

Chapter 10

The Town Centre

Corporate Aims

1. We will develop a strong and sustainable local economy, encouraging business and investment into Eastbourne;
2. We will make Eastbourne a safe place to live, work and visit.
3. We will enhance the opportunities for enjoyment through active pursuits and simple relaxation;
4. We will encourage a fair and socially inclusive society;
5. We will protect and enhance the Borough's environment, sympathetically developing it for future generations.

Corporate Objectives

- P1: Promote Eastbourne as a place for business investment and as a tourist destination.
- P2: Work with all agencies and landowners to retain and grow existing businesses.
- P4: Develop a vibrant and successful Town Centre.
- S2: Reduce and prevent domestic burglary.
- S3: Reduce and prevent vehicle crime.
- S4: Reduce and prevent anti-social behaviour.
- S5: Reduce and prevent the fear of crime.
- EN2: Develop and promote Sports and Leisure activities.
- EN4: Develop and promote a wide range of events for residents and in support of the tourism industry.
- EV1: Provide access to services for all.
- EV2: Help everyone to have a decent home.
- EV5: Combat and alleviate the effects of poverty.
- EV6: Promote social inclusion and community participation.
- F3: Promote and enhance our natural environment.
- F4: Provide effective sustainable management and protection of the built environment.
- F5: Promote the use of environmentally friendly forms of transport and seek to alleviate traffic congestion.

Policy Objectives

1. To maintain and encourage the development of retail uses so that the Town Centre remains a major shopping destination;
2. To encourage and develop the diversity of social and leisure facilities in the Town Centre to augment the Town Centre role as a primary destination;
3. To conserve and improve the townscape so that it remains an attractive destination;
4. To promote wider use of more sustainable means of transport;
5. To encourage a range and diversity of housing;
6. To provide for the needs of businesses and services that make an effective contribution to the wider Eastbourne community.

Introduction

- 10.1 This chapter departs from the topic-based approach of most of the other chapters in this Plan because the Council attaches significant importance to the regeneration of the Town Centre as a whole. The area to which the policies and proposals of this chapter apply is defined on the Inset Map which accompanies this document. Borough-wide policies which have relevance to the Town Centre are not duplicated in this chapter but are cross-referenced to the relevant topic chapter.
- 10.2 The Council's greater commitment to the Town Centre commenced in 1992 when a Town Centre Management Initiative (TCMI) was created, the Initiative included a Town Centre Strategy Manager who was appointed to work jointly for the Borough and retailers. The TCMI was a response to the climate of increased competition that the traditional Town Centre was facing from out-of-town shopping centres. In 1996 a Town Centre Strategy was published on behalf of the TCMI which indicated a series of measures to enhance the Town Centre as a shopping destination. TCMI objectives continue to be progressed through a series of annual business plans.
- 10.3 In 1996 and 1997 the Council organised a series of meetings with business, commercial and other groups in the town to discuss how they felt about the town's needs and priorities. There was widespread support for the principle of a regenerated Town Centre as the hub of the town, integrating work, homes, recreation and shopping activities into an accessible centre. As a result the Council commissioned the Civic Trust Regeneration Unit to prepare a Town Centre Regeneration Strategy. This Strategy has been taken into account in preparing this chapter. Also taken into account is the Eastbourne Transport Study commissioned from the Mott MacDonald consultancy in 1997 which looks in detail at transport opportunities in the Town Centre.
- 10.4 The area defined for planning purposes as the Town Centre is home to about 8,684⁵¹ people, and approximately 10,270 people are employed there.
- 10.5 Within the Town Centre are pockets of deprivation, most markedly in parts of Devonshire ward where indicators show this to be one of the most deprived areas in East Sussex. Unemployment is particularly high in the area at 8.4% compared to 3.3% for the town as a whole (as at November 2002). The Council is encouraging the regeneration of this area and has a number of schemes targeted to Devonshire ward. In particular it has produced "The Seaside Road Regeneration Strategy" for this commercial street. The strategy outlines a cross-authority approach to the problems of this area and land use implications stemming from this statement are carried forward in this Plan. Also the Council has successfully sought grant monies from the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB), Capital Challenge and the Heritage Lottery Fund (Conservation Area Partnership Scheme, Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme) but it is recognised that there is still much to be

⁵¹ Source: 2001 Census (Key Statistics for Local Authorities), Crown Copyright.

achieved.

- 10.6 For clarity sake it is necessary to look at the individual components that make up the fabric of the Town Centre but it should not be forgotten that there are clear interdependencies between these components. For instance a vital, vibrant shopping destination is also likely to have a range of leisure facilities such as cafes, bars and cinemas that complement the offer. Whilst poor transport arrangements may contribute to the decline in shopping provision and cease to make the town an attractive destination for both local people, tourists and visitors.

