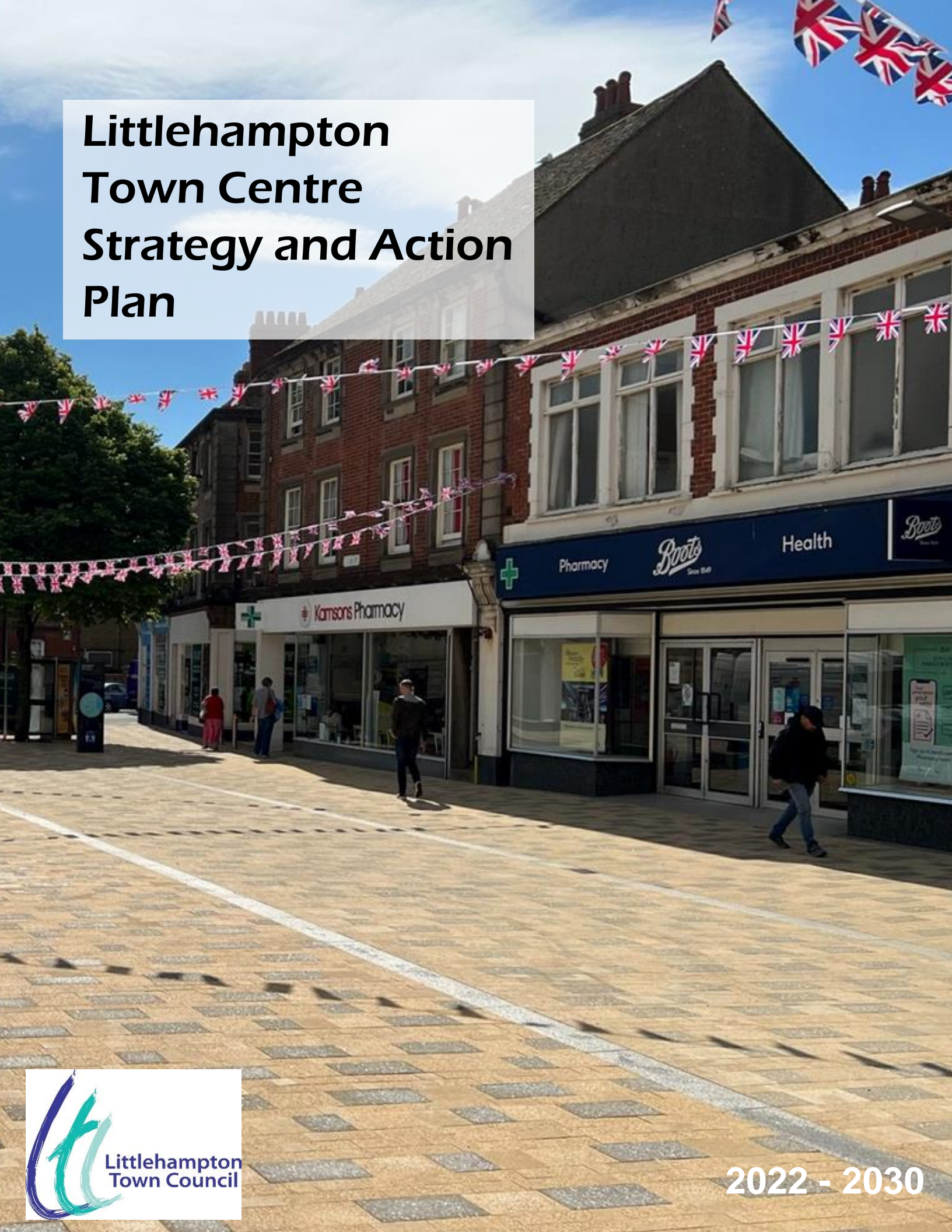


Littlehampton Town Centre Strategy and Action Plan



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1. Introduction by the Town Mayor

Littlehampton Town Centre is viewed as a vital area of the Town, providing residents and visitors with essential retail outlets, services – both public and private – and leisure space. Leadership from local authorities, other key stakeholder parties and the private sector is required to ensure the long-term viability of this asset.

Over many years, the District and Town Council have provided support to the Town Centre, originally through the Single Regeneration Budget funds, but also through attracting significant investment into such schemes as the current Public Realm Enhancements. A range of Strategies have been developed over that time, some overlapping, but a coherent strategy signed up to by all parties and focussed solely on the Town Centre has been lacking.

