100,000 use the Cuckoo trail each year.

The N.C.R.21 north of Heathfield is unable to follow the old Cuckoo Railway line and therefore it has been necessary to explore other routes. In 2000, in order to do this, the Heathfield



Partnership brought together the relevant organisations the E.S.C.C., W.D.C, The Heathfield & Waldron Parish Council, SUSTRANS, The Millennium Green Trust, local Harlerider Ground, Local Cycle Group, Mayfield & Five Ashes Parish council, Local residents and a solicitor/negotiator. Finally in May this year, after much negotiation, exhibitions were held in Mayfield and Heathfield and questionnaires were distributed asking the public for their views on the three suggested routes. These exhibitions were run by the E.S.C.C. and SUSTRANS.

After publicising the working group's options, and following public consultation, 38 % of respondents chose route B. The ESCC's aim now is to secure permission for the route and obtain the financial help to turn the plan into a reality.

Benefits - The Northern extension will also provide further leisure opportunities and therefore health benefits to for local people, as 77% of local people attending the exhibition stated that they would use the new link if it were built.

Extending the trail to Mayfield will bring further visitors through the town and therefore provide the town with the opportunity to gain economic benefits from the visitors. The Heathfield Partnership's Town Plan, which has been agreed and adopted with the above Councils, has Leisure and Tourism at its heart.

a) Aim of the project NCR21 / Cuckoo Trail enhancements

The aim of the project is to enhance the experience of the Cuckoo Trail for residents and visitors by using local art and educational information boards promoting local cultural and natural heritage, by providing seating, promoting responsible use of the trail and by holding special activity days and guided nature walks. In addition to this the project will provide much needed signage to direct visitors into the town centre and a Heathfield information board at the NCR21/ Cuckoo Trail gateway informing visitors of what they can do in the town.

- b)** To promote the local heritage of the town of Heathfield by using public art on the trail to enhance the local distinctiveness of the town.
- To attract visitors into Heathfield by improving the Cuckoo Trail gateway in Heathfield, with the aim of increasing the economic impact of tourism by improving sign posting to the town and website information on the town.
 - To improve local people and children's knowledge of their environment by informing them about their natural and cultural heritage by interpretation sign boards, through education days and by developing activity worksheets. The project will encourage children and adults to become custodians of their natural environment
 - To encourage local people in the district to be healthier by taking regular exercise.

The total cost of the art project is about £10,000. Half of this will come from Leader + and the rest of the money from Wealden DC, Private Sector and time in kind. The project should commence in 2003. The Heathfield Community College, which has now secured arts status, will be approached to be involved in this project.

In a recent Wealden District Council Internet survey the following represented what favourite activities people liked doing when visiting the area:

Walking	24 %
Cycling	5 %
Visiting Attractions	3 %
Visiting Farmers Markets	5 %

3.2.5) Inward investment & marketing

The aim of this group is to encourage growth and investment in the brown field sites and under used commercial buildings in the town. The Heathfield Partnership wants the town to be a natural hub that surrounding villages will gravitate to for shopping, services and work.

The overall aim of the project is to develop a stronger more inclusive and sustainable rural economy by marketing and developing new business investment opportunities that have been identified to attract new companies develop current businesses and train local residents to meet these challenges.

The project aim will be achieved by undertaking research to determine how to attract new businesses to the area. The data collected from the research will be used to conduct a marketing and promotional campaign, which will highlight the opportunities for business in the area.

The group will produce printed information, an interactive website and marketing plan to meet the needs of the town and help to set up a framework for sustainable growth. This data will be made available via the website www.heathfield.net

The total value of the project, which incorporates the production of a brochure and Internet promotion, is £7000. The Partnership has received £2000 from Wealden DC, £3,500 from EAGGF and has contributed £1,500 in volunteer time.

3.2.6) Commercial Regeneration

The ultimate aim of the project is to empower and enable the community of Heathfield, to take control of the future revitalisation of their town and not be reliant on outside developers and to improve the facilities and services of Heathfield for its residents and visitors

This will be achieved by completing a feasibility study for the town of Heathfield highlighting the possibilities for the relocation of and redevelopment of key facilities and the impact that doing this will have on the town. This feasibility study needs to be completed in order to satisfy the requirements of local government, private developers and trusts that have current and/or future interests in the town.

The feasibility study will look at the viability and impact and of relocating key facilities in the town and address the following issues:

- Making sites in the town of Heathfield available for business development in order to increase the range of services available to local people and to provide local employment opportunities. At present the library and parish council offices occupy prime High Street locations and the fire station is in an inappropriate position, which could be developed as a gateway to the town. The feasibility study will also look at the impact of the newly available sites in the High Street and the fire station site for commercial development. A further impact would be incubator units for start-up business.
- The provision of a multi-purpose community facility. The study will examine the impact of the redevelopment of a youth centre into a multi-facility youth and community centre, which will include the library and Parish Council offices. Draft plans have been drawn up for a new multi-facility community centre. This facility will be built on several levels freeing up land for affordable housing.
- Affordable housing provision for key workers.

- The completion of the feasibility study will identify the impact of relocating and redeveloping key facilities in the town and the impact of using newly available sites for commercial opportunities.

MDA International Property and consultation will undertake the feasibility study.

The results of the feasibility study will provide the Partnership with evidence /hard results to negotiate with developers it wishes to attract in to the town; to obtain a loan from a trust company and to satisfy county requirements in the relocation of town facilities.

The cost of the feasibility study is £25,000 The Heathfield Partnership are applying for £12,500 from Leader + and plan to spend £12,5000 SEEDA Market Towns Money on this

3.2.7) East Sussex County Council's Heathfield's Transport Strategy

Heathfield was chosen by ESCC to develop a Local Area Transport Strategy (LATS). Crowborough, Uckfield and Rye already have LATS Local Area Transport Strategies (LATS) focus on integrated transport such as bus stops, pedestrian routes to bus stops, pedestrian crossings, junction improvements, and school journeys.

The LATS can support and complement the Local Plan process and can help to support bids to the capital pot for LTP money; it helps bids for other funds such as European, SEEDA, developers and transport operators, and other Government sources that are available

The Heathfield Partnership acted as a catalyst to bring this project forward by initiating and organising the first meeting. In total 5 meetings and community consultation sessions were held in winter 2002 and spring 2003 to identify key transport issues for people in Heathfield and to draw up a LATS. The key issues covered in the forum include 'Public and Community Transport', 'Vulnerable road users and school transport', and 'Roads and Parking.

The process takes a minimum of 6 months for the development of a final draft, with endorsement and approval anticipated in autumn 2003. Implementation of works could start in financial year 2004/5.

The Transport Forum and Steering Group as have agreed the vision, "To improve travel choice, safety and access for all people who live in, work in and visit Heathfield and its satellite villages, and to facilitate economic and community regeneration". The findings and transport plan will be announced by the end of the year.

Projects the Partnership consults on

3.3) Leader + Funding

The WARR Partnership that administer Leader + funding are already aware of the projects that the Heathfield Partnership are seeking Leader + funding for, and it is likely that they will be approved.

3.4) Other Heathfield Projects

As well as projects developed and supported by the Heathfield Partnership, other organisations are also involved with community improvement and regeneration activities in Heathfield and the surrounding villages. These projects are listed below:

3.4.1) Heathfield First

The Chamber of Commerce produce a tri-monthly magazine called Heathfield First, which features local newsworthy events and promotes local businesses and surrounding area events. (See appendix for committee)

3.4.2) The Millennium Green

Heathfield has a Millennium Green. The Countryside Agency, Millennium Green Trust and the Parish council funded this.

The Heathfield & Waldron Parish Council gave the land for a Millennium Green and was instrumental in selling up the Millennium Green Trust. This was by the Countryside Agency, Heathfield & Waldron Parish Council, Heathfield & Waldron Rotary Association, Sustrans, Wealden District Council, private donations and other trusts. The Heathfield Partnership and the Millennium Green work very closely together.

3.4.3) The Skate Board Park

The Parish Council recently funded a skateboard park costing £55,000 in the centre of the town, which is located to the south side of the Millennium Green rail tunnel and serves the more energetic members of the community. The South Wealden Division of the Police also contributed financially.

3.4.4) Tourism Campaign

The Heathfield and Waldron Parish Council produced 20,000 maps of Heathfield highlighting sites of interest and local businesses. The Heathfield Partnership has expanded on this initiative and notice boards will be installed highlighting the same features but in poster size at key locations around the Town. This information will be invaluable to the passing tourist that visits the Town especially when the Parish offices are closed.

3.4.5) Le Marche

Le Marche is an annual Anglo-French market held in Heathfield, which attracts visitors from a wider area to buy local and French produce. Local police have calculated that over 20,000 visitors attend the event.

3.4.6) Community Wardens

The Parish Council employed two wardens in Spring 2003 to promote public safety. ESCC has underwritten the funding for the first 2 years of the pilot scheme to the tune of £100,000.

3.4.7.) Heathfield Show is the largest 1 day agricultural show in the South East with over 20,000 visitors attracted from a wide rural and urban area every year, and generates business to the sum of £80,000.

3.4.8) La Tour De Wealden – Cycle Race

This is a very successful event raising funds for a number of local charities incorporating the Heathfield Talking Newspaper, which is a Heathfield based operation serving the partially sighted and blind people of the community.

3.5 Summary

The Local plan

The Heathfield Partnership's aims and objectives reflect those set out for Heathfield in Wealden District Council's Local plan Draft Review 2003.

- 1) To strengthen Heathfield's role as a residential, employment, shopping and service centre.
- 2) To regenerate the town increasing accessibility and improving the range and quality of shopping and other services
- 3) To provide additional local employment opportunities to serve both existing and future residents

- 4) To ensure that development respects the character and qualities of the town and makes a positive contribution to its townscape and local environment.

4) Healthcheck Methodology

The Heathfield Healthcheck has been completed by:

a) Working through the Countryside Agency's Healthcheck worksheets completing the sections on the Economy, Environment, Social and Community and Transport. Meetings of the Heathfield Partnership were held to consider the Healthcheck findings and identify Priority Actions

b) Through community consultation, research and the production of reports and business plans, The Heathfield Partnership has identified key issues of concern for the community. The following recent community consultation, research and reports have taken place on key issues in Heathfield:

- **1995 The Heathfield Business Plan:** This was created by EDEAL and the Heathfield Partnership.

- **Heathfield Town Centre Environment and Design Strategy:** This was created by the Heathfield Partnership in conjunction with ESCC. Full consultation at Parish Assembly, Chamber of Commerce and Rotary

- **Exhibitions and Public Meetings** to discuss and further develop needs and ideas for the improvement of the High Street and Station Road **now completed on the High Street South Side and Station Road East Side** (achieved).

- **East Sussex County Council Local Area Transport Strategy For Heathfield.**

- **National Cycle Network Route 21 – Heathfield to Mayfield**

c) Regular monthly meetings with Partnership Members representing the various community groups identify issues of importance to Heathfield and surrounding communities as they arise.

d) Final Partnership consultation meetings to confirm the contents of the Healthcheck and to identify possible further projects to continue with the regeneration of Heathfield, and identify how best to complete the SEEDA Market Towns Programme.

4.1) Healthcheck Worksheets Consultation and Research Process

Information for the worksheets was gathered through results from community consultation, Partnership input, interviews with relevant district and county government officers, record of minutes from town Partnership meetings and Cultural Partnership meetings and secondary data.

4.2) Heathfield Town Centre Environment and Design Strategy Consultation and Research Process

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 revitalization 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 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, retention of free parking, enforcement of controls over parking, a need for youth facilities (such as a cinema, swimming pool, and cafe) and retail improvements (i.e. less concentration on estate agents, building societies, charity shops, hairdressers and take a-ways in the primary retail zones and a greater concentration in "High Street names", a wider range of shops and more specialist shops).