Transport and Environment

- 10.7 An attractive, accessible centre lies at the heart of a successful town and represents the most sustainable location for development. Both the Civic Trust Regeneration Unit report and the Eastbourne Transport Study showed that there are a range of transport problems that are undermining the Town Centre's economic prosperity and diminishing its environment. These include:
- noise and fumes in the Terminus Road bus lane;
 - a lack of integration of transport facilities;
 - inadequate facilities for pedestrians and cyclists;
 - excessive penetration by private cars;
 - peripheral Town Centre retail areas being marginalised due to pedestrian difficulty in crossing major roads;
 - congestion caused by car drivers searching for on-street car parking places.

The Town Centre is a distinctive, historic townscape with a generally good visual appearance, which offers a mix of functions and a pleasant ambience.

- 10.8 Improvement of the Town Centre environment is inextricably linked to resolving these transport problems. As a first step it is important to look at measures which reclaim the Town Centre for pedestrians. Using Capital Challenge monies the Council has significantly improved the environment of the original shopping precinct in Terminus Road, and has instigated traffic calming measures in Bolton Road/Terminus Road/Langney Road to give pedestrians priority. It is envisaged that further schemes will be implemented during the course of this Plan as, and when, funding becomes available, with the ultimate intention of a pedestrian friendly "spine" linking the Railway Station to the Seafront. These schemes will be centred upon the upper section of Terminus Road, between "Bankers' Corner" and the Railway Station, which is currently used as the Town Centre bus lane; and Terminus Road between Seaside Road/Trinity Trees and the Seafront. A range of pedestrian priority measures are also likely to be required where the pedestrian "spine" is crossed by traffic. Where appropriate pedestrian priority measures may include full pedestrianisation and the exclusion of vehicular traffic though it will not always be possible to achieve this. In such instances suitable design measures will be utilised to ensure that pedestrians have precedence over vehicular traffic and deliveries will be strictly time controlled.
- 10.9 Improvements have been agreed for the Seaside Road Area to encourage the regeneration of this area and work is scheduled to commence in 2003. Pedestrian priority measures in this area will link to the main pedestrian "spine" and assist the area to become less marginalised. A range of pedestrian priority measures are also proposed for the section of Carlisle Road between Compton Street and Grand Parade to complement the development of a "Cultural Quarter", see paragraph 10.28 below.
- 10.10 Greater pedestrian priority within the Town Centre has a number of advantages. In particular it will contribute to a significant improvement in the environment, not only in reducing noise and fumes, but enabling tree planting and other landscape measures. It will also contribute to improved community safety as opportunity can be taken to develop lighting schemes which reduce the fear of crime. It could also enable managed street theatre, street art and particular events, such as a Farmer's Market, to take place, all of

which could add to the vibrancy, vitality and economic viability of the Town Centre.

- 10.11 Terminus Road between “Banker’s Corner” and the Railway Station is currently used as a bus lane and there are clear vehicle/pedestrian conflicts which need to be resolved before significant environmental improvements can be made. The Council is committed in principle to improving this section of the Town Centre but recognises that there may be difficulties in implementing a strategy which relocates all the buses without compromising access. A more efficient interchange could allow the integration of a range of transport options including train, bus, coach, taxi, cycling and pedestrians and also ensure that bus stops elsewhere in the Town Centre would be used for setting down and picking up passengers rather than longer term waiting as occurs at the present. This option could enable a major improvement to the environment including significant traffic calming measures and pavement widening, whilst also enabling much improved information, and other, services to be provided for bus passengers. However further study is required before this option could be pursued and finance would need to be identified, but in the meantime the Local Transport Plan provides for the relocation of the Town Centre ring road to The Avenue and Whitley Bridge to reduce traffic levels in the vicinity of the Station.

Policy TC1: Public Transport Interchange

Planning permission will be granted for a new public transport interchange in the Town Centre, subject to:

- a) a well designed scheme in terms of siting, scale, materials and layout that respects both the needs of public transport operators and the needs of passengers, including convenience and safety (see Policy UHT1);**
- b) an acceptable environmental impact;**
- c) no adverse impact on public transport operations;**
- d) no adverse impact on road or pedestrian safety;**
- e) appropriate measures are included for safety and security including crime prevention measures in layout and design (see Policy UHT1);**
- f) appropriate provision for people with disabilities and mobility difficulties.**

- 10.12 Implementation of Travel Plans for existing and proposed major employment generating uses within the Town Centre will also assist environmental improvement by reducing car usage. Policy TR3 of the Transport Chapter applies.
- 10.13 Public consultation has suggested that the Town Centre is poorly served both in terms of cycleways and cycle parking. All major developments in the Town Centre will be subject to Policy TR6 of the transport chapter which requires adequate cycle parking provision to be made. Opportunities will also be taken for further cycle parking as part of the pedestrian priority schemes outlined above. New cycleways are envisaged for the Town Centre as part of the Local Transport Plan submission, these cycleways will be signposted and accompanied by traffic calming measures.