The Town Centre is largely perceived as retail focused. This is historically largely true, but given the trends facing the retail sector, this perception requires challenge. At a national level, at the end of 2020, just over 14% of High Street retail and leisure businesses were vacant in Great Britain (House of Commons, Briefing Paper no. 9218. May 2021). The recessions following the financial crises of the last 12 to 13 years and much more recently the pandemic have been damaging. However, one of the biggest negative factors quoted by traders, both nationally and locally, is the impact of business rates and rent.

The need for a strategy to lead all the parties through these difficult times has never been greater. Therefore, this Strategy, once signed up to by all key parties sets out clear aspirations as to what can make a positive difference, whilst also retaining a sense of what is realistic and achievable. It sets out clear aspirations. These will need to be reviewed regularly, but also underpinned by an achievable Action Plan.

All the partners who signed up to the Strategy will need to look to work to deliver the aspirations and the actions within the Action Plan and focus their budget and priorities accordingly. Paramount to the delivery of their objectives will be the leadership provided by elected representatives. Without this, the Strategy is likely to wither on the vine.

On a more positive note, the effective implementation of the Strategy should enable Littlehampton Town Centre to remain a vital element of a successful, vibrant Town, providing key services and recreation for all people. It should be attractive, safe, fun, robust, flexible, and vital. Littlehampton has adapted to change in the past, be it moving away from a harbour-based town to more recent threats such as out-of-town Shopping Centres. It is in the nature of the businesses and residents to overcome once again.

Councillor Jill Long

2. Purpose of the Strategy

2.1. The Mission

By 2030 all those signed up to this strategy will have worked together to deliver positive change that places the Town Centre both at the heart of the Town and as a retail and leisure hub for the Eastern Arun area.

2.2. Why Is a Strategy Needed?

Since the early part of this Century, when the Town Centre was last the focus of cohesive partnership work, supported by Single Regeneration Funding, considerable change has impacted Town Centres across the nation, including Littlehampton. Many recognisable retail chains have disappeared; shopping trends have altered, particularly because of internet shopping; there has been more than a decade of national “austerity” and most recently the pandemic and cost of living crisis have impacted the nation, including retail.

Consequently, there is a need to develop a strategy that focusses on attracting investment into the Town Centre, as a revitalised community hub offering leisure, entertainment, arts, key services such as education and health, housing and office space, supplementing and in sympathy with the retail offer. These should all be aligned with encouraging people to visit and spend in the locality, whilst also enjoying their time there.

2.3. The Action Plan

Following a public consultation survey, an Action Plan has been devised to highlight a range of proposals and opportunities identified by the community and stakeholders that can deliver regeneration in Littlehampton by 2030.

The aims and objectives of the Action Plan have been categorised into short term (2 years), medium term (5 years) and long term (8 years) actions to be achieved between today and 2030.



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2.4. Informing of the Strategy

The Strategy has been developed using extensive knowledge of the recent history of the Town Centre, together with the threats, opportunities, and challenges it faces. This has been assisted by a Town Centre Health Check delivered for Arun District Council earlier this year. Both the background information (Appendix A) and health check (Appendix B) can be found in the appendices.

2.5. Key Partners

- Arun District Council
- Littlehampton Town Council
- Littlehampton Traders' Partnership (or a similar forum made up of two traders)
- West Sussex County Council
- Sussex Police

The key partners will lead on this work but other important players such as Health bodies, the Harbour Board etc will be needed to assist when matters cross refer to their area of expertise.

3 Vision Statement

Littlehampton Town Centre will be a safe and thriving centre offering a wide range of shops, excellent leisure facilities, high quality office premises, residential opportunities, and a full range of community services for the local and wider community.

In achieving this, there will be a high quality of design with an attractive street scene and easy access to the centre with good public transport and an emphasis on pedestrian priority.

4. The Ambition

Wide consultation identifies that Littlehampton Town Centre should be:

- Welcoming and safe
- A vibrant place that drives out localised anti-social behaviour
- Supportive of schemes which benefit the whole town and its community.
- An accessible and attractive place to visit, work and live.
- A place that stands out from other destinations, offering something 'different.'
- Accessible to everyone and well signposted in a way that connects the Town to the waterfronts, making pedestrian access to business areas much easier.