4.3) Observations

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).

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, which was executed by WDC and was then published 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 shop fronts, 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.

Results from the consultation process are presented in 'the analysis of Heathfield town centre strategy – public consultation 2000.'

4.4) East Sussex County Council Local Area Transport Strategy For Heathfield - Consultation Process

Information for the strategy was obtained by holding meetings with the Steering Group and two community consultation processes with members of the public. Members of the public joined working groups on 'Public and Community Transport', 'Vulnerable road users and school transport', and 'Roads and parking, to identify key issues of concern, prioritise the issues and identify actions.

4.5) National Cycle Network Route 21 – Heathfield to Mayfield - Consultation Process

Exhibitions were held in Heathfield and Mayfield in Spring 2003 outlining the possible routes the Cuckoo trail could take between the towns. Respondent's views were collected in a questionnaire. 182 people attended in Mayfield and 110 in Heathfield.

5) HEALTHCHECK RESULTS

Where possible statistics have been provided for Heathfield. However in many cases this level of information does not exist. Figures for the rural district of Wealden in which Heathfield is located have been provided.

Findings are listed under the headings of 'results', 'key issues' and 'actions'. Where it is clear points are listed as strength or a weakness, however in some cases it is not always that straightforward.

5.1) The Economy

5.1 Employment

RESULTS

5.2) Employment Rates

The unemployment rate in Heathfield is 0.9% (26) compared to unemployment in Wealden of 1.3% (532); unemployment in East Sussex of 2.4%, and the South East region of 1.7%. Whilst higher than the South East rate, it is lower than the Great Britain rate of 3.1%. (Source: National Statistics Online).

5.3) Average Household Earnings

Weekly pay earnings (Source: Gross weekly pay, NES 2001)

Wealden	£291.29
East Sussex	£388.00
South East	£473.00
United Kingdom	£444.00

Results show that the Rural District of Wealden in which Heathfield falls has a comparatively low weekly income.

5.4) Out-commuting

43% of Wealden's workforce commutes elsewhere – to Eastbourne, Tunbridge Wells, Crawley, East Grinstead and London. This figure is reflected for Heathfield, as there are no major employers there.

5.5) Industry Sectors

The majority of Wealden businesses are engaged in the service sector, and whilst the manufacturing base is small, some of the stronger industrial sectors are well represented. These include Tourism (4,093 jobs) food and drink, instrument engineering, mechanical engineering, plastics and data processing. It is a low-wage "small firm economy" with nearly 90% of firms employing less than 10 people; around 20% of the workforce is self-employed;

5.6) Employer Size

The local economy can be described as a low-wage 'small firm economy' with nearly 90% of firms employing less than 10 people. In terms of 'large firms', 22 companies exist, employing altogether some 3332 jobs. For the Heathfield and Waldron Parish, no firms exist which employ more than 49 people.

5.7) Future Employment in the area

Sussex Enterprise report (2003) employment in low skilled occupations and high skilled occupations is forecast to grow quickly over the next 5 years. 4,700 managerial positions are forecast to be created in Sussex over the next 5 years, which is growth of just under a fifth. Overall the number of jobs locally is increasing as demand has grown, however the wage levels in the service and transport sectors remain low.

5.8) Business start-ups and failures

Using information provided by EDEAL (Eastbourne & District Enterprise Agency Ltd), it was recorded during the nine months ended 31st December 2002 that a total of 33 new businesses were started by Wealden based clients. This compares to 26 new businesses being started in the same period to 31st December 2001. The industrial structure of 'Central Eastern Sussex' (includes Wealden District) is not very dynamic, and is reflected in the low GDP per head for the area relative to Sussex, as well as the low levels of business formation.

5.9) Business Estates

Heathfield contains a number of established Business areas including sites on Browning Road, Ghyll Road with 24 businesses, Burwash Road and the Market area with some 20 business which are permanent and market traders, Station Road with some 16 business. Outside these areas opportunities for new development is very limited. The local plan makes one allocation for new business development in Heathfield on a site adjacent to and south of the site on Ghyll Road. The site is allocated for B1 and residential uses. Land is limited for development due to Heathfield being located in an AONB.

- **Opportunities for new employment from the expansion of existing local firms**

Local business research undertaken indicates that Heathfield now has several businesses that wish to expand but these are restricted by the lack of land available. The need for warehousing is great with many local manufacturing firms looking to out source their warehousing or expanding their business outside of the Heathfield town boundary.

- **Economic development/inward investment grants available - assistance available to existing and new local businesses.**

- **SEEDA:** 'Farm Diversification Grant' provides financial assistance towards the development of redundant farm buildings to bring them back into productive use or to enhance current business practice.

- **GOSE – Small Business Service:** 'Smart Grant' aimed at exploiting good ideas (products and processes) – to support business development and positioning for sustainable high growth using 'Smart' technology.

5.10) Employment - job centre

There is no employment centre in the town. Unemployed people need to travel to Eastbourne, an hour away by bus. There is no work placement/experience scheme for unemployed people.

KEY ISSUES

Low Wages

Unemployment is not perceived as significant in or around the town of Heathfield, however, the type of work, seasonality, part-time and low wages and out-commuting are masked by this figure.

A Small Labour Pool

Also, with such a low unemployment rate, there is a smaller pool of surplus labour in Heathfield/Wealden for companies to recruit from.

There is a Lack of Land for inward investment

Lack of land available for inward investment opportunities and local business expansions is a major weakness. The protection of existing business sites from redevelopment for other uses is therefore of high importance to Heathfield.

Type of Inward Investment

As many local employers are service industry orientated and manufacturing low skilled people are employed. Heathfield has no High Value Added companies, which require people with higher skills and therefore pay higher wages.

ACTIONS

Respond to the local plan

The Partnership need to remain proactive by responding to the local plan in the review process ensuring that their land for business sites retains such status and usage.

Work experience Programme

A Work experience Programme needs to be established in conjunction with local training establishments/colleges so that young people and the long term unemployed can receive training.

Attract high Value Added companies into Heathfield

A study needs to be completed looking at business premises / land available to determine what type of businesses could be attracted to Heathfield area. Heathfield needs to identify their selling points for such business. The Heathfield Partnership could work with Invest in East Sussex to complete the study and attract high value added companies to the area.

Set up stronger links with Community College for career advice and job opportunities.

In recent years the Community College has distinguished itself in its standards of both GCSE and A Level performance. Quality jobs with real career opportunities are important needs for this increasingly impressive production line. Inward investing employers would now be able to find capable young people eager to find interesting work.

6. Retail and Town Centre Services

RESULTS

6.1) Shopping provision in the town centre

Strength - Almost 90% of all shopping provision is located in the Town Centre. Small convenience and general provision stores are located in some villages within the rural hinterland

6.2) Shop and Service variety

Strength - There are a wide variety of shops and services in the town; these are listed in the box below.

Accountants	Computer Services	Graphic Design Services	Plumbing
Advertising Agencies	Computers & Software	Grocery Stores	Post Offices
Agricultural Services	Conservatories	Hairdressers	Poster & Sign Specialists
Air Conditioning & Refrigeration	Cycles & Cycle Hire	Handy Man Services	Pre School
Antiques Dealers	Dance Studios & Schools	Heating Specialists	Printing Services
Artist & Drawing Supplies	Decorators	Hire & Rental Shops	Property Services
Auto Electrical Services	Delicatessens	Hobby Suppliers	Public Houses
Baby Clothes and Accessories	Dentists	Home Services	Removals
Bakers	Disability Services	Hospices	Restaurants
Banking Services	DIY	Importers	Riding Stables
Bed & Breakfast	Doctors	Jewellers	Secretarial Services
Bridal Wear	Double Glazing	Kitchen Specialists	Soft Furnishings
Builders & Builders Merchants	Driving Schools	Laundry Services	Solicitors
Burglar Alarm Installers	Education Services	Legal & Surveyors	Sports & Leisure
Butchers	Effluent Services	Logistics & Storage	Super Markets
Camping & Caravanning	Engineering	Marketing Services	Surveyors
Car Hire & Taxis	Entertainment	Medical Services	Telephone Services
Car Specialists	Estate Agents	Metal Work Manufacturers	Travel Agents
Cards & Stationery	Exporters	Miscellaneous	TV & Electrical
Care Homes	Fast Food & Takeaways	Model Shops	Upholsterers
Care Services	Fencing Contractors	Mortgage Lenders	Vineyards
Carpet & Flooring Specialists	Financial Services	Newsagents	Wine & Cider Makers
Charity Shops	Fitness Training	Nursing Homes	Wood & Furniture Manufacturers
Chemists	Florists	Off Licences	
Child Care	Food Stores	Office Supplies	
Chiropodists	Footwear	Opticians	
Churches	Funeral Directors	Pet & Animal Care	
Cleaners & Dry Cleaning	Garages & Auto Services	Photographic Services	
<u>Clothes</u>	<u>Garden Centres & Services</u>	<u>Picture Framers</u>	
<u>Communication Services</u>	<u>General Stores</u>	<u>Play Schools</u>	

There are no major high street Names.

Heathfield contains a number of established business areas, including the Browning Road Industrial Estate off Station Road, the Ghyll Road Industrial Estate on the southern edge of the town and the business area at Burwash Road. These areas provide a valuable source of local employment and a range of premises, by size and type, to meet the needs of local businesses. In addition, there is an area of established business and commercial activity at Station Road to the south of Heathfield town centre, which provides a range of employment opportunities and local services.

Outside these established areas, opportunities for new business development are very limited. The Plan makes one allocation for new business development in Heathfield, on a site adjacent

to and south of the Ghyll Road Industrial Estate. The site is allocated for a combination of B1 and residential uses. The environmental constraints referred to above, have however precluded the allocation of further land for new business development. The protection of existing business sites from redevelopment for other uses is therefore of particular importance in Heathfield, to maintain and increase opportunities for residents to work locally and to maintain a diverse economic base for the town.

6.3) Retail Floor Space

Strength –The amount of retail floor space has increased. The impact of the High Street Improvement Programme has been a positive one, making the town centre a more attractive location for the existing retail businesses, and any potential new retail development.

Strength - Heathfield has two regular markets. A General Market, which takes place on the outskirts of the town, is held twice a week; the General Market is under private ownership, and has expanded over the years.

A Farmers Market is held once a month in the town centre. Owned by the Heathfield Partnership, it has grown from 12 to 27 stalls over the last two years. Only Local Producers are eligible to sell their goods via this market.

Threats - to the Farmers Market include: The Battle Farmers Market, which is held on the same Saturday in the month; Highway restrictions relating to siting of event signage. Competition for Local Producers, logistical costs, highway restrictions.

6.4) Shops vacant in the town centre

Weakness – Currently there are two vacant shops. However, there are no long-term vacant shops as no shops have been vacant for more than two years.

6.5) New shops

10 new shops/major refits have been recorded in the last three years, these include: Furniture Retailer, Extension to the Co-op, Clothes Shop, Interior Design, Antiques Shop, Gift Shop, Restaurant, Tiles Shop, Estates Agent, Car Showroom

6.6) Retail Rents

Retail rent rates have been suppressed for almost 15 years. In the last two years, the rental rates have come back to the level of 15 years ago. Assessing current rent levels, a shop was recently rented out for £12k per annum, which now falls in line with similar premises within the Uckfield retail market. However, this rental value does not reflect buoyant demand. It is recognised that the demand for retail space is higher in Uckfield than Heathfield.

6.7) Future Retail Confidence

Weakness Local confidence amongst the smaller retailers is patchy, being dependent on the retail service offered.

Strength - In comparison, the Co-op Supermarket has expanded its business, with projected turnover on target compared to its smaller retail neighbours in the town.