- 10.14 The Council has identified a need to relocate the Wartling Road coach park to make the town a more attractive destination for coach operators (see para. 8.28). The Cavendish Place coach station is considered to be well located for the needs of operators and would increase 'footfall' in an area of the town where businesses have been experiencing difficulties. The Council would, therefore, support a scheme that would ensure the improvement and continued use of this site. In particular a scheme that includes an element of residential accommodation is considered to be appropriate (see Policy TC13).

Policy TC2: Cavendish Place Coach Station

Planning permission will be granted for a mixed use scheme comprising retention of the existing use for a minimum of 35 coaches and residential development above the coach station, off Cavendish Place/Susan's Road. The coach parking element will be considered against Policy TR14 of this Plan. Policies HO20 (residential amenity) and UHT4 (visual amenity) will apply to the housing proposal.

Note: A planning brief will be prepared to guide the development of this site.

- 10.15 The Civic Trust Regeneration Unit's report highlighted the need to create urban parks and gardens within the Town Centre as there is a general lack of public amenity space in the area. This deficiency is recognised by the Council and "green spaces" will be created within the Town Centre when suitable opportunities emerge. Hyde Gardens is one area where an improved urban space could be created during the period of this Plan.
- 10.16 It is accepted that some public car parking will always be necessary in Town Centres. This must be balanced with other modes of transport and the capacity of the highway network. It is important for the vitality and viability of the Town Centre to have sufficient public parking spaces. This will help it compete with other Town Centres and out-of-centre retail parks. In association with other policies in the Plan, particularly the transport interchange and the Arndale Extension it may be necessary to increase the amount of off street car parking provision. It will, therefore, be necessary to carry out a need based assessment to manage this potential to ensure that the viability and vitality of the Town Centre is not undermined. It will also be a requirement that any additional off-street provision is managed in accordance with the relevant adopted parking strategy in order that wider transport objectives are not undermined.

Policy TC3: Public Car Parking

Applications for new public car parking will be required to include an assessment of the need for the scheme. Planning permission will be granted where it can be demonstrated that:

- a) there is a need for the scheme;
- b) there is no adverse impact on residential, environmental or visual amenity (see policies HO20, NE28, and UHT4);
- c) there is no significant adverse impact on the capacity of the highway network; and
- d) appropriate measures are included for safety and security including crime prevention measures in layout and design (see Policy UHT1).

Retail and Leisure

- 10.17 Eastbourne is an important retail centre with a catchment area of some 190,000 people for comparison goods. This population is expected to increase to at least 202,000 people by 2011, with expenditure levels on comparison goods also projected to increase by about 3.5% per annum during the same period.⁵² Multiple chains are well represented in the Arndale Centre and its immediate vicinity, whilst there are a number of independent retailers outside of this core. The overall floorspace vacancy rate is relatively low at some 9.1%, with a significant proportion of the vacancies in the more peripheral shopping areas.
- 10.18 However there are gaps in the retailers represented in the Town Centre. Fashion clothes are frequently mentioned in this respect, and respondees to the Issues Consultation also highlighted limited opportunities for food shopping and the absence of a “Woolworth’s” store. The 1996 Town Centre Strategy provides a more objective assessment of these gaps, recognising that the Town Centre is missing out on much of the Social Class 1 and Class 2 potential spend (socio-economic groups A/B) which represents 38% of the total available, and is also missing out on virtually all of the young, high fashion spend available in the catchment area.
- 10.19 There are particular issues facing the Town Centre which planning policy needs to address. The prime concern is that the centre has lost market share to the other neighbouring sub-regional shopping centres of Brighton, Hastings and Tunbridge Wells, and also to out-of centre retail warehouses. Failure to promote further investment in the Town Centre over the Plan period would see a further decline in this market share. The environmental improvement measures discussed above will contribute to a vital, viable shopping centre but additional retail provision is likely to be required for the town to at least maintain its current share of the market given the increasing population and expenditure levels in the catchment area.
- 10.20 The measures outlined in Chapter 9 (Shopping) reflect current national planning policy guidance which seeks to maintain and enhance retail provision within Town Centres rather than out-of centre locations, and are essential for achieving greater investment in Eastbourne Town Centre. In order that these measures succeed it is important that appropriate sites are identified for retail development otherwise the vitality and viability of the Town Centre will become increasingly threatened by further out-of centre developments.
- 10.21 In applying the sequential test set-out in Policy SH3 only land adjacent to the Railway Station is identifiable as likely being available for immediate retail development. The land is currently used for car parking, vehicle storage and railway operations. It is considered that retail development would be most appropriate in the vicinity of the Enterprise Centre and the Railway Station, but will require a high standard of design to integrate both buildings and respect the character of the station which is a listed building. Any development should, therefore, make provision for the relocation of the existing car parking to the rear of the retail element. It will be a requirement that the scheme include environmental improvements in the area between the station and the Enterprise Centre.