- A place with a good public transport system including good commuter links and public car parks.
- Environmentally sustainable.
- A hub for connecting people of all ages through cultural activities that compliment local businesses and showcase local talent.
- A place that provides essential services such as banks, Post Offices, and health care.
- A place that provides services such as hairdressers, beauty care, and leisure facilities, including eateries.
- Supportive of existing businesses looking to diversify.
- A location supportive of alternative commercial opportunities, such as markets
- Supportive of commercial investors
- Where businesses and residents mutually benefit each other
- Able to provide housing with support for the residents without detracting from the retail offer.
- Linked to the whole town.
- A place that utilises virtual and online shopping methods to drive footfall into the physical offerings.
- A place with strong supporting infrastructure including public conveniences, seating, and accessibility.
- Home to a thriving evening economy attracting people of all generations.
- A town with businesses that attract people all year round.

These ambitions are strongly supported by the Town Council and form the spine of this Strategy.

5. Area of Coverage



For the purposes of this Strategy, the Town Centre is taken as being the area shown in the map below. Pier Road has not been specifically addressed within this, but its proximity and importance to the local linkages will mean that it will be referred to and possibly incorporated in projects.



Littlehampton High Street is the Centre of the Town, connecting all surrounding shopping areas. The High Street is home to a large majority of the national shops in Littlehampton. It is also the home to events such as the Christmas Lights Switch on and Late-Night Shopping, Family Fun Days, Artisan Markets, and the weekly Friday market.

High Street



Anchor Springs is home to various services and includes a sweet shop, charity shops and a vet. The main bus stop for Littlehampton Town Centre is in Anchor Springs meaning it needs to be an inviting and welcoming area.

Anchor Springs



Beach Road is at the East end of the High Street and is home to independent retail shops, services, and restaurants/cafes. Beach Road leads to Littlehampton Seafront, meaning it would be a key link for tourists to access the High Street on their visits.

Beach Road



The Arcade

The Arcade in Littlehampton was built in 1912 and is part of the Town Centre's history. It currently is the home to a Florists and Greengrocers. The key issue The Arcade is facing is occupancy and the appearance and maintenance of it.



Surrey Street

Surrey Street is to the West of the High Street, it is home to a mix of chain and independent shops, restaurants, and services. Surrey Street connects Littlehampton Town Centre to the riverside, an area popular with tourists.



6. The Strategic Objectives

To achieve the Vision a range of Strategic Objectives will need to be achieved. It is envisaged that the lead on this will be a newly constituted Town Centre Action Group, details of which are covered under section 7.

The Strategic Objectives that have been identified for progression by the Town Centre Action Group are:

1. Draw up and progress a realistic and achievable Action Plan renewable by partners annually.
2. Appoint two representatives made up of local traders to attend the Town Centre Action Group meetings and represent all sectors of Town Centre commerce.
3. Focus on addressing problems relating to crime, antisocial behaviour, drug usage, and street drinking.
4. Recognise the importance of Community and Public Sector Services as key providers for the future Town Centre.
5. Encourage further investment to complete the public realm works.
6. Encourage a more diverse retail sector, robust enough to meet changing shopping trends and cater to all those visiting.
7. Investigate opportunities to seek to attract online shoppers into the Town Centre, possibly through locating collection facilities in the locality.
8. Consider how best to encourage leisure and key services to emerge in the Town Centre.
9. Prepare a proposal to deliver sympathetic housing that will uplift the Town Centre, whilst reducing, or at a minimum keeping to existing levels hostel accommodation.
10. To press West Sussex County Council, particularly in the light of the North Littlehampton development, to prepare a transport plan for the Town Centre, including improving disability access.
11. Prepare Marketing and Branding Plans and look to improve the offer of information for visitors in the town. Any branding initiative should be closely discussed with the Town Council who might be developing such an initiative for the whole Town.
12. Protect and market the heritage of the Town Centre.
13. Progress the promised Feasibility Study for the redevelopment of St Martins Car Park.
14. Look to work with those involved to assist in the taking forward of the proposals for the Hospital, Health Centre, Library and Fire Station sites.
15. To urgently investigate the need to action and deliver increased Charge Points in Town Centre Car Parks to meet the advent of electric vehicles and to relieve the parking congestion on nearby roads in the evening.