6.8) Town Centre Promotion

Strength - Heathfield has its own Town Map, which is produced by the Parish Council. This publication is distributed at the Farmers Markets, via the Tourist Information Centres, through Local Shops, and on the Heathfield website – www.heathfield.net and in the Chamber of Commerce publication – ‘Heathfield First’. Heathfield is not marketed specifically as a shopping destination.

Strength – One of the major assets of the Market Town of Heathfield is the free car parking arrangements.

6.9) Commercial demand for additional retail floor space

The Inward Investment group has an objective to encourage a major retailer to consider a business in Heathfield. It is suggested however that demand for smaller scale development may continue to improve the range of shops/services in the town.

6.10) Charity Shops

Weakness – Three charity shops, namely Oxfam, Imperial Cancer and Help the Aged currently accommodate prime retail space in the High Street. Potential commercial retail space for rent is ‘undervalued’; Image of High Street and shopping provision is affected.

Strength – *Charity shops can also give people a reason to visit a town to drop of goods or to buy.*

KEY ISSUES

Shop Turnover

Although ten new shops have opened in the Town centre in the past three years there is a high turn over of shops with at least 30% of the shops changing usage, which doesn’t reflect in the small number of empty shops (two).

Major purchases

Major purchases still being made outside of the town where there is more choice, there is opportunity to address this if Heathfield can identify land for attracting these types of business.

Retail Opportunities

Research into floor space carried out by Wealden DC suggests that there is unlikely to be a demand for further retail space growth. However there is still likely to be small-scale development and other investment opportunities that would improve the range of shops and services. An example of this would be a catering facility.

Although there is a wide variety of shops and services in the town centre and we now have a café, a restaurant or public house which act as a focal point for local people to meet in and we are looking to attract this type of outlet. The need for this has already been identified in the Heathfield Design strategy. Such a place would also provide economic opportunity to make money from visitors passing through the town.

ACTIONS

Encourage inward investment for a catering establishment

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 or in the town centre is needed. Such investment needs to be attracted into the town.

Filling vacant shops

The Heathfield Partnership is looking to do a study to determine what further shops / services are desirable in the town centre. The Heathfield Partnership is working with the landlords of vacant shop premises to provide a simple means of putting buyers and developers in touch with the landowners.

Attracting Major Retailers into the town

The Partnership is to identify which major retailers would complement (and not compete with) shops in the town and would be willing to set up in a town with a small population. Heathfield needs to consider the population of the rural area it serves not just the population of the town when trying to attract a major retailer.

Further Develop E Commerce

E commerce, encouraging certain local businesses to trade over the internet, could further be developed especially by those supplying specialist goods (e.g. large shoe sizes) and supplying large quantities of goods to businesses to enable rural traders to overcome access issues for shoppers and gain a larger share of the market. To further develop e commerce in Heathfield research needs to be completed to determine which businesses in Heathfield already do this and which ones would like assistance developing e commerce.

For businesses that do not yet have the capacity to trade on line assistance is needed in training traders and identifying sources of low cost IT to install in local shops.

7) Commercial and industrial Property Needs

RESULTS

1) Commercial and Industrial floor space

1809m² floor space has been created in the last three years and 168m² lost which is a net increase of 1641m². The box below shows where this has occurred.

<u>Business</u>	<u>Area</u>	<u>Floor Area (m2)</u>	<u>Use</u>
Larkin Structural Ltd	Ghyll Road Ind Est	80 sq mts	office/workshop
Sunset Farm	Cross in Hand	170 sq mts	B2
Odongo Farm	Newick Lane	650 sq mts	Light Ind
Little Dudsland	Cross in Hand	225 sq mts	Light Ind
First House	Hailsham Road	66 sq mts	B1
Copford Farm	Heathfield	98 sq mts	Workshop
Copford Farm	Heathfield	520 sq mts	Sawmill
<u>New space</u>		<u>1809 sq mts</u>	
Former Alsford's Yard	Heathfield	-120 sq mts	B1
4 Holme Brook	Heathfield	-48 sq mts	from workshop to Accommodation
<u>Space Lost</u>		<u>-168 sq mts</u>	
<u>Net increase of</u>		<u>+1641 sq mts</u>	

7.1) Industrial Floor Space - The demand for good quality industrial units exceeds supply.

7.2) Vacancy Levels for retail shops and light commercial properties

Shop vacancy levels have increased slightly. In January 2000, the Retail & Capacity Study reported that levels had increased marginally by 2, to 11 from 9 as recorded in 1996. The 11 vacant units represent 8.6% of the total number of retail/service uses in the town centre. This is below the national average vacancy rate as measured by Goad (11.7%), and suggests that the centre is performing reasonably well in this respect. However the continually changing units give rise to the suggestion that shops are only marginally making a profit and that we need to help the retailers increase the footfall into their premises.

Commercial land vacancies have decreased over recent years.

7.3) Planned expansions to existing firms

These are shown in the box below.

Heathfield Businesses	Industry	Expansion
Goldsmith & Allcorn	Car Sales	To expand & improve services in High St
C & S Coaches	Coaches	To expand & improve services out of Town
Talking Newspapers	Service for the Blind	Urgently need more space
Whiterman Brothers	Car & Lorry repairs	Need to find location with better access

Strength: These expansions show a good level of business confidence in the local economy.

Business gains

Heathfield Businesses	Industry	New Businesses
Jarvis Technology	IT	Have managed to relocate to Heathfield

Strength: This expansion shows a good level of local business confidence in the area.

Business Loses

William Hill Interiors	Furniture	New HQ located outside the District
E.F Joinery	Kitchen Manufacture	Relocated elsewhere

Weakness: We need to work with the Parish, District, Chamber of Trade and businesses to ensure we hold on to all our Heathfield firms and stop what could be the start of a trend. The District has already identified the main nearby Towns of Uckfield, Hailsham and Polegate as areas for both urban and residential expansion, and if Heathfield is to compete it will have to think smarter and work harder.

7.4) Economic development and funding initiatives in place to assist incoming firms and the expansion of local firms

The inward investment agency, 'Invest in East Sussex' provides a service to all business enquiries relating to new investment/relocations and expansions.

b) KEY ISSUES

There is confidence in the local economy

Planned expansions to existing businesses, the growth in commercial and industrial floor space and the demand for good quality office space and commercial land all indicate confidence in the local economy.

Need for Space for light Industries

The area is in need of good quality small to medium sized Light Industrial units. Many Farmers have diversified their activities and have already converted their Farm buildings to help provide starter units and workshops.

However in general Heathfield has limited land to develop for commercial purposes to meet further demand, as it is located in an AONB.

Need for quality office space

Due to high demand for good quality office space, very little space is available at affordable rents for new or small businesses. There is the opportunity to create this space above shops in Heathfield High Street. This would provide office space at affordable rents, which would assist new and /or small businesses. The income from the rents could be re-invested into future Partnership activities, thus this project could provide a sustainable source of income as well as support new and small businesses.

ACTIONS

Office Space Development

The Development of new quality office floor space above ground floor level premises is an initiative that the Partnership is considering. Suitable premises need to be identified for conversion and funding secured.

Farm Diversification

The Partnership will investigate further opportunities for farm diversification for light industrial units / floor space.

Contribute to Wealden DC's/ East Sussex CC's study of supply and demand on small business units

This information will assist local government in making strategic local decisions on the development of business units

8 Business Support

RESULTS

8.1) Banking

Strength - Heathfield has Barclays, NatWest and Lloyds TSB banks and Portman Building society and Alliance & Leicester who offer almost a full range of services.

8.2) Town Centre Support

Strength - The Town Partnership has a part time Co-ordinator to manage and develop regeneration projects in Heathfield.

Strength –Heathfield has an active Chamber of Trade and Commerce that supports town regeneration initiatives

Strength – the Partnership has a good working relationship with the Parish Council

Strength- The Heathfield Partnership has a good working relationship with Wealden District Council Economic Revitalisation Officers.

Weakness – The town lacks a small business service and enterprise agency

8.3) Successful Business support Initiatives

Strength: There are currently a variety of events, which provide businesses in the Wealden district the opportunity to access training, find staff and to network. These include:

Wealden DC Business Breakfasts

EDEAL Small Business Networking Events

Heathfield Chamber of Trade events, Social events, Special Topic meetings

Futuretec Careers in Technology (brings together businesses and potential employees)

Distribution of Wealden Business Focus to the business community

Strength: There are currently a variety of publications and the Heathfield website promoting local businesses and new initiatives

Wealden Business Focus

Heathfield First

www.Heathfield.net

Strength: Wealden District Council have website providing essential advice to small businesses www.wealdenbusinesshelp.org.uk

8.4) Broadband Access

Broadband technology was introduced into Heathfield in autumn / winter 2002.

Broadband only covers the major area of the Town and is yet to be developed to the villages that surround Heathfield, and it is unlikely to be for the next five years.

8.5) Business Directory

Strength - Wealden produces the 'Wealden Industrial Estates & Business Parks Directory'. The Council also has an Online Business Directory available at www.wealden.gov.uk (covers the whole of Wealden)

Strength - Heathfield has a fully up to date and comprehensive web site which address these issues at www.heathfield.net

8.6) Meeting / conference Venues in town

Although Heathfield has no official central conference facilities – the following facilities shown in the box below are available for meetings exhibitions and conferences:

Parish office	14	No - up stairs	Booking required
Youth Centre	14 - 30	Access	Booking required
Union Church	14 - 20	Access	Booking required
Kings Church	14 - 60	Access	Booking required
Outskirts of Town Community Centre	14 - 100	Access	Booking required

a) **KEY ISSUES**

There is good local support for existing businesses

It is strength that there is support for local businesses at a town and district level. The use of Wealden trade directories and the town websites that promote local businesses are likely to increase local trade.

New businesses need further support

The Partnership's Inward Investment Group has identified the need to produce a welcome pack for new business highlighting the information they seek when first arriving. By achieving this initial contact we believe we will be more likely to find they become involved in local projects and events

There is a great need for further broadband access

As broadband access does not cover the whole of Heathfield and surrounding area many businesses, organisations and individuals are currently missing out on the advantages this technology can bring. *(For example for businesses using space in farm buildings)*. This directly impedes the development of business, where Broadband can make a vital difference. It is essential that Broadband and a non-interrupted supply of electricity to rural areas go hand in hand. Rural areas such as Heathfield aim to attract new business, but also to help and maintain the survival and growth of businesses currently located there. There is therefore a great need to further develop access to Broadband technology. Contact so far with BT suggests that it will be some years before Broadband will be rolled out to the outlying areas Heathfield serves. Talks with the electricity suppliers SEEBOARD have as yet not resulted in any positive measures to up grade Heathfield's power supply which means the areas has on average 5- 10 interruptions a month for some considerable time.

ACTIONS

Broadband

To identify the most suitable supplier of Broadband technology, identify areas most in need of Broadband and identify sources of funding to bring these assets to more areas.

Business Advice

To work with EDEAL and Sussex Enterprise to increase small business advice in town and enlist their lobbying power to help bring about an upgrade in the electricity supply.

9) Training and Education

RESULTS

1) Vocational Training

The Learning Skills Council has already identified a lack of vocational training courses in the rural areas of Sussex. Currently The Learning Skills Council, Sussex Downs College and The Community Colleges in North Wealden are working together as a Partnership to provide vocational training in the future on a North Wealden basis.

A skills shortage in IT was found to be of concern to most businesses. The local Chamber of Commerce found after a series of meetings held with their members that there was a need for IT training at basic level for trailers in the main. From this information the Chamber asked Sussex Enterprise and the Partnership to attend Chamber meeting to explain what might be available in resources for them. The Sussex Enterprise focused on using the web and how e-mailing and Internet access would save business money. The Partnership highlighted the fact that they had just set up a Town Web Site and that they would all be highlighted on the site FREE of Charge

2) School Leaver Qualifications

Strength 70% of School Leavers from Heathfield Community College achieve 5+GCSE/GNVQ results grade A* - C (ESCC LEA). These grades are above the LEA and national averages of 51%.