Policy TC4: Retail Development Adjacent to the Station

Planning permission will be granted for a retail development on land adjacent to Eastbourne Railway Station, together with provision for car parking in line with Policy TR11, provided that:

a) the development is well designed in terms of siting, scale and materials and appropriate landscaping is provided (see Policy UHT1);

- b) the development is well located to existing Town Centre pedestrian links;**
c) appropriate access arrangements are provided, including provision for taxis and short term dropping off facilities, and access and parking for cyclists;
d) appropriate provision is made for access by people with disabilities and with

⁵² Data supplied by the Council’s retail consultant. See Background Document No.9: Retail Audit

- mobility difficulties;**
- e) **there would be no adverse impact on visual or environmental amenity (see Policies UHT4 and NE28);**
 - f) **policies in this Plan in respect of environmentally sustainable development are complied with, including NE3 (conservation of water resources); NE4 (sustainable drainage systems); NE5 (minimisation of construction waste); NE6 (recycling facilities) and NE11 (energy saving measures);**
 - g) **appropriate measures are included for safety and security, including crime prevention measures in layout and design (see Policy UHT1); and**
 - h) **provision of appropriate infrastructure (see Policy IR2);**
 - i) **appropriate vehicular access is maintained to the operational railway that currently exists.**

An environmental improvement scheme for the area between Eastbourne Railway Station and the Enterprise Centre will be required as part of the development, including the development of a landscaped pedestrian piazza area.

Note: A planning brief will be prepared to guide development of this site including guidance on the appropriate type of retail development based on an up-to-date assessment of shopping floorspace need.