16. Set up links with landlords including a landlords' forum to involve them in the Town Centre planning and to maintain high quality building maintenance and appearance.
17. Develop and promote an all-year-long Events programme for the Town Centre.
18. Investigate and where practicable work with landlords to fill vacant shops and deliver pop-up shops.
19. Look to deliver 21st Century public conveniences, free from crime and antisocial behaviour.
20. Review the Car Parking Disc Scheme and look at easy, inexpensive alternatives. As the scenario cannot continue whereby small independent shops are subsidising nationals and determine whether this is the best way to use these funds in supporting the Town Centre.
21. Review the existing market arrangements, with other options to be considered, possible new markets and including creating a marketplace in St Martins Car park.
22. Addressing negative perceptions of the Town and Promotion.
23. Ensuring that the new roads to the North of the Town direct traffic to the Town Centre.
24. Similarly work to encourage mobility between the seafront, riverside and Town centre for pedestrians and to that end support the pedestrianisation of Pier Road, at least seasonally.
25. Ensure Town Centre Gateways – Railway Station and Anchor Springs – are inviting and attractive.
26. Focus on Culture, Fitness, and the Arts to uplift the image of the Town.
27. Encourage the service sector to work alongside the established retail care of the Town to reflect changes in consumer practice.
28. Look to improve the offer of information for visitors to the Town Centre and to attract those using other facilities in the area to visit.
29. Support and encourage new and young investors wanting to start a business in the town.
30. To urgently ensure that there is a marketing strategy in place for the completion of the public realm works.
31. To encourage a banking hub in the Town Centre.
32. Encourage the development of digital business in the Town Centre.

7. Town Centre Action Group – TCAG

The creation and delivery of an Action Plan that is SMART and deliverable is essential to the success for this Strategy. Chaired by the Mayor the action group should comprise of the following Members:

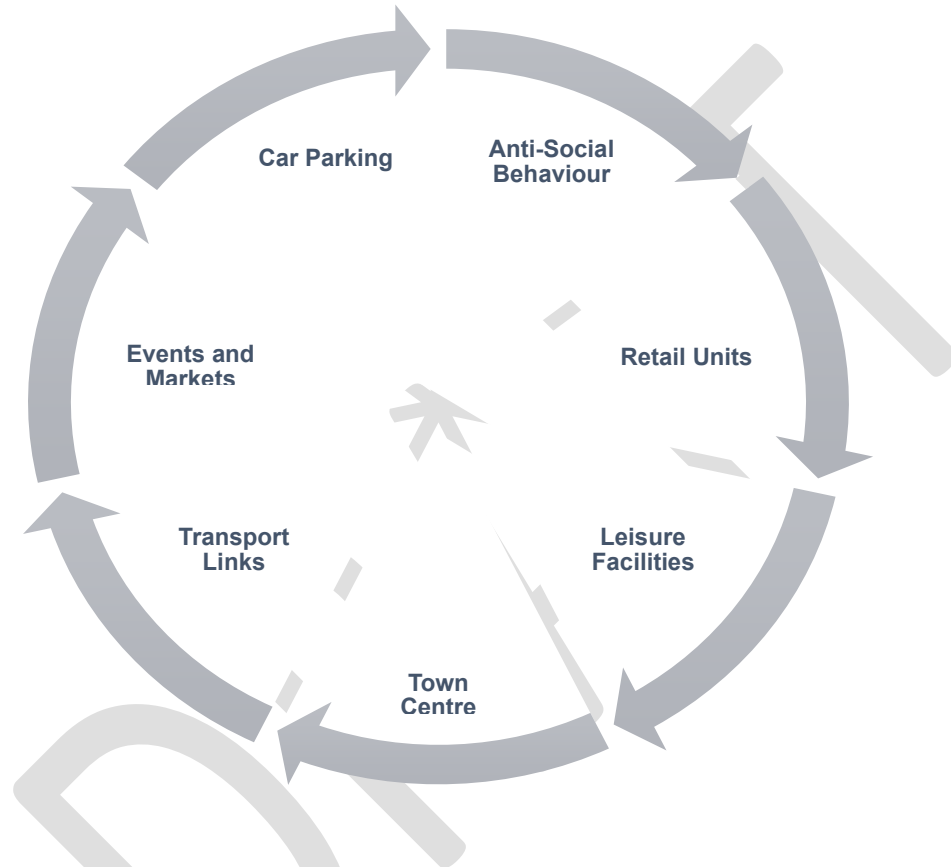
Littlehampton Town Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mayor of Littlehampton• Chair of Policy and Finance Committee• One other Member• Relevant Officers
Arun District Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Relevant Committee Chair• Ward Member• Relevant Officers
West Sussex County Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• County Division Member• Relevant Officers
Sussex Police	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Divisional Commander• Relevant Officers
Business Representative	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Two Nominated Representatives