3) Childcare: Nurseries and Preschool and Play groups

Weakness: There is currently a lack of child day care in the Heathfield area. This includes child minders, full day care nurseries and session

Play groups. In addition to this there is a lack of out of school play schemes for 0 – 14 year olds.

(Source Early Years Development Community Partnership Lynn Grinfell)

4) Internet and Learning Access Points

Weakness: There are only two internet access points for the public in Heathfield, one is based in the library, this is only available during restricted opening hours and usually oversubscribed. The other is in a private café for which users pay per session, thus making its use prohibitive to those on low incomes.

5) Adult Education

Strength: The adult education centre at Heathfield Community College provides a wide range of courses.

KEY ISSUES

Lack of childcare services makes it difficult for parents to participate in the local economy

The lack of childcare services means that the services required by working parents to look after their children are not there, which makes it difficult for them to work fulltime. The cost of childcare is also prohibitive for families on lower incomes.

Further Internet Access is needed for deprived families

2002 figures show that over 40% of UK homes now have access to the internet, however low income households / families do not have this facility. As many households / families in Heathfield and the surrounding communities fall into the low income category / may find it

difficult to travel into Heathfield to use such as facility there is demand for internet access in Heathfield and the surrounding villages.

Lack of IT skills and local unemployment

Unemployed people (mostly middle aged and older farm workers due to the downturn in farming) and those in unskilled jobs on low incomes need access to IT training to make them more employable and improve their career prospects. Local employers will also benefit from the training, as this will help address the IT skills shortage.

ACTIONS

Work with Early Years Development Community Partnership

The Heathfield Partnership need to work with Early Years Development Community Partnership to determine best way to address the shortage of childcare in Heathfield and the surrounding communities

Leader + Funding for Pub Hubs

The Partnership are currently applying for Leader + funding to install 16 public hubs in Heathfield and the surrounding communities (see 3.3). This project will address the issues of access to the Internet and computer skills training.

Work in Partnership for the development of Vocational training Courses

The Partnership will be involved with the development of vocational training courses in Partnership with the learning skills council and others.

10) Tourism and visitor services

RESULTS

1) Tourism and the local Economy

There are 3093 jobs created through tourism in Wealden, which contributes £142 million to the local economy (including the multiplier effect) WDC. This income comes from 5.2 million day visitors and 500,000 overnight visitors. Although the main tourist season in the district is during the summer there is a steady trade in tourism throughout the year. (Wealden District Council Tourism)

There is currently little tourism activity in Heathfield. There are currently no tourism statistics specifically for Heathfield.

2) Tourist and Visitor Attractions

The town has a variety of events to attract visitors. These include:

- The Farmers Market every 3rd Saturday of the month
- Annual events – the Heathfield Agricultural show, an Anglo-French market, a charity cycle ride and Christmas lights.
- The town and surrounding hinterland also hold musical concerts and rugby and cricket matches.
- Historical interest lies in the early iron industry sites and some significant Churches. These events are more attractive for residents in Wealden than people visiting the area.

3) Tourist information

Tourist information is displayed in the Parish Council Offices on a leaflet rack – but this is not open shop opening hours or weekends the nearest access point for tourist information is the TIC at Dicker 15 minutes drive away.

The town has a tourism page on www.heathfield.net with useful links to other tourism sites but nothing specific on Heathfield to encourage visitors to stay and explore. This could be further developed.

4) Tourist Accommodation

There are 8 bed and breakfasts in the Heathfield area, only one of which is in Heathfield. There are two campsites, a youth hostel and two self-catering facilities.

5) Signage in Heathfield

Generally there is a shortage of signage in Heathfield. In 2003 New Signs were erected to take people from the town centre to the Farmers Market, Cuckoo Trail and Millennium Green.

6) The Cuckoo Trail

Over 100,000 people use the Cuckoo trail each year, which currently runs from Eastbourne to Heathfield.

KEY ISSUES

There is a need to attract visitors into Heathfield

Tourism currently brings many economic benefits to Wealden district. However, there is currently little tourism activity resulting in economic benefits to Heathfield town. There is opportunity to develop this in the future.

One of the key issues is to get visitors into the town.

On the Cuckoo Trail many people pass through the town but there are currently no attractions or facilities to bring people in to the town.

Heathfield needs to develop facilities to serve visitors once they are in the town, for example catering establishment (as discussed in the retail and town centre services)

Opportunities to develop tourism in Heathfield include the following points:

Heathfield currently has no main visitor attraction to attract people from outside the district into the town. Heathfield could capitalise on their cultural heritage through the development of a natural gas museum.

Heathfield does have local historical, cultural and natural points of interest that could be developed into a town trail to bring tourists into the town. (See 5.3 – local culture)

Heathfield lies in the centre of an area of outstanding natural beauty (AONB) and there are plenty of opportunities for walking in the district.

There are also many quality attractions to visit surrounding Heathfield in East Sussex. These are strong attributes to attract tourists to the area.

There is a need for self-catering accommodation

Although the town has no hotel, Wealden District Council Tourism Manager states that there is no current demand for this. However there is a lack of self-catering accommodation in the district – which provides an opportunity for development.

More Signage is needed

To encourage visitors from the Cuckoo Trail to the main facilities in the town centre, where they can spend money, further signage is needed.

ACTIONS

Enhancing The Cuckoo Trail – Leader + Bid

i) Public Art: The Partnership's Leader + bid to enhance the NCR21/Cuckoo Trail includes £3000 to develop Public art which promotes the cultural heritage of the area.

ii) Signage: The Partnership's Leader + bid to enhance the Cuckoo Trail covers sign posts and that will direct tourists to facilities and points of interest in the town of Heathfield.

Other Actions To be confirmed by the Partnership via their Action Plan.

- **The Environment**
- **Heathfield Town**

11) Key townscape characteristics: buildings, landmarks and focal points

RESULTS

Strengths

Some of the buildings on the High Street are Edwardian and Victorian. 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. There are attractive period shops on the

south side, with fine detailing, human scale and cohesive frontages. It is these buildings that give Heathfield its gentle, period character.

The retail trade is concentrated within a relatively small area close to free car parking. Trees have been planted along the High Street, inline with public consultation, as part of the High Street Improvements. This has given the town a boulevard effect and makes it more attractive and welcoming

There are floral hanging baskets in the High Street – part of the High Street Improvement programme.

The old part of Heathfield remains virtually untouched by modern development and exists in an idyllic area outside of the Town with its local Church and Public House.

The recently improved sections of the Heathfield High Street have resulted in improved access for all, an enhanced environment and increased footfall in affected shops.

Weaknesses

There is a lack of a focal point in the town centre and few landmarks to celebrate local character.

The High Street is an A Road, it produces a sense of travel rather than arrival, which means the town, is easily dominated by traffic and is a barrier to pedestrian flow, reducing access across the town

There is a lack of gathering places, especially along the High Street, to provide refuge.

The unsympathetic, incongruous 1960's architecture to be found dotted along the north side of the High Street, detracts from local identity, there are also some poor or garish shop fronts

The High Street Improvements need to be completed throughout the town so that the whole High Street and Station Road can benefit.

(Many of these points were noted in Heathfield's Town Centre Environment and Design Strategy)

• Gateways

Generally the town lacks main gateways. Heathfield Partnership research which was carried out via consultation exhibitions in the construction of the Environment & Design Strategy identified that The Western entrance of the town was in most need of improvement as it leads you in from the Tunbridge Wells area and as the Cuckoo Trail enters the High Street around this point. This Gateway has already been improved as part of the High Street Improvements using SEEDA Market Towns Money.

. Street Furniture

The Design strategy has ensured that all new furniture is in keeping with the Town theme and colour, giving the Town a coordinated and finished feel.

Strengths

The town has supplementary planning guidance to guide the choice of street furniture

Weaknesses

Lack of litter Bins and cycle racks

KEY ISSUES

Following Heathfield Design Strategy 2001 will help create a local identity for Heathfield

The town of Heathfield's strengths lie in its period buildings and High Street Improvements. The Heathfield Design Strategy states that special care should be taken of these buildings. The Heathfield Design Strategy, which has been adopted as supplementary planning Guidance, provides design principles applicable to all development.

One of the main Weaknesses are post 1960 buildings and poorly designed shop fronts. The Heathfield Design Strategy provides guidance for shop fronts and advertisements in the town.

The collection of street furniture (lighting, signage, seating etc) can have a significant impact on the amenity of the town. The Heathfield Design Strategy (p29) provides guidance for street furniture.

Following these guidelines will help to foster local identity. For Further details on planning principles see The Heathfield Design Strategy 2001.

Gateways

Further Gateways need to be developed to strengthen the sense of arrival into the town. The Heathfield Design Strategy states that further Gateways should be developed at the following points:

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

ACTIONS

Further High Street Improvements

To continue with phase 4 of the High Street Improvements (Already in progress see section 3.1.3 and 3.2.1) and development of gateways.

Follow The Heathfield Design Strategy

To ensure that all new development in Heathfield Town Centre follows The Heathfield Design Strategy / Supplementary Planning Guidance.

12) The Countryside

RESULTS

1) Character and quality of the countryside

Strength: Heathfield is surrounded by (s) an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) of 45,500ha, which is characterised by an intricate network of wooded ridges and "ghylls" or valleys. It is dominated by small fields, thick hedgerows and extensive woodland, a significant amount of which is ancient woodland. Generally large areas remain quiet and unspoilt.

2) Importance of the surrounding countryside for nature conservation

Strengths:

The ancient woodland in the area is of great importance. Half of the UK's threatened species are woodland species, so the ancient woodland around Heathfield provides an important habitat for them (Countryside Conservation Officer WDC).

The Cuckoo Trail is an important wildlife corridor, as well as area for environmental education and outdoor recreation. (Countryside Conservation Officer WDC).

There are four SSSI around Heathfield, near Punnet's Town, Maynard Green, Beacon Land and Heathfield Park

3) Parks

Heathfield Park 40.8 ha lies on the edge of Heathfield

4) Countryside Management Initiatives

High Weald land Management

The first draft of the High Weald land AONB Management Plan 2004 has been produced under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. It sets out a 20-year strategy. The consultation for this plan runs until 5th September 2003.

Strength

The purpose of the management plan is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area and increase public understanding and enjoyment

KEY ISSUES

There is further opportunity to base Tourism and Leisure on understanding and enjoying the surrounding countryside

With the countryside around Heathfield being an Area Of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) it can provide outdoor recreation opportunities for local people as well as being of the quality to appeal to visitors from outside the area. There is opportunity to base Tourism and Leisure on understanding and enjoying the surrounding countryside. At present this focuses mostly on the NCR/21 - Cuckoo Trail.

- **Threats to the Local landscape**

The main threat to the countryside is that AONBs lack their own development control functions. Responsibility for development and purpose of the area lies with the local authority. Although no large development is likely to take place the countryside, it is threatened by the cumulative impact of small-scale development. (see the Wealden Local Plan in appendix)

- **Environmental representation on the Heathfield Partnership**

At present the Partnership has no representation from environmental or conservation groups on the Partnership. Developing a link with an Environmental/Conservation Group such as High Weald land Management would enable the Partnership to work on environmental protection schemes as well as further environmental education schemes.

ACTIONS

Cuckoo Trail Enhancements – Education

Part of the Cuckoo Trail enhancements project includes the development of further natural and cultural heritage interpretation boards around Heathfield, so that local people and visitors can learn more about the environment and history of the town and surrounding countryside. The IT and Education Group will also create downloadable countryside education worksheets which children/youths can complete whilst on the Cuckoo Trail. These will be available on the town website.