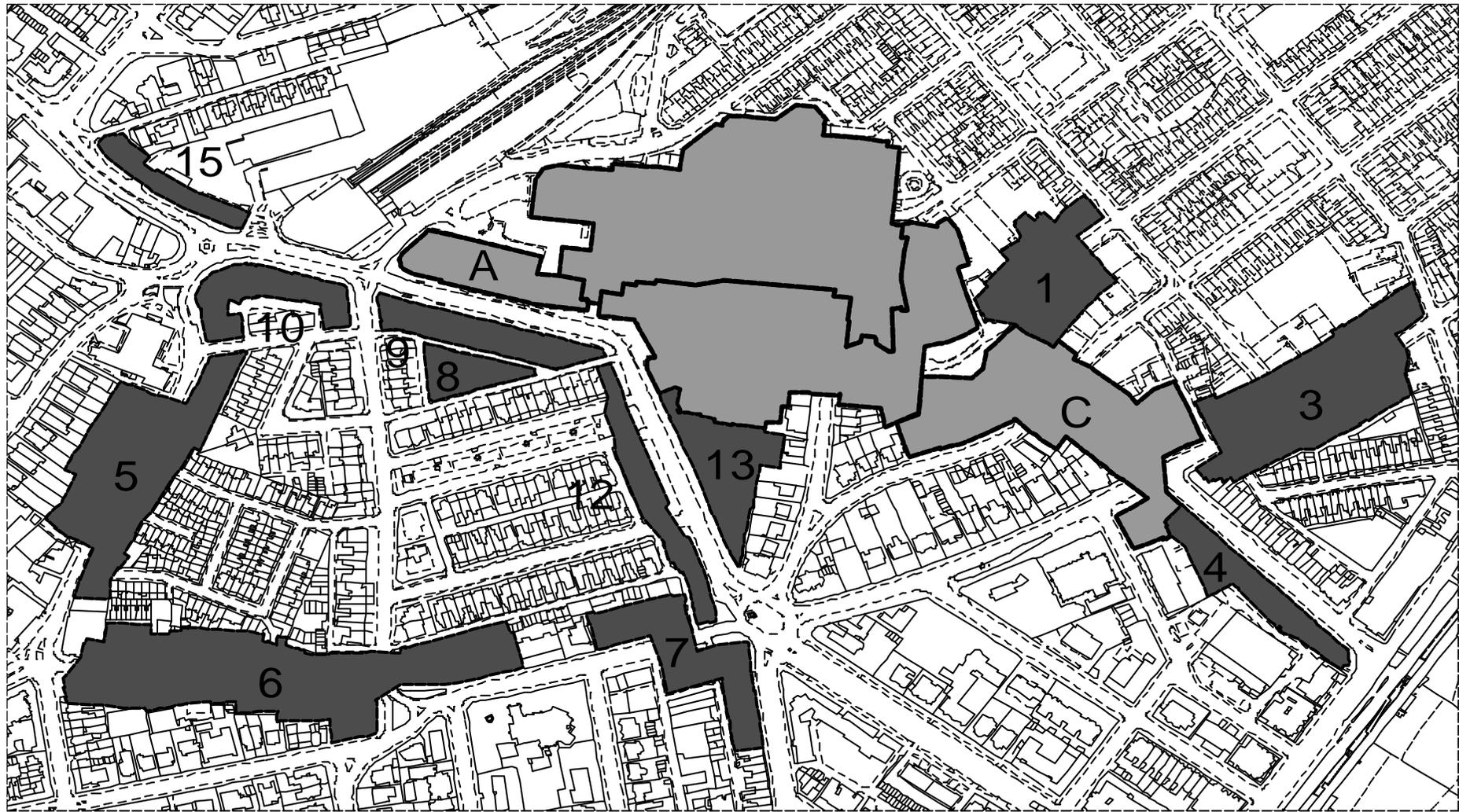
- 10.22 On the basis of the most likely need for new retail floorspace over the Plan period⁵³ it is recognised that the development proposed above will be insufficient. Preliminary work undertaken on behalf of the Council suggests that the best location for additional retail floorspace in the longer term is the western end of Terminus Road between the existing Arndale Centre and the Railway Station, including what has been termed Arndale III. Consultants have been engaged to prepare a development brief, and to search out potential development partners. It is the purpose of this Plan to establish the planning policy framework for the proposal to ensure that any scheme can be well integrated and enhance the existing Town Centre and include a public transport interchange, which is regarded as an essential component. It is considered that the additional retail floorspace should be provided as part of a mixed use scheme including residential and leisure elements.

Policy TC5: Mixed Use Scheme at Western End of Terminus Road

Planning permission will be granted for a mixed use development, including additional retail floorspace, residential and leisure elements at the western end of Terminus Road, subject to the following considerations:

- a) **the development is well designed in terms of siting, scale and materials (see Policy UHT1);**
- b) **the development is well linked to the existing Town Centre and to established pedestrian links;**
- c) **the development to include an integrated transport interchange (see Policy TC1);**
- d) **appropriate access arrangements are provided, including provision of access and parking for cyclists;**
- e) **appropriate provision is made for access by people with disabilities and with mobility difficulties;**

⁵³ See Background Paper No. 14(R): Shopping Floorspace Requirement



Plan 7

Town Centre:
Primary and Secondary Shopping Areas

Key	
shopping areas	
	Primary Shopping Area
	Secondary Shopping Area

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- f) there would be no adverse effect on residential, visual or environmental amenity (see Policies HO20, UHT4 and NE28, including views from the Downland (see Policy UHT3);
- g) policies in this Plan in respect of environmentally sustainable development are complied with, including NE3 (conservation of water resources); NE4 (sustainable drainage systems); NE5 (minimisation of construction waste); NE6 (recycling facilities); and NE11 (energy saving measures);
- h) appropriate measures are included for safety and security, including crime prevention measures in layout and design (see Policy UHT1); and
- i) provision of appropriate infrastructure (see Policy IR2).

Note: A planning brief will be prepared for this development.