The Town Centre Action Group should meet 3 times a year and be underpinned by an Officer Task Group. The TCAG will be serviced by the Town Council, but the actions will need to be taken forward by partners. The minutes of meetings of the TCAG will be made publicly available, except where there is “Exempt” information. Partners would be expected to feedback on meetings to assist priorities and resourcing discussions within each organisation.



8. Town Centre Action Plan

The strategic objectives have been categorised into key areas of focus for improvement in the Action Plan. Within each area of focus the goals and actions are listed.



Antisocial Behaviour			
Strategic Objectives: SO3: Focus on addressing problems relating to crime, antisocial behaviour, drug usage, and street drinking.			
Goal	Immediate action	Medium term action (2-5 years)	Longer term action
Work with local authorities to reduce anti-social behaviour and crime in the town.	Arrange a meeting with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Divisional Commander (Sussex Police) - Police lead on Business Wardens - ADC Crime and ASB lead Officer. - Lead Officer – Community wardens - LTC Town Centre Officer - Chair of TCAG To understand issues and agree focussed and coordinated plan of action to address areas of prime concern and enact actions to		

	resolve these. Review – 3 monthly. Encourage events in the Town Centre to deter Anti-Social Behaviour.		
Reduce the presence of drugs in Littlehampton Town Centre	To link in with the above action and supplement this by identifying and working with local support groups for those in the town battling addiction and substance abuse. Lead agencies to be identified.	A working relationship with local charities to help those with addiction in Littlehampton.	
Improve CCTV to deter crime and antisocial behaviour.	Identify and meet with those responsible for CCTV in the Town Centre with a view to increase its deterrence and ability to identify and prosecute those undertaking criminal acts and ASB.	Improvements to the CCTV and the unit placements if behaviour does not improve and the cameras are not working as a deterrent.	
Reduce the usage of e-scooters and cycling in the town.	Discuss with Sussex Police what powers they can use to prevent the use of e-scooters and cycling in the town. Ensure the laws are clear with signage in the High Street.		

Retail

<p>Strategic Objectives:</p> <p>SO4: Recognise the importance of Community and Public Sector Services as key providers for the future Town Centre.</p> <p>SO6: Encourage a more diverse retail sector, robust enough to meet changing shopping trends and cater to all those visiting.</p> <p>SO7: Investigate opportunities to seek to attract online shoppers into the Town Centre, possibly through locating collection facilities in the locality.</p> <p>SO16: Set up links with landlords including a landlords' forum to involve them in the Town Centre planning and to maintain high quality building maintenance and appearance.</p> <p>SO18: Investigate and where practicable work with landlords to fill vacant shops and deliver pop-up shops.</p> <p>SO30: Support and encourage new or young investors wanting to start a business in the town.</p> <p>SO31: To encourage a banking hub in the Town Centre.</p> <p>SO32: Encourage the development of digital business in the Town Centre.</p>			
Goal	Immediate action	Medium term action (2-5 years)	Longer term action
Improve the appearance of shops, enabling	Discuss the previous shop front grants with Arun District Council and the representatives from local	Arun District Council to offer shop front grants to businesses.	

their ability to attract business.	<p>businesses to establish if they were well used.</p> <p>Engage with the landlord of the Arcade to discuss their plans and how it can be improved.</p>	<p>Promote any external grants to shops so they can apply for them.</p> <p>Work with Landlords to encourage the appearance of shops.</p> <p>Work with a digital marketing consultant to deliver training to local traders.</p> <p>Investigate working with courier services to install more collection points into town centre shops and areas.</p>	
Reduce shop vacancy in the town centre.	<p>Work with Arun District Council to prepare a register of vacant and underused properties.</p> <p>Engage with landlords of empty units to discuss options for a pop-up shop.</p>	<p>Engage with all landlords at a landlords' forum to discuss any issues, understand their intentions and investigate if the councils can work with them to reduce shop vacancy.</p> <p>To open a successful pop-up shop in an empty unit in the town centre.</p>	Arun District Council to maintain a list of vacant/underused shops, updated every quarter as an ongoing procedure and shared with Littlehampton Town Council.
Support banks and key facilities such as the post office.	Liaise with the banks and post office to create a banking hub in the Town Centre.		