The Partnership have identified the need to conduct a feasibility study to establish the engineering problems and costs of the prefer routes which have been proposed to public. ESCC will be asked to set a brief for the Engineering consultancy to look at and then report the findings back to the community. The Partnership will apply to WDC and ESCC and SEEDA for funding.

The Partnership will promote the wider aspects for the Cuckoo trail and NCR 21 via the Town Web site and its Action Plan and will lobby Tourist Boards and groups to promote the total route from Paris to London to help our neighbours attract the widest possible audience to participate.

The Partnership will work closely with the Heathfield Community College as they have been awarded Art status to provide a graphic account of historical and natural events along the trail.

The Partnership will work with the ESCC Ranger to promote cultural works along the trail by promoting the events on the Town Web site.

The Partnership will work with an Environmental Group / Local Government Environmental Officer to achieve the above.

13) Social and Community Issues

13.1) Population

The town today makes a good touring base and is served by a good range of general and specialist shops. Heathfield has also established many community events, which have become major focal point not just for the town but also for a much larger catchments area, helping the area to grow.

HEATHFIELD and the Villages it serves

Demographic Profile of the area

Total Population aged 15+ : 12597				Total number of households : 6386 Source NS DATA June 2000					
Total men	Total women	Total population aged between 15 and 24	Total population aged between 25 and 34	Total population aged between 35 and 44	Total population aged between 45 and 54	Total population aged between 55 and 64	Total population aged 65 or more	Total population of social class ABC1	Total population of social class C2DE
6006	6591	1433	2105	2115	2353	1672	2919	7386	5211

Around 40,000 people work in the large Weald area with business primarily in the service sector. 80% of Wealden's businesses employ less than ten people and 57% of residents work locally. Employment opportunities continue to grow with unemployment standing at around 1.6% compared to a countywide rate of 3.8%.

Heathfield forms part of Wealden District Council situated in the South East of England in the county of East Sussex and is home to over 7,500 people and services a population of almost 12,500. It is a market town standing on the Weald, surrounded by beautiful countryside, and whose roots can be traced back over 700 years

Population: The resident population of Heathfield in mid 1998 was 7300 people, 5 per cent of the population of Wealden local authority. 22 percent of Heathfield's population in mid 1998 were aged under 16, 56 per cent were aged between 16 and 59 and 21 per cent were aged 60 and over. This compares with 20, 55 and 25 per cent respectively for Wealden as a whole.

Vital Statistics: A total of 103 live births to mothers usually resident in Heathfield and 73 deaths of residents of this ward were registered in 1998. These represented crude rates of 14 births and 10 deaths per thousand residents compared with 10 and 12 respectively across the whole of Wealden local authority.

- GDP – Not available specifically for Heathfield. East Sussex is the lowest geographic area for which this data is available. £7,847 GDP per head in East Sussex in 1998 (63% of the UK average). Source: Office for National Statistics.
- Agricultural Holdings – 1999 Census of Agriculture indicates there were around 70 agricultural holdings in ward of Heathfield in 1999.
- Small businesses – Data is sourced from Annual Business Inquiry 1999, ONS:
- No of employees No of employers
1-4 294
5-10 49

11-24 23

25+ Confidential

- No of shops – Data is sourced from ESCC analysis of GOAD retail survey plan, May 2001:
Type of unit - No of units
 - Convenience 10
 - Comparison/Durable 35
 - Services 37
 - Total trading units 82
 - No of vacant units 4 (4.7% vacancy rate)
 - TOTAL RETAIL UNITS 86
- Area of Heathfield – we have data, which suggests the ward of Heathfield is 27.6 sq km in size.

Employee Jobs: There were 1800 employee jobs in Heathfield at September 1998, 5 per cent of the Wealden total.

Income Support: In August 1998 there were 200 Income Support claimants in Heathfield. This represents 4 per cent of the resident population aged 16 or over. For Wealden the proportion was 4 per cent compared with an average of 8 per cent for Great Britain overall.

Indices of Deprivation: The Indices of Deprivation 2000 (with rank 1 being the most deprived ward in England) gave Heathfield the rank of 7024 out of a total of 8414 English wards

RESULTS

1) Population

The 1991 Census show's the Parish of Heathfield and Waldron: as having 10,676 (1991 Census) 11,520 (1996 estimate WDC) Heathfield Town: 7,500 (1996 estimate) with a wider catchment hinterland area of approximately 15,000. 64% of the population lives in Heathfield, which leaves 36% in the Hinterland.

2) Age Groups

Elderly - 21 % of Heathfield's population in mid 1998 were aged 60 and over compared with 25% for Wealden, which is lower than the District level. However the town is inheriting an ageing population.

Young - 22 % of Heathfield's population in mid 1998 was aged less than 16, which is higher than the Wealden average.

3) Employment Type

Professional and Managerial: A total of 36% (of the working population) are in these professional positions with 46% of males and 26% of Females.

Semi Skilled and Manual: 61% of the total working population have semi skilled / manual jobs. 71 % of female are in this group against 52% of males

Figures for Heathfield and Waldron only - Based on a 10% sample of the population carried out WDC in 1991

4) Housing – Elderly people living alone

Single elderly people occupy a total of 751 households, which is 17 % of the total households.

5) Population Growth

The 1991 Census shows the Parish of Heathfield and Waldron: as having 10,676 (1991 Census) 11,520 (1996 estimate WDC). The population has increased by just over 9% from 1991 to 1996.

KEY ISSUES

Maintaining a diverse population

Population Figures show that Heathfield and the surrounding areas already have a positive mix of young and old people, the main issue here is to maintain this by providing local employment opportunities and affordable housing (see the section on housing for further input)

ACTIONS

To raise the quality of life for the employers, employees and their families by increasing job opportunities and quality of work, whilst increasing shops and services diversity, ensuring all have access to a comprehensive and locally provided service at reasonable prices.

The Partnership is working with local businesses and services to promote prosperity and ensuring the full occupancy of shops, offices and industrial units.

To encourage Inward Investment

To redeveloped Brownfield Sites in the High Street to build upwards.

To maximise the Industrial use of the Crown and Market site

To set up a feasibility study looking at utilisation of the major Gateways to the Town

Creation of local high quality jobs to increase the leisure time for those living in our community and provide them with a better quality of life.

To encourage families to spend time in the community and attend local events.

To promote events for all on the Town Web site free of charge to help clubs and organisations have a platform to explain the benefits of their work and raise awareness via the site.

14) Housing

Property Prices January to March 2003

Average house prices in Heathfield and Surrounding area		
Accommodation	average Price £	
Heathfield		
1 Bedroom	120.000	
2 Bedroom	180.000	
3 Bedroom	225.000	
4 Bedroom	266.000	
5 Bedroom	350.000	
All houses Heathfield		UK
£181.000		£141.000
Detached		
£245.681		£230.708
Average retail prices in Heathfield and surrounding area		
Accommodation	average Price £ per calendar month rent	
1 Bedroom	650.00	
2 Bedroom	750.00	
3 Bedroom	850.00	
4 Bedroom	900.00	
5 Bedroom	1250.00	

As the above figures show Heathfield has constantly out performed in house prices over the rest of the UK resulting in the area attracting those with a high income which forces out the younger and key workers to relatively cheaper areas.

1) Future Housing Development

Wealden's local plan indicates that 6600 dwellings were planned for 1991 – 2006 and 4400 for 2006 – 2011 3300 of which are on new housing allocations. (Due to its AONB location. take out as duplication with below) In addition to this 160 new dwellings are considered appropriate to reflect council scheme living over the shops, 300 dwellings on residential curtilage and 100 dwellings to allow for development on existing employment. There is no urban extension planned for Heathfield – due to the surrounding landscape being AONB

The land adjacent to and south of the Ghyll Road industrial estate is allocated for a combination of business and residential purposes.

Heathfield has no large areas of land set aside for new home development. Building will be on small scale as infill sites come forwards,

The Percentage of affordable housing in the district will be minuscule and the only area identified at the moment is the land that is owned by Persimmons at Ghyll Road.

(Please see Local Plan for Heathfield in Appendix).

2) Second Home Ownership

No ward level figures available but having local Estate Agents state that numbers are low.

3) Housing in the Town Centre

The Partnership have identified several properties in the High St which can be converted to provide flat accommodation

4) Wealden District Council Support

The District provide the following to help residents:

- Provide funding for Key workers to purchase homes /within a traveling distance of Wealden.
- Provide housing advice to prevent homelessness.
- Provide adaptations/grants for older homeowners.
- Provide shared ownership properties.

The District also have a Programme to bring all rented local authority housing up to minimum levels as outlined in their 2002 -2005 Housing Strategy survey. Most of the homes in the area are up to these standards.

KEY ISSUES

There is a lack of low cost housing

For those who would like to buy a home the prices in the area have grown dramatically, the average house price in 1999 from £110.000 to £160.000 (source Land Registry 2002). Estate Agents tell the same story with many Landlords selling their rented accommodation to cash in their investment. Therefore there is little to rent, which keeps demand for rented property and therefore prices high.

As average wages in Wealden are only £291.29 a week (approximately £ 15,000 per year) this means that the average person cannot even afford the most basic accommodation, a one-bedroom property.

Results show that many young and separated local people and local people on low or modest incomes are unlikely to be able to purchase property. Many of those on modest incomes are key workers such as teachers, police, health workers, and government officers that are needed to carry out essential roles in the district. Affordable housing is a necessity for these groups.

The lack of affordable housing will affect the labour supply

Affordable housing is also necessary to enable local people on local wages carrying out semi skilled or manual jobs to stay in the area, to provide an employment pool for local businesses. Unemployment is currently low in the area and local businesses moving into the area need a local labour supply if possible so the Partnership will lobby to create low cost housing in the area.

The lack of affordable housing will affect the composition of the community

Young people need to be able to afford property. In Heathfield there is a high percentage of commuters. Communities need to be made up of all age groups if they are to prosper.

Developing housing in the town centre

The flats over the shops will provide accommodation for people at the lower end of the property market. Bringing people to live in the High Street will start to add to the vibrancy of the town centres.

ACTION

The Provision of Housing for those in need is key for the Partnership (Object 4).

The Development of accommodation in the Town Centre

The Partnership has identified several properties in the High Street that can be converted to provide **affordable** flat accommodation. The Partnership is working with landowners to bring these up to living standards for sale. The Partnership estimates that there are at least 12 properties, which can be converted.

The Development of Affordable Housing

The commercial Regeneration project which focuses on moving and redeveloping key properties will confirm suitable sites to develop housing. The Partnership aim to secure a long-term loan to develop affordable housing for key workers in the community

Influencing the Local Plan

The Partnership will co-ordinate local opportunities to build affordable housing with the District Council and Housing associations.

15 Public Health and Safety

RESULTS

1) Emergency Services

Strength: The figures in the box below show that the emergency services are generally meeting their targets

Service	Type	Target	Achieved
Fire Service & Ambulance Service	Emergency Calls 3sec	80%	88%
	Emergency Calls 5sec	90%	96%
	Emergency Calls 60sec	80%	71%
Police	Vehicle Crime	6% réduction	10%
	Violent Crime	5% réduction	65% détection rate
		2%	18% detection rate
Total Crime	Reduction	2%	5%

Source/Figures East Sussex Emergency Services 2002

1) Health

With regards to Public Safety the Partnership have this under specific review in the Draft Heathfield Transport Plan currently being undertaken by ESCC and the Partnership is represented in this process.

With regard to Health care this is not regarded as reasonable by the County District or Parish Councils and indeed by the Partnership.

2) Crime

Strength: Generally Crime Rates are low in Heathfield.

Weakness: One of Heathfield's biggest problems is the amount of Anti-Social behaviour that occurs when youngsters congregate on street corners and cause noise. This is a difficult area to police, as there are rarely any criminal offences being committed.

3) Crime Prevention Measures

Strengths: Two Community Wardens were contracted in spring 2003. Their impact on Anti-Social behaviour and other complaints will be monitored.