- 10.23 In considering ways to maintain, or even enhance, the market share of Eastbourne Town Centre it is important to “manage” the existing retail stock so that the centre remains attractive to shoppers. Planning policy for the Town Centre has reflected the view that A1 (shops) uses should predominate in the primary (or central) part of the town. Whilst A2 (financial and professional services) and A3 (food and drink) uses, although important, should be in the more peripheral, or secondary, areas of the town. These policies have been well supported on appeal and remain appropriate although some minor boundary modifications have been made.
- 10.24 In interpreting Policy TC6 the Council will have regard to the proportion of non-A1 frontages in the specified areas shown on Plan 7. A frontage is defined as that part of the premises at ground floor level capable of accommodating a retail display. A single shop unit is defined as having a frontage less than 6.5 metres wide (thus a frontage of 19 metres would be 3 standard shop units). The proportion of non-A1 uses identified for each area varies due to specific local circumstances and longer-term considerations. Within the Primary Shopping Area as a whole no more than two consecutive frontages at ground floor level should be in non-A1 use and the overall proportion of non-A1 uses should be no more than 25%. The proportions sought are as set-out in Table A over.
- 10.25 Within the shopping area as a whole, the Sussex Police Community Safety Team are concerned to ensure that any proposals for large scale public houses are considered carefully in view of the possible impact on crime and disorder within the Town Centre, and their views will be sought on any such proposal. In particular they consider that a diversity of licensed premises attracting different types of people and a spread of large venues rather than a concentration across the Town can reduce crime and disorder problems.

Policy TC6: Town Centre Shopping Areas

Within the primary and secondary shopping areas of the Town Centre (PSA and SSA on the Proposals Map) planning permission will be granted for the change of use of ground floor units in A1 use to A2 and A3 uses subject to the following considerations:

- a) the location and prominence of the premises within the shopping frontage;
- b) the floorspace and frontage of the premises;
- c) the number, distribution and proximity of other ground floor premises in use as, or with planning permission, for class A2 and A3 uses;
- d) the particular nature and character of the use proposed, including the level of activity associated with it;
- e) whether the proposed use on its own, or cumulatively with other such uses in the area, would give rise to unacceptable noise or disturbance, including disorder.

In Seaside Road (numbers 3–95 and 12-68) no more than three consecutive premises are to be in non-A1 use.

Table 1: Town Centre Shopping Areas and Acceptable Proportions of Frontages in Non-A1 Uses.

Shopping Area	Area		Proportion off Non-A1 Uses	Reason
Primary Shopping Area (PSA)	A	11-57 Terminus Road.	No more than 35%	Regard to established balance of A1 to non- A1 uses
PSA	B	59-145 and 96-150 Terminus Road, and 2-2a Bolton Road.	No more than 25%	Regard to established balance of A1 to non- A1 uses
PSA	C	147-187 and 152-202 Terminus Road and 24 Langney Road and 1-3 Pevensey Road.	No more than 30%	Regard to established balance of A1 to non- A1 uses
PSA	D	Arndale Centre	No more than 10%	Regard to established balance of A1 to non- A1 uses
Secondary Shopping Area (SSA)	1	Langney Road, nos. 1-31 and 6-24	No more than 60%	Regard to established balance of A1 to non- A1 uses
SSA	3	Seaside Road, nos. 3-95 and 12-68	No more than 3 consecutive units to be in non-A1 use	Particular concerns to promote this area as a secondary retail area, as part of the regeneration strategy for the area.
SSA	4	Terminus Road, nos. 210-258	No more than 35%	Regard to established balance of A1 to non-A1 uses
SSA	5	Grove Road, nos. 14-64 and 25 to 57	No more than 40%	Regard to established balance of A1 to non-A1 uses
SSA	6	South Street, nos. 389 and New Inn to 56	No more than 50%	Regard to established balance of A1 to non-A1 uses
SSA	7	South Street, nos. 99-119 and 106-114 and Cornfield Terrace nos. 17-26	No more than 35%	Regard to established balance of A1 to non-A1 uses

SSA	8	Station Street Area. 4-20 Station Street. 1-5 Stables Lane. The Labyrinth, 1-10 Mark Lane	No more than 75%	Regard to established balance of A1 to non-A1 uses
SSA	9	Terminus Road, nos. 46-94	No more than 35%	It is considered that this area is a transitional area between the primary retail area and other secondary areas and should support a reasonable proportion of A1 uses.
SSA	10	Terminus Road, nos. 2-44; Ivy Terrace nos. 1a and 1b; Grove Road nos. 2-12a and Gildredge Road 1a-3b	No more than 50%	Regard to established balance of A1 to non-A1 uses
SSA	12	Cornfield Road, nos. 2-44	No more than 35%	It is considered that this area is a transitional area between the primary retail area and other secondary areas and should support a reasonable proportion of A1 uses
SSA	13	Cornfield Road, nos. 7-45	No more than 35%	It is considered that this area is a transitional area between the primary retail area and other secondary areas and should support a reasonable proportion of A1 uses
SSA	15	Station Parade, nos. 1-17	No more than 50%	To reflect percentage in area 10

- 10.26 Encouragement of an evening economy with shops and services such as coffee shops, bars and restaurants trading longer hours benefits both residents and visitors to the town. However in promoting an evening economy it has to be recognised that there are potential conflicts between such uses and the needs of nearby residents, including hotel visitors. It is, therefore, appropriate that planning policy seeks to restrict such uses to areas where residential amenity would not be significantly harmed.