Leisure

Strategic Objectives:

SO8: Consider how best to encourage leisure and key services to emerge in the Town Centre.

SO27: Encourage the service sector to work alongside the established retail care of the Town to reflect changes in consumer practice.

SO29: Support and encourage new or young investors wanting to start a business in the town.

Goal	Immediate action	Medium term action (2-5 years)	Longer term
To bring more leisure and hotel facilities into the town centre.	<p>To encourage any new initiatives that come forward to deliver attractions and increase hotel provision.</p> <p>Potentially linked to the new public realm, to ensure that an effective marketing strategy is delivered for the Town Centre with leisure providers one of the main focuses.</p>	<p>Work with the County Council on chairs and tables licenses to determine a time that businesses can keep them outside till.</p> <p>Arun District Council to provide business support to any new businesses</p>	

	To arrange a meeting with West Sussex County Council to discuss the timing agreements and if they can be amended to encourage more businesses to invest.	that are interested in investing in the town.	
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Town Centre

Strategic Objectives:

SO2: Appoint two representatives made up of local traders to attend the Town Centre Action Group meetings and represent all sectors Town Centre commerce.

SO5: Encourage further investment to complete the public realm works.

SO25: Ensure Town Centre Gateways – Railway Station and Anchor Springs – are inviting and attractive.

SO12: Protect and market the heritage of the Town Centre.

SO9: Prepare a proposal to deliver sympathetic housing that will uplift the Town Centre, whilst reducing, or at a minimum keeping to existing levels hostel accommodation.

SO27: Encourage the service sector to work alongside the established retail care of the Town to reflect changes in consumer practice.

SO29: Support and encourage new or young investors wanting to start a business in the town.

SO26: Focus on Culture, Fitness, and the Arts to uplift the image of the Town.

Goal	Immediate action	Medium term action (2-5 years)	Longer term actions
Ensure the town centre is clean and inviting.	Establish the high street cleaning timetable with Arun District Council and discuss at TCAG. Request for this to be shared with the public.	Review whether this has matched up to the aspirations of the huge investment in the public realm.	
Acknowledge the heritage of the town and show it in the town centre		Engage with Littlehampton Heritage Society about the work they have been doing and request a register of heritage buildings.	Heritage Society and Littlehampton Museum to showcase the town centre and how it used to be.
Provide incentives to bring people back to the town centre to shop	Investigate running a Love Local shopping incentive in summer 2023.	Run the Love Local shopping incentive successfully for 3 years.	
Look to encourage proportional residential units, through accommodation above shops, but not at the expense of breaking up the retail heart of the Town.		<p>Liaise with Landlords forum.</p> <p>TCAG to consider planning issues and whether further planning controls are required.</p>	
Support the businesses in the town centre	<p>Share information about grant funding opportunities available to businesses.</p> <p>Develop the Traders Partnership, or successor body to be independently run and financed;</p>	<p>Monitor usage of the grants and the success rate of applicants where possible.</p> <p>Review these arrangements.</p>	

	with a clear understanding of its purpose and representing all businesses in the Town Centre.		
Promote the Arts in Littlehampton.	Littlehampton Town Council to investigate creating an Arts Forum involving local artists to help people collaborate and bring more arts events into the town centre.	Artists to work with Arun District Council and Landlords to bring more art into the town. Using empty spaces to brighten up the town, making the space more inviting and vibrant whilst deterring graffiti.	