Weakness: There is currently no CCTV in town and there are no plans to provide this service.

KEY ISSUES

To open up the previously closed Heathfield Police Station for local surgeries. To enable the Public to have access to Police Offices and discuss services provided

Policing for traffic enforcement and vandalism

ACTIONS

- **Youth Anti – Social Behaviour**

A new initiative of issuing Acceptable Behaviour Contracts to youths who start to present a problem, seems to be having the desired effect in moderating their behaviour in the Hailsham area and we will explore this in Heathfield.

16) Local Government and Community Organizations

RESULTS

1) Access to Parish, District, and County Council

Accessibility to council services and information is summarized in the box below. Accessibility is good for those with access to a car or the Internet, but more difficult for those on low incomes and the elderly who do not have these facilities.

Parish Offices	These are well situated in the High St and manned five days a week.
District Council	The Offices for Welden District Council are situated in Crowborough and Hailsham, both some 9 miles away.
County Offices	The offices of East Sussex County Council are based in the County Town of Lewes some 14 miles away.
Information points	All Council information is held at the Library but their offices are only open part time. Heathfield has a Web site with links to the various tiers of council attached to it at www.heathfield.net
Local Councilors	Do hold occasional local surgeries in conjunction with the Local M.P. and we will ask them to provide this information on line at the Towns web site.

Council Websites are available on the Internet. Heathfield's Pub Hub portal will provide access to Parish, District and County Council information via the Internet.

2) Community Activities

Strengths: There are a variety of clubs for different age groups and interests.

There is also a well-attended youth group at the community college.

3) Local Policy and Strategy Making

Strength: Residents of Heathfield and the surrounding villages have had the opportunity to be involved in Local Policy and Strategy Making, as they have been consulted on the following:

- The development of Supplementary Planning Guidance for Heathfield 2001
- The route for the Northern Extension of the Cuckoo Trail 2003
- East Sussex County Council's Transport Strategy 2003

4) Community Representation on the Town Partnership

Strength: 2.2 shows that there is a wide representation from the public, private and voluntary sectors on the Partnership that all have their own different interests.

KEY ISSUES

Although there are a variety of clubs in Heathfield, There are still youths that 'hang around' on the streets with little to entertain them. The issue of lack of appropriate clubs, activities or entertainment for this group needs to be explored.

ACTIONS

The Partnership is pioneering a new Free Internet access centre "Pub Hubs" which will be available for the youth and the groups they attend. Initial feed back from the Young Farmers group who have the proto type show that there use is vital in areas of communication and helping to co-ordinate events and activities.

Heathfield Web Site to continue to promote community venues and events free of charge.

To like to the Web Site with there own Web page links at no extra charge.

To encourage membership of these groups to join the Partnership and the activities it runs, by inviting their views on projects.

To support and promote the use of local venues by ensuring the Partnership uses the facilities and encourages government and commercial bodies to do the same.

17. Sport Leisure and Open Space

RESULTS

1) Sports Facilities in Heathfield and the surrounding communities

Strengths

1. There are 9 Recreation Grounds in Heathfield and Waldron most of which provide football facilities for clubs
2. The Heathfield and Waldron Rugby Club is successful and includes a ladies club and 200 juniors
3. There is a good private tennis club at Cross in Hand which caters for adults and juniors
4. Heathfield has a facility for bowls, which caters for the elderly
5. Heathfield has a running club
6. The Heathfield Park and Waldron Cricket Clubs are successful and include Junior sections
7. The Parish Council has recently funded a Skateboard Park (£55,000)
8. There is a small Leisure facility available located adjacent to the Community College to the east of the Town. This is open to the Public outside of School hours and provides for a Fitness centre and such sports as Badminton, Trampolining, Netball and Cricket Nets.

Weaknesses

1. There is an open-air swimming pool at the community college, which is (used to be made) available to the community in the summer holidays. (The insurance Policy does not cover such use therefore the facility is no longer available to the community)
2. The local campaign to raise money for an indoor pool is a long way off fruition. The District Council is unlikely to fund a pool as they feel that there is adequate supply in the district. Currently Residents of Heathfield have to travel 7 miles to Uckfield for this facility.
3. There are no hard courts for sports such as netball, which could indicate a lack of sports facilities for women-see above!

2) Outdoor Recreation

Strengths

The Millennium Green, to the North of the tunnel, provides a Communal Green Space in the town for pastoral Recreation and Relaxation.

The Skateboard Park, to the south of the tunnel, is very well equipped and provides for vigorous sporting activity for Skateboards, BMX bikes and rollerblades.

The Cuckoo Trail provides Opportunities for walking, cycling and horse riding in a traffic free rural environment.

KEY ISSUES

Encourage the use of further Footpaths and trails around Heathfield

There is further opportunity for the promotion of existing walking, cycling and riding routes around Heathfield. Promoting further trails around Heathfield would ease congestion on the Cuckoo trail and further encourage people to walk in the countryside as a wider variety of walks will be on offer. This will be a health benefit for local people and an attraction for incoming tourists.

Lack of Access to swimming pools in other towns

Transport is a big issue which directly affects the communities health and leisure opportunities for example the older population are prescribed the oasis scheme – which is swimming and other exercise for health - by their doctor but then they can't get to the Leisure Centre as there is no public transport.

ACTION

The development of walks on Footpaths and trails around Heathfield

Wealden District Council's Leisure Officer and the Cuckoo Trail / Tourism sub group can work together to develop and promote further trails around Heathfield.

Swimming Pool in Heathfield

Research insurance schemes that will cover summer use of the pool by the community-Done

Access to other swimming pools in the district

The Partnership will investigate the possibility of providing free transport to from Heathfield to Uckfield Leisure Centre to access the swimming pool and other facilities.

District Wide Sport's facility Audit

Wealden's Cultural Partnership will be undertaking a district wide audit of open space for sport and recreation in Summer 2003. The Heathfield Partnership is a member of this. The audit will officially identify recreation needs in and around Heathfield and identify further opportunities that need to be developed. The Heathfield Partnership will support this.
Confirmed

18) Culture and Heritage

RESULTS

1) Cultural facilities and societies

Strengths

There is an excellent local drama group

The Heathfield Choral Society has an adventurous and successful programme and put on major concerts each year with an orchestra backing. The Heathfield Silver Band is acclaimed in the South of England.

Weaknesses

- There is no cinema people have to travel into Uckfield (7 miles) or Hailsham (14 miles) to see a film. There is no theatre / venue with a regular entertainment programme
- There is no museum / visitor information centre explaining local history, culture, landscape or way of life. Local people probably have a lack of identity with their own landscape and may not be aware of cultural heritage in their own town.

2) Community Events

Strengths

The Heathfield Show, Le Marche, Christmas Lights and Tour de Wealden bring the community together, however they also cater for people from the wider area. There are also parish and school fetes in summer.

3) Communication

Strengths The Heathfield Chamber of Commerce have a new newsmagazine called Heathfield First – this is delivered to all households in Heathfield and Waldron. It Highlights local news stories, events and promotes local businesses.

The community are starting to use www.heathfield.net to promote events and businesses.

4) Community Venues

Strengths The Community Centre is a good community building on the edge of town. It has a large hall with a stage that can hold up to 195 (**this is in close seating formation**) people, catering facilities, disabled access and several smaller rooms. The facility can be hired out for events.

The town centre has a small church hall, which is used by the community especially the aged, youth and Partnerships up to 30. At Station Road the larger Kingdom Church Hall can be hired and is used by the professional groups as it is bigger and has just been refurbished up to 100.

The Red Cross Hall is available for the community groups to use and is ideal for small-scale meetings up to 40.

There is a small wooden built church in Broad Oak, which was erected by local people.

Weaknesses The Youth Centre in town is too small for the facilities and services it needs to provide. Some adult education is delivered here and the pub hubs project will take away the quiet room.

5) Historical and Cultural Links

Strengths Unique historical and cultural facts about Heathfield include: the discovery of local natural gas, terracotta gravestones and the cuckoo lady. At present these have not been promoted. Well known local attractions include Rudyard Kipling's House; Bateman's in Burwash and Heathfield Park does guided tours for visitors.

KEY ISSUES

Tourism could be developed based on local cultural heritage

The Heathfield area has a well-known association with Rudyard Kipling's house 'Bateman's' which already brings tourists into the area. The items of interest based on local culture and history in Heathfield have not yet been developed and promoted. There is opportunity to do this through the development of a town or natural gas museum, the development of a town trail taking in local History and culture such as John Cade (15th century first rebellion against the government), the Cuckoo lady as well as the information/interpretation boards and public art which are planned to enhance the Cuckoo Trail around Heathfield.

ACTIONS

A New Youth Centre

The Partnership already has plans drawn up for a new multi – facility youth and community centre. The Partnership will seek and secure funding for this project once the commercial regeneration project (see 3.2.6) has been completed identifying the necessity and impact of relocating and redeveloping key properties.

To research the local history of the origins of the Iron works and production and development of Natural Gas and to work in harmony with East Sussex Churches to enlighten the community

of the history of the area. Waldron has a church that can trace its origins back over 800 years, which will be of great local and national interest.

To provide a pictorial of these event s along the Cuckoo Trail / NCR 21 and major gateway sites in Heathfield.

Heathfield Community Centre has a vibrant local Theatre group who produces events and dramatically plays involving all age's groups. The Partnership will support these events and advertise then free of charge on the Town web site.

Heathfield College has recently received Arts and Performing Arts status and has part of its remote responsibility to promoter local culture and history so the Partnership will work closely to ensure we maximise opportunities to bring items of interest to the Town.

19) Transport and Accessibility

Ease of Travel to and from the Local Area

RESULTS

1) Access to national network of dual carriageway roads from the town and the least and most accessible villages

There is very little dual carriageway in East Sussex, the only stretch being part of the A22/A27 at Hailsham/Polegate. The distances given are to link into the Primary Route Network, the nearest Trunk Road being the A21, and the nearest Primary Route being the A22.

The distance from Heathfield to a national network of dual carriageway roads is

Heathfield to A21 = 10.6 miles on A265; to A22 at Halland = 6.5 miles

The distance from Waldron to a national network of dual carriageway roads is

Waldron to A21 = 16.2 miles (via Cross in Hand + Heathfield); to A22 at Halland = 9.1 miles

There are no improvements planned for the local/regional highway network

2) Distance and average travel time by car to nearest large town

Heathfield to Eastbourne = 16.7 miles taking 29 minutes

Heathfield to Tunbridge Wells = 14.7 miles taking 25 minutes (AA route finder)

3) Public Transport to Heathfield

Trains

Heathfield has no train Station. Stonegate Railway Station is central to the Local Transport Plan and work will be carried out to establish a better way to utilise this means of transport. The nearest station is Buxted. Heathfield to Buxted Station by road = 6.5 miles (trains to London) however there is no bus service here. The nearest Station is Uckfield. Heathfield to Uckfield Train Station by bus = 22 minutes. Journeys to London take around an hour.

Buses

The nearest main line bus stations connecting to London are located in Uckfield, Tunbridge Wells and Eastbourne.

Bus Train Connections

It's not convenient to change between train and coach and/or bus services.

Bus times and trains do not always help connection with average waiting times of 25 minutes to add to your journey and in most cases you may need to change once on your train journey.

KEY ISSUES

1. Congestion in the Centre of the Town.
2. No regular and reliable bus service.
3. Pedestrian access.
4. Lack of signage in the Town and Villages.
5. Lack of car park information.
6. Over use of rat runs in the Town avoiding the High St at peak times.
7. Danger Hot spots both in times of day and areas of the Town.

ACTIONS

ESCC are coordinating a Transport plan for the Town and the villages it serves from this the Partnership will lobby to ensure the result of the report is actioned.

The Partnership will work with all groups and councils to ensure co-ordination of its activities to make sure grant funding is available to follow the action that the transport plan will require.