Policy TC7: Area for Later Opening of Class A3 Uses

In the following areas:

- **Bolton Road (numbers 1, 3 ,5 , 7a, 7b, 7c, 2a, 4, 6 and 8)**
- **Langney Road (numbers 1- 31, and 2- 24)**
- **Pevensey Road (numbers 2d- 4, and 1b- 3)**
- **Terminus Road (numbers 147-155)**
- **Terminus Road (numbers 46-94)**

Relaxation of planning conditions restricting the opening hours of existing A3 uses will be permitted, if it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that this would not give rise to unacceptable noise or disturbance. Proposals for new A3 uses will be permitted without a planning condition restricting opening hours subject to Policy TC7 above.

- 10.27 The Seaside Road Regeneration Strategy has accepted that it is inappropriate to continue to promote retail development east of Cavendish Place, and that instead leisure and entertainment use (use class A3 (food and drink) and use class D2 (assembly and leisure)) should be promoted alongside good quality residential accommodation. However in order to balance commercial and residential needs, all developments will need to demonstrate that they would not be harmful to residential amenity. Late night uses would be inappropriate so all planning approvals will be subject to a planning condition limiting their opening hours.

Policy TC8: Seaside Road

Planning permission will be granted for class A3 (food and drink) and class D2 (assembly and leisure) uses, provided they do not significantly affect residential amenity in Seaside Road (numbers 70-126, and 99-139). (Policy HO20 sets out residential amenity considerations).

- 10.28 Bars and restaurants are just one aspect of leisure provision in the Town Centre. However the Council is committed to encouraging a range of sport and leisure activities in the town, as well as encouraging arts and heritage activities. It has been proposed that a “cultural quarter” should be promoted, made up of the Congress Theatre, Devonshire Park Theatre, and the Winter Gardens which would offer a range of facilities for both residents and visitors, including conference visitors. This “cultural quarter” would be complemented by the development of a new building adjacent to the Congress Theatre which would comprise an arts exhibition space, a business incubation unit for local small firms from the Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) sectors, and community facilities including provision for community access to ICT. Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) finance has been agreed toward this scheme. A planning brief will be prepared to guide consideration of this proposal.

Policy TC9: Cultural Facility

Planning permission will be granted for a mixed use development adjacent to the Congress Theatre to comprise an arts exhibition space, community facilities, and space for small businesses, subject to compliance with a planning brief.

- 10.29 Public Art is an important component to the vibrancy of any Town Centre. It can take many forms from a permanent physical feature, the dramatic highlighting of a building or street performance and events. Public Art is supported and encouraged by the Council and major new developments will be expected to contribute in line with Policy UHT14.

Employment and Services

- 10.30 Approximately half of people working within the Borough are employed within the Town Centre. Much of this employment relates to the Town Centre's role as a service centre for Eastbourne and the surrounding area. However tourism has a valuable role to play in supporting and sustaining Town Centre employment. This employment is both direct: in hotels and guest houses, and indirect: in shops and other services, where turnover is increased by the significant number of visitors to the town (see Chapter 11: Tourism).
- 10.31 Service sector employment, including that in the legal, financial and health sectors, makes a valuable contribution to the overall community-wide function of the Town Centre, complementing and benefiting the shopping role. It is, therefore, important to ensure that adequate provision is made for this sector. Policy in the Borough Plan (1998) permits new B1(business) uses in two specific areas of the Town Centre: Hyde Gardens/Gildredge Road and the Commercial Road/St Leonard's Road area. Hyde Gardens, Gildredge Road and Commercial Road are older conversions predominantly suited to the smaller business; whilst St Leonard's Road has been an area where purpose-built offices have been constructed in the past. The Eastbourne Borough Plan (1998) makes no special provision for the health sector, but there are concentrations of surgeries in Lushington Road and Cornfield Terrace.
- 10.32 There is an important balance to be struck between the needs to provide for local businesses and the need for more homes, particularly within sustainable locations such as the Town Centre. It is considered appropriate to continue the designation of Hyde Gardens/Gildredge Road and Commercial Road as areas for B1 uses, but also to permit D1 uses (such as surgeries) in these areas. In addition B1 and D1 uses would also be permitted above ground floor level in the primary and secondary retail areas to complement the retail offer and make better use of under-used or vacant accommodation above shops. However it is recognised that the change of use of existing buildings does not always result in accommodation that is accessible for people with disabilities, the elderly and those with other mobility difficulties, and any such proposal should take the needs of these groups into account.
- 10.33 Mews courts, as in other parts of the Borough, also fulfil a valuable role in providing reasonable accommodation for a variety of businesses and services and will be retained subject to Policy BI 1. However outside of these areas there will be a strong presumption against B1 and D1 uses as the Council attaches significant importance to retaining the existing dwelling stock.
- 10.34 There has been little interest in the development of new purpose-built offices in the St Leonard's Road area, and the Council has granted planning approval for residential schemes in the area, including a "Foyer" project for young people. It is, therefore, proposed that this area should be re-designated as suitable for either business or residential use. However the Council will need to be assured that existing office sites and premises are genuinely redundant before considering approving their conversion or redevelopment for residential use, and Supplementary Planning Guidance will be prepared to set-out appropriate tests (see Policy BI 1).