Transport and linking the town centre

<p>Strategic Objectives</p> <p>SO10: To press West Sussex County Council, particularly in the light of the North Littlehampton development, to prepare a transport plan for the Town Centre, including improving disability access.</p> <p>SO23: Ensuring that the new roads to the North of the Town direct traffic to the Town Centre.</p> <p>SO24: Similarly work to encourage mobility between the seafront, riverside, and Town centre for pedestrians and to that end support the pedestrianisation of Pier Road, at least seasonally.</p> <p>SO25: Ensure Town Centre Gateways – Railway Station and Anchor Springs – are inviting and attractive.</p>			
Goal	Immediate action	Medium term action (2-5 years)	Longer term action
Improve interconnectivity between the seafront, riverside and Town Centre.		Investigate the following ideas with the Town Centre Action Group: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shuttle buses - Interactive trails - Land train - Signage 	
Improve the signage for Littlehampton town centre around the town	Liaise with West Sussex County Council regarding the impacts of new roads and residential development in the North of the Town.		
	Review the signage directing people from the seafront to the town centre and see if any additional signage can be added to encourage people to use main roads (see above).		
Improve the attractiveness of public transport waiting areas.	<p>Littlehampton Station entrance and exit area to be redeveloped in the Public Realm works.</p> <p>Contact Stagecoach to investigate if they have any plans to improve Anchor Springs bus station with a shelter and toilets.</p>		
Investigate issues with bus services	Undertake a consultation with users of bus services and those who would use such services if available to see whether this could assist footfall in the Town Centre.		
Investigate concerns over traffic management in the town centre	Identify any concerns over traffic management and work with West Sussex Highways to address these, particularly around Church Street/East Street, Surrey Street/Arundel Road, and the flow through town along Beach Road.		

Events and Markets

Strategic Objectives:

SO17: Develop and promote an all-year-long Events programme for the Town Centre.

SO21: Review the existing market arrangements, with other options to be considered, possible new markets and including creating a marketplace in St Martins Car Park.

Goal	Immediate action	Medium term action (2-years)	Longer term action
<p>To investigate improvements to the current programme of markets</p> <p>Make event applications easier</p>	<p>Gain clarification from Arun District Council and West Sussex County Council about what areas they cover for event applications.</p> <p>Liaise with Arun District Council to assess all options to create a "Market Place," potentially in Anchor Springs car park, to host a wide range of markets including the weekly market currently located in the High Street.</p>	<p>A regular farmers market run in the town centre.</p> <p>More artisan, themed markets in the town.</p>	
<p>More events to be held in the town centre</p>	<p>Councils to work with external event organisers to support them bringing events and pop ups to the town centre.</p> <p>TCAG to advise and comment upon LTC/ADC events programme to Town Centre.</p>	<p>Draw up long-term funding commitments to Town Centre events.</p>	
Car Parking			

Strategic Objectives:

SO13: Progress the promised Feasibility Study for the redevelopment of St Martins Car Park.

SO15: Urgently investigate the need to action and deliver increased Charge Points in Town Centre Car Parks to meet the advent of electric vehicles and to relieve the parking congestion on nearby roads in the evening.

SO20: Review the Car Parking Disc Scheme and look at easy, inexpensive alternatives. As the scenario cannot continue whereby small independent shops are subsidising nationals and determine whether this is the best way to use these funds in supporting the Town Centre.

Goal	Immediate action	Medium term action (2-5 years)	Longer term action
<p>Review the parking disc scheme.</p>	<p>Urgently identify whether there is continued support for the scheme and consider options before the Autumn of 2023 to include implications in the Councils budgets.</p> <p>Make recommendations to Councils on way forward.</p> <p>Discussions to include trader representatives.</p>	<p>If it is decided that a new system needs to be looked at, work with ADC to implement it into car parks. Work out the best and most inexpensive version.</p>	<p>Review the car parking scheme every 3 years.</p>
<p>Improve the town centre car parks</p>	<p>Progress the Feasibility Study for the redevelopment of St Martins car park.</p>	<p>To have electric car parking facilities in at least one car park in the town centre.</p>	<p>The redevelopment of St Martins car park.</p>