To work with the community group to establish the best way to publicise the action that will be required from the Transport plan.

To publish all information from this report and encourage participation via the use of the Town Web site.

To work with the Chamber of Trade and other retail groups and tourism to establish the amount of signage and numbers and design of notices required.

To produce an audit of what signage is available currently and who is responsible and then to keep a log of new signage and design in line with the Design Strategy already adopted by the Town and WDC.

Establish Traffic enforcement to police the areas, which are legally, designated as non-parking.

To work with the Police, traders and the community to ensure we adopted a better car parking system which enables workers in the Town to park free but a little further away from the centre and to set up short term car parks closer to the retail area with very short pick up only points direct on the High Street to ensure those wishing to make a quick one off purchase can and those who wish to shop have not far to carry their shopping.

20) East Sussex County Council (ESCC) Transport Strategy (Vulnerable Road Users, Public and Community Transport and Roads and Parking)

The ESCC Transport Strategy identified the key transport issues for Residents of Heathfield and the surrounding villages. The key issues identified in the forum are summarised below. The full notes can be seen in appendix X. Transport Issues in Heathfield are listed under the headings of Vulnerable Road Users, Public and Community Transport and Roads and Parking.

a) KEY ISSUES

Vulnerable Road Users

1) Rat-running was highlighted as a problem in Heathfield generally but in particular in the Tilsmore area. The roads used are near Cross-in-Hand Primary; the rat-running traffic is in conflict with pedestrians en-route to the school and is a real barrier to walking. Can traffic be prevented from Rat Running and kept on the A-roads instead?

2) Not enough School Crossing Patrols (SCPs): Residents would like more SCPs in order to make crossing roads safer for children. This might reduce short local car trips.

3) Cycle route to school: There was strong feeling that a segregated cycle track (or shared use facility) along the B2096 is essential to encourage greater levels of cycling and walking from the town to the Community College.

4)

5) 20 mph zones outside schools and in other roads: Reduced speed limits outside schools and on Tilsmore Road were suggested in order to slow down traffic and make the areas around school safer for pedestrians and cyclists.

6) School Buses: More capacity on existing school bus routes was requested to cut down on car dependence for journeys to schools.

7) Enforcement: All residents felt that greater enforcement of speed limits and parking restrictions would help create greater levels of safety and improve traffic flow. Not just around schools but in the High Street where parking violations can have a serious impact on traffic flow. Could restrictions be placed on delivery times to premises in the town? In terms of speed of vehicles, there were requests for interactive speed signs or safety cameras.

9) School Run Congestion: If schools had the facility to allow children to be dropped off earlier in the school day, then this could stagger the problem of the morning school run.

10) Ghyll Road / Cuckoo Trail crossing: This location was highlighted as needing serious and immediate action to slow down vehicles. This causes a lot of concern for parents of children crossing here, as visibility is poor and speeds of traffic high. This problem is seen as a real barrier to walking to school.

11) Cuckoo Trail: Greater use of this might be made by school children if the perceived barrier of personal safety could be overcome. Although known crime rates are low for Heathfield, the dark and secluded nature of this otherwise excellent facility, can serve to prohibit some children from using it. There was also some concern that those cyclists who do use the Cuckoo Trail, ride too fast and this has a negative impact on other vulnerable road users. Great education is needed to slow down cyclists.

12) Camber of some roads and pavements: Severe cambers at some locations are known to cause problem for wheelchair users in the town and serve to limit mobility for this vulnerable road user group

13) Barriers to cycles: sunken drains can throw a cyclist off - particularly an issue where the road is narrow.

14) Barriers to Pedestrians: Crossing at Mill Road/Tilsmore Corner junction difficult for pedestrians. Station Approach/High Street junction difficult for pedestrians.

15) A key request was for a new school bus initiative where a bus could do a regular circulatory route around the town to drop children at schools – a little like the Yellow American Bus system. There was an indication that parents would be quite happy to pay for the journeys if such a service could be provided.

Public and Community Transport

Town bus service: Extend the town service from present am only to include pm. Sunday and evening services are particularly poor.

Village bus services: are infrequent or there are none

Bus stops: on Ghyll Road at the corner with Geers Wood needs better facilities. A bus stop on the south side of the High Street is needed - opposite the north side bus stop? Bus stop desirable for banks.

Bus services: 318 rail-link bus to Etchingham is good.

A similar service to Uckfield would be welcomed.

Time taken by Eastbourne service puts people off (over 1 hour due to delays).

An early morning commuter timed service would be useful. 7.18 and 7.48am services are extremely busy but remainder of the day too quiet so service only just covering costs.

Buses and cycles: a service from Etchingham station to Heathfield with cycle carrying facilities would encourage use of the cuckoo trail.

Heathfield is a hilly town so can be difficult for the elderly to walk far – therefore need a dial a ride bus

Fare levels: prohibitive of regular journeys particularly so for elderly on low income.

Road transport and parking

1) Objective should be to keep traffic flowing along the A265 and to reduce rat running
Suggestions to enable this: Mini Roundabout j/n A265 High Street/C273 Station Road
Roundabout j/n A265/A267 Cuddesfords Corner Roundabout j/n A267/B2102
Cross in Hand

2) Improved junction visibility: A265/Swife Lane
A265/C406 Scotsford Lane
A265/U7588 Uplands Park
A265/U7588 Street End Lane
A265/B2096 Parkwall Road (R/A?)
A265/C14 Newick Lane

3) Alter Junction layout: A265/U7369 Tilsmore Road opposite fire station

- 4) Reposition bus stop in High Street (westbound, south side) Opposite existing bus lay-by (eastbound, northside) Programme bus timetables to ensure east and westbound buses are not stopped opposite each other at the same time to enable traffic to use lay-by if necessary to maintain flow.
- 5) Shop deliveries cause congestion. The construction of loading bays outside Trading 4 You and patisserie could help remove most delivery vehicles from carriageway.
- 7.) The parking of vehicles on footways is a major problem however the group did not want bollards erected to prevent this. Suggestions are to utilise part of the footway in new parade to provide chevron parking including 2 new disabled bays; provide pull off outside NatWest and library; improve direction signing for off street parking; review long and short term parking in existing car parks; reduce long term parking in the town centre and replace with short term, with long term parking further away from the town centre; Mill Road car park under used; provide more cycle parking.
- 8) Speed limits and traffic calming suggestions:
 Broad Oak – 30mph
 Broad Oak – Heathfield speed limit buffer zone
 Tilsmore Road/Mill Road/ Sheepsetting Lane/Ghyll Road – 20mph
 Pedestrian protection in Tilsmore Road
 Rat runs; Ghyll Road/Sheepsetting Lane/Mill Road/Tilsmore Road
 Make Streatfield and Cherwell one-way streets

Key Principles for the transport strategy determined by the Forum

The forum agreed a number of key principles: to enhance economic vitality, to encourage greater use of alternative and sustainable transport choices, to improve the health of the whole community, to enable full participation in the life of the town, to improve travel related safety, to support links to surrounding communities, to protect the built and natural heritage of the area, to enhance the quality of life for residents. Other suggested principles are to discourage illegal car parking, to encourage car sharing, to educate and inform people about sustainable travel.

Moving the Local Area Transport Strategy Forwards

Priorities for the strategy will be focussed on the top four groups; pedestrians, people with reduced mobility, cyclists and users of public transport, but holistic solutions will be sought that help as many of the groups as possible.

The Disability Discrimination Act is discussed in the Strategy, and will be applied to all schemes.

The Strategy will help inform the next LTP with the aim of securing further funding above that available up to 2006. Measures will need to be prioritised carefully to achieve the most benefit.

Priorities expressed in the meeting included smooth flow of traffic through the High Street to help buses and general traffic, the key to which is improving loading and parking issues.

It is planned that a final draft of the Strategy will be made available to the Forum members prior to the next meeting –on 22nd September 2003. This will identify actions.

Other Key Issues

Actions

The Partnership will work with the ESCC and the community to bring to the forefront the most pressing transport issues and plan for improvements.

This will relate to a local Transport Plan, which will plan for the long-term aspirations of the Town, and the area it serves. From the action plan the Town will have the opportunity to priorities the areas most urgent and will have the ability to spend up to £400k on building a Transport system to elevate some of the areas highlighted in **5.4 Transport and Accessibility**

A Summary of Action

KEY to colour code

These are the partners the Partnership will work with to meet the objectives of the action.

RED	BLUE	GREEN	BLACK	PINK	BROWN	Partnership	Other
LEADER+	SEEDA	WDC	Commercial	ESCC	Parish	Grey	Sky Blue

The numbers by the side of the action indicate the priority level and year in which they will need to be completed to take advantage of the grant money from SEEDA or Leader+

HEALTHCHECK RESULTS

The Economy

ACTIONS

Respond to the local plan

The Partnership need to remain proactive by responding to the local plan in the review process ensuring that their land for business sites retains such status and usage.

Key Partnership

Work experience Programme

A Work Experience Programme needs to be established in conjunction with local training establishments/colleges so that young people and long term unemployed people can receive training.

Key Partnership Heathfield College ESCC

#1 Attract high Value Added companies into Heathfield (SEEDA and Leader+)
By 2003 September/October

A study needs to be completed looking at business premises / land available to determine what type of businesses could be attracted to Heathfield area. Heathfield needs to identify their selling points for such business. The Heathfield Partnership could work with Invest in East Sussex to complete the study and attract high value added companies to the area.

Key Partnership SEEDA Leader+ Sussex Ent'rise EDEAL Invest in East Sussex

Set up stronger links with Community College for career advice and job opportunities.

In recent years the Community College has distinguished itself in its standards of both GCSE and A Level performance. Quality jobs with real career opportunities are important needs for this increasingly impressive production line. Inward investing employers would now be able to find capable young People eager to find interesting work.

Key Partnership Heathfield Comm College Chamber of Commerce

Retail and Town Centre Services

ACTIONS

#1 Encourage inward investment for a catering establishment (SEEDA and Leader+) January 2004

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 or in the town centre is needed. Such investment needs to be attracted into the town.

Key Partnership SEEDA Leader+ Sussex Ent'se EDEAL Invest in East Sussex

Filling vacant shops

The Heathfield Partnership is looking to do a study to determine what further shops / services are desirable in the town centre. The Heathfield Partnership is working with the landlords of vacant shop premises to provide a simple means of putting buyers and developers in touch with the landowners.

Key Partnership WDC EDEAL Invest in East Sussex

Attracting Major Retailers into the town

The Partnership is identify which Major Retailers would complement (and not compete with shops in the town) and would be willing to set up in a town with a small population. Heathfield needs to consider the population of the rural area it serves, not just the population of the town when trying to attract a major retailer.

Key Partnership WDC EDEAL Invest in East Sussex

#1 Further Develop E Commerce (SEEDA and Leader+) by 2004

E commerce, encouraging certain local businesses to trade over the internet, could further be developed especially by those supplying specialist goods (e.g. large shoe sizes) and supplying large quantities of goods to businesses to enable rural traders to overcome access issues for shoppers and gain a larger share of the market. To further develop e commerce in Heathfield research needs to be completed to determine which businesses in Heathfield already do this and which ones would like assistance developing e commerce.

For businesses that do not yet have the capacity to trade on line, assistance is needed in training traders and identifying sources of low cost IT to install in local shops.

Key Partnership ESCC Leader+ Chamber Parish

Commercial and industrial Property Needs

ACTIONS

Office Space Development

The Development of new quality office floor space above ground floor level premises is an initiative that the Partnership is considering. Suitable premises need to be identified for conversion and funding secured.

Key Partnership WDC EDEAL Commercial Agents ESCC

Farm Diversification

The Partnership will investigate further opportunities for farm diversification for light industrial units / floor space.