Policy TC10: Areas for Business Use

Planning permission will be granted for:

- a) the change of use of premises within Hyde Gardens (numbers 1-32); Gildredge Road (numbers 3-55 and 6-32) and Commercial Road**

(numbers 1-52, including Commercial Mews, 10-14 Upper Avenue and 2-24 St Leonard's Road) to class B1 and D1 uses;

b) the change of use of units above ground floor level in the primary and secondary shopping areas to B1 and D1 uses. (See Policy TC6).

Policy TC11: St Leonard's Road Area

Planning permission will be granted for residential development or B1 uses in St Leonard's Road (numbers 1-32 and 26-52) provided that:

- a) the development is well designed in terms of siting, materials and landscaping (see Policy UHT1). Policy BI 7 will apply in terms of business proposals, Policy HO20 will apply for residential proposals;
- b) where planning approval is sought for residential redevelopment or change of use of existing office evidence will be sought that the site and premises are genuinely redundant. See Policy BI 1.

Policy TC12: Retaining Residential Use

Outside of the areas designated in Policies TC12 and TC13 planning permission will not be granted for the loss of residential units to class B1 or D1 uses. In these areas planning permission will be granted for the change of use of existing class B1 and D1 uses to residential.

Housing

- 10.35 There are about 4,783 households living in the Town Centre. Predominantly these households are younger people, often seeking cheaper private rented accommodation, or retired persons seeking smaller sized accommodation close to Town Centre facilities. In consequence car ownership rates are low (50% of households had no access to a car at the time of the 2001 Census).⁵⁴
- 10.36 Housing development in the Town Centre is, therefore, highly sustainable and would accord with government guidance in PPG3 to seek much greater development of land within the existing built-up area. (See further details in the Housing Chapter).
- 10.37 The Housing Capacity Survey showed that there are only limited opportunities for further residential development within the Town Centre, although other sites may come forward on a "windfall" basis. The Council would wish to see higher density residential schemes come forward but recognises that there may be limited opportunities for this as much of the Town Centre is included within conservation areas where a primary consideration must be to maintain the existing character. Where appropriate residential developments may be permitted without on-site car parking to achieve higher densities.

Policy TC13: Town Centre Housing Allocations

The following sites are allocated for residential development:

- Lismore Road, rear of numbers 6 and 8 Trinity Trees;

⁵⁴ Source: 2001 Census (Key Statistics for Local Authorities), Crown Copyright.

- **Wish Road, rear of “Little Lodge”;**
- **Burlington Road, Garage premises;**
- **25 St Leonard’s Road;**
- **42 St Leonard’s Road.**

Residential schemes will be permitted in the following areas:

- **St Leonard’s Road (redevelopment or conversion) (see Policy TC11)**
- **Seaside Road (numbers 70-126 and 99-139) (conversion) (see PolicyTC8);**
- **Cavendish Place – the Coach Station (see Policy TC2).**

Residential schemes will be expected to comply with other relevant policies of this Plan including the requirements for infrastructure (Policy IR2) and affordable housing (Policy HO13). In particular maximum residential densities will be sought wherever possible, and in appropriate circumstances permitting schemes without on-site car parking will be considered.

- 10.38 As there are relatively few opportunities for additional residential developments within the Town Centre it is important that the existing stock is managed effectively, including seeking a reduction in the number of vacant units. The Council has a “Living over the Shop” scheme which seeks to return underused or vacant upper floors to housing. This scheme is a joint venture with social landlords and contributes additional units of affordable housing. The Council is also supportive of private conversion of such accommodation to residential use.

Policy TC14: Residential Use Above Shops

Planning permission will be granted for the conversion of upper floors above shops and other businesses to residential use subject to Policy HO20 (residential amenity).