(Another source of possible funding is SEEDA redundant building fund 25%)

Key Partnership WDC EDEAL Invest in East Sussex

Contribute to Wealden DC's/ East Sussex CC's study of supply and demand on small business units

This information will assist local government in making strategic local decisions on the development of business units

Key Partnership WDC Chamber

Business Support

ACTIONS

Broadband

To identify the most suitable supplier of broadband technology, identify areas most in need of broadband and identify sources of funding to bring these assets to more areas.

Key Partnership ESCC WDC Chamber

#1 Business Advice (SEEDA and Leader+) by 2004

To work with EDEAL and Sussex Enterprise to increase small business advice in town and enlist their lobbying power to help bring about an up grade in the electricity supply.

Key Partnership SEEDA Leader+ Sussex Ent'se EDEAL Invest in East Sussex

Training and Education - KEY ISSUES

ACTIONS

Work with Early Years Development Community Partnership

The Heathfield Partnership need to work with Early Years Development Community Partnership to determine best way to address the shortage of childcare in Heathfield and the surrounding communities

Key Partnership ESCC Heathfield College

#1 Leader + Funding for Pub Hubs (SEEDA and Leader+)
Oct Dec 2003

The Partnership are currently applying for Leader + funding to install 16 public hubs in Heathfield and the surrounding communities. This project will address the issues of access to the Internet and computer skills training.

Key Partnership ESCC Leader+ SEEDA

Work in Partnership for the development of Vocational training Courses

The Partnership will be involved with the development of vocational training courses in Partnership with the learning skills council and others.

Key Partnership WDC Heathfield College

9.1) Tourism and visitor services

ACTIONS

Enhancing The Cuckoo Trail – Leader + Bid

#1 PUBLIC ART (SEEDA and Leader+)
by 2004

i) Public Art: The Partnership's Leader + bid to enhance the NCR21/Cuckoo Trail includes £3000 to develop Public art which promotes the cultural heritage of the area.

Key Partnership WDC Leader+ SEEDA

#2 ii) Signage: (SEEDA and Leader+)
By Dec/Jan 2003 - 4

The Partnership's Leader + bid to enhance the Cuckoo Trail covers sign posts and that will direct tourists to facilities and points of interest in the town of Heathfield.

- The Environment

Key Partnership ESCC Leader+ SEEDA

ACTIONS

#2 Further High Street Improvements (Leader+)
by Dec 2004

To continue with phase 4 of the High Street Improvements (Already in progress see section 3.1.3 and 3.2.1) and development of gateways.

Key Partnership ESCC Leader+ WDC

Follow The Heathfield Design Strategy

To ensure that all new development in Heathfield Town Centre follows The Heathfield Design Strategy / Supplementary Planning Guidance.

Key Partnership

10) The Countryside

ACTIONS

1# Cuckoo Trail Enhancements – Education (SEEDA and Leader+) By Jan 2004

Part of the Cuckoo Trail enhancements project includes the development of further natural and cultural heritage interpretation boards around Heathfield, so that local people and visitors can learn more about the environment and history of the town and surrounding countryside. The IT and Education Group will also create downloadable countryside education worksheets which children/youths can complete whilst on the Cuckoo Trail. These will be available on the town website.

Key Partnership ESCC Leader+ SEEDA

#1 Feasibility study (SEEDA and Leader+) by 2004

The Partnership have identified the need to conduct a feasibility study to establish the engineering problems and costs of the prefer routes which have been proposed to public. ESCC will be asked to set a brief for the Engineering consultancy to look at and then report the findings back to the community. The Partnership will apply to WDC and ESCC and SEEDA for funding.

Key Partnership ESCC Leader+ SEEDA WDC

The Partnership will promote the wider aspects for the Cuckoo trail and NCR 21 via the Town Web site and its Action Plan and will lobby Tourist Boards and groups to promote the total route from Paris to London to help our neighbours attract the widest possible audience to participate.

Key Partnership ESCC Leader+ SEEDA WDC Visit England

The Partnership will work closely with the Heathfield Community College as they have been awarded Art status to provide a graphic account of historical and natural events along the trail.

Key Partnership ESCC Leader+ SEEDA Heathfield College

The Partnership will work with the ESCC Ranger to promote cultural works along the trail by promoting the events on the Town Web site

Key Partnership ESCC

The Partnership will work With an Environmental Group / Local Government Environmental Officer to achieve the above.

11) Social and Community Issues

ACTIONS

To raise the quality of life for the employers, employees and their families by increasing job opportunities and quality of work, whilst increasing shops and services diversity, ensuring all have access to a comprehensive and locally provided service at reasonably prices.

Key Partnership WDC Chamber Commercial Agents

The Partnership is working with local businesses and services to promote prosperity and ensuring the full occupancy of shops, offices and industrial units. To encourage Inward Investment

Key Partnership Chamber

To redeveloped Brownfield Sites in the High Street to build upwards.

Key Partnership WDC Chamber Commercial Agents

To maximise the Industrial use of the Crown and Market site

Key Partnership WDC Chamber Commercial Agents

**#1 To set up a feasibility study looking at utilisation of the major Gateways to the Town (SEEDA and Leader+)
By Dec 2003 – Jan 2004**

Key Partnership ESCC WDC Leader+ SEEDA

Creation of local high quality jobs to increase the leisure time for those living in our community and provide them with a better quality of life.

Key Partnership ESCC Chamber

To encourage families to spend time in the community and attend local events.

Key Partnership ESCC Leader+ SEEDA WDC

To promote events for all on the Town Web site free of charge to help clubs and organisations have a platform to explain the benefits of their work and raise awareness via the site.

Key Partnership ESCC WDC

12) Housing

ACTION

The Provision of Housing for those in need is key for the Partnership (Object 4).

The Development of accommodation in the Town Centre

The Partnership has identified several properties in the High Street that can be converted to provide **affordable** flat accommodation. The Partnership is working with landowners to bring these up to living standards for sale. The Partnership estimates that there are at least 12 properties, which can be converted.

Key Partnership ESCC Leader+ SEEDA WDC Landowners

The Development of Affordable Housing

The commercial Regeneration project, which focuses on moving and redeveloping key properties, will confirm suitable sites to develop housing. The Partnership aim to secure a long-term loan to develop affordable housing for key workers in the community

Key Partnership

Influencing the Local Plan

The Partnership will co-ordinate local opportunities to build affordable housing with the District Council and Housing associations.

Key Partnership WDC

13) Public Health and Safety

ACTIONS

Youth Anti – Social Behaviour

A new initiative of issuing Acceptable Behaviour Contracts to youths who start to present a problem, seems to be having the desired effect in moderating their behaviour in the Hailsham area and we will explore this in Heathfield.

Key Partnership ESCC WDC Heathfield College

#1 PUB HUBS (SEEDA and Leader+)
Oct – Dec 2003

The Partnership is pioneering a new Free Internet access centre “Pub Hubs” which will be available for the youth and the groups they attend. Initial feed back from the Young Farmers group who have the proto type show that there use is vital in areas of communication and helping to co-ordinate events and activities.

Key Partnership ESCC Leader+ SEEDA

Heathfield Web Site to continue to promote community venues and events free of charge.

Key Partnership Volunteer Organisations Heathfield College

To link to the Web Site with there own Web page at no extra charge.

Key Partnership Heathfield Chamber

To encourage membership of these groups to join the Partnership and the activities it runs, by inviting their views on projects.

Key Partnership

To support and promote the use of local venues by ensuring the Partnership uses the facilities and encourages government and commercial bodies to do the same.

Key Partnership

5.3.5 Sport Leisure and Open Space

ACTION

The development of walks on Footpaths and trails around Heathfield

Wealden District Council's Leisure Officer and the Cuckoo Trail / Tourism sub group can work together to develop and promote further trails around Heathfield.

Key Partnership WDC

Swimming Pool in Heathfield

Research insurance schemes that will cover summer use of the pool by the community-Done

Key Partnership

Access to other swimming pools in the district

The Partnership will investigate the possibility of providing free transport to from Heathfield to Uckfield Leisure Centre to access the swimming pool and other facilities.

Key Partnership ESCC WDC

District Wide Sport's facility Audit

Wealden's Cultural Partnership will be undertaking a district wide audit of open space for sport and recreation in Summer 2003. The Heathfield Partnership is a member of this. The audit will officially identify recreation needs in and around Heathfield and identify further opportunities that need to be developed. The Heathfield Partnership will support this. Confirmed

Key Partnership WDC

5.3.6 Culture and Heritage

ACTIONS

#1 A New Youth Centre (SEEDA and Leader+)
ASAP Leader+ bid in but see at WDC

The Partnership already has plans drawn up for a new multi – facility youth and community centre. The Partnership will seek and secure funding for this project once the commercial regeneration project (see 3.2.6) has been completed identifying the necessity and impact of relocating and redeveloping key properties.

Key Partnership Leader+ SEEDA WDC

To research the local history of the origins of the Iron works and production and development of Natural Gas and to work in harmony with East Sussex Churches to enlighten the community of the history of the area. Waldron has a church that can trace its origins back over 800 years, which will be of great local and national interest.

Key Partnership Leader+ SEEDA WDC

To provide a pictorial of these events along the Cuckoo Trail / NCR 21 and major gateway sites in Heathfield.

Key Partnership ESCC Leader+ SEEDA WDC College

Heathfield Community Centre has a vibrant local Theatre group who produces events and dramatically plays involving all age's groups. The Partnership will support these events and advertise then free of charge on the Town web site.

Key Partnership

Heathfield College has recently received Arts and Performing Arts status and has part of its remote responsibility to promoter local culture and history so the Partnership will work closely to ensure we maximise opportunities to bring items of interest to the Town.

Key Partnership ESCC Leader+ SEEDA College

5.4 Transport and Accessibility

ACTIONS

#1 **Transport Plan (SEEDA and Leader+)** Jan 2004

ESCC are coordinating a Transport plan for the Town and the villages it serves from this the Partnership will lobby to ensure the result of the report is auctioned.

Key Partnership ESCC Leader+ SEEDA WDC Landowners

The Partnership will work with all groups and councils to ensure co-ordination of its activities to make sure grant funding is available to follow the action that the transport plan will require.

Key Partnership ESCC Parish WDC Landowners

To work with the community group to establish the best way to publicise the action that will be required from the Transport plan.

Key Partnership Volunteer groups

To publish all information from this report and encourage participation via the use of the Town Web site.

Key Partnership

To work with the Chamber of Trade and other retail groups and tourism to establish the amount of signage and numbers and design of notices required.

Key Partnership ESCC Parish WDC

To produce an audit of what signage is available currently and who is responsible and then to keep a log of new signage and design in line with the Design Strategy already adopted by the Town and WDC.

Key Partnership ESCC WDC Parish

Establish Traffic enforcement to police the areas, which are legally, designated as non-parking.

Key Partnership ESCC

To work with the Police, traders and the community to ensure we adopted a better car parking system which enables workers in the Town to park free but a little further away from the centre and to set up short term car parks closer to the retail area with very short pick up only points direct on the High Street to ensure those wishing to make a quick one off purchase can and those who wish to shop have not far to carry their shopping.

Key Partnership ESCC Police WDC Chamber

5.4.4 East Sussex County Council (ESCC) Transport Strategy (Vulnerable Road Users, Public and Community Transport and Roads and Parking)

Actions

The Partnership will work with the ESCC and the community to bring to the forefront the most pressing transport issues and plan for improvements.

Key Partnership ESCC Parish WDC Landowners

This will relate to a local Transport Plan, which will plan for the long-term aspirations of the Town, and the area it serves. From the action plan the Town will have the opportunity to priorities the areas most urgent and will have the ability to spend up to £400k on building a Transport system to elevate some of the areas highlighted in **5.4 Transport and Accessibility**

Key Partnership ESCC Parish Leader+ SEEDA WDC Landowners