	Introduce electric car charging points.		
Public Conveniences			
Strategic Objectives: SO14: Look to work with those involved to assist in the taking forward of the proposals for the Hospital, Health Centre, Library and Fire Station sites. SO19: Look to deliver 21st century public conveniences, free from crime and antisocial behaviour.			
Improve the toilet facilities in the town centre.	Address the concerns over the toilet facilities and rumoured drug taking in St Martin's car park. Work with Arun District Council to install deterrents to St Martins car park toilets. Look into CCTV for the outside of the building and work with the community wardens and police.	Look to develop proposals for new or improved public conveniences.	
Former Hospital site and "Civic Island"		Seek resolution to the long vacant hospital site as an area of opportunity for the Town Centre.	
Tourism			
Strategic Objectives: SO11: Prepare Marketing and Branding Plans and look to improve the offer of information for visitors in the town. SO22: Addressing negative perceptions of the Town and Promotion. SO28: Look to improve the offer of information for visitors to the Town Centre and to attract those using other facilities in the area to visit. SO30: To urgently ensure that there is a marketing strategy in place for the completion of the public realm works.			
Goal	Immediate action	Medium term action (2-5 years)	Long term action
Improve visitor information	Review the visitor information points	Investigate other ways to provide visitor information.	
Attract people to visit the town from other facilities.	Promote the town centre at other attractions in the town such as Harbour Park, The Beach, Mewsbrook Park etc. Provide promotional materials and discuss poster advertisement.	Have permanent advertising at local attractions.	
Prepare marketing and branding plans.	Liaise with Arun District Council to confirm their plan to advertise the town after the Public Realm works are completed. Clarify who runs each social media account relating to Littlehampton and the town centre.	Littlehampton Town Council and Arun District Council to have a plan to promote the town centre. Work on plans to promote tourism and address the negative perceptions of the town. Work with Arun District Council to use the social media pages to promote all the positive changes happening.	



Appendix A

Background information

General demographics

Littlehampton (including Angmering, Hammerpot, West Kingston, Wick) has a population of 61,938.

Littlehampton Town Centre is located within walking distance of Littlehampton Train Station and Bus Station meaning it is accessible by public transport. There are three town centre car parks, and visitors can currently enjoy 2 hours free parking using a Littlehampton parking disc.

The town centre has a mix of retail shops, restaurants, cafes, pubs, beauty services and health services (opticians). The majority of units in the town centre are Independent (85.8%) compared to 15.8% National. There is only one unit providing an activity in the town and no attractions or hotels.

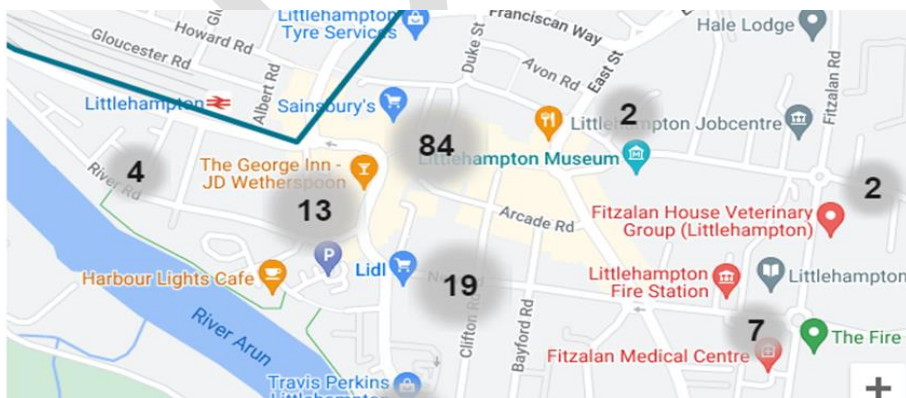
Antisocial behaviour

A key issue raised in feedback from the draft Town Centre Strategy was the level of anti-social behaviour and crime. Littlehampton's overall crime rate in 2021 was 90 crimes per 1,000 people. This is 50% higher than the West Sussex rate of 60 per 1,000 residents.

The most common crimes in Littlehampton are violence and sexual offences, with 1,174 offences during 2021, giving a crime rate of 39. This is 6% higher than 2020's figure of 1,103 offences and a difference of 2.34 from 2020's crime rate of 36.

Source : <https://crimrate.co.uk/west-sussex/littlehampton>

Sussex Police – Littlehampton (river)



This is the area covered by river ward. It highlights the crime hotspots in the town.

In data recorded by Sussex Police it shows that in Littlehampton (River) the most common crimes are violence and sexual offences, shoplifting and anti-social behaviour. Below are the figures from October 2021 – September 2022.

Type	Total	Percentage
Violence and sexual offences	396	27.8%
Anti-social behaviour	290	20.3%
Shoplifting	226	15.8%
Public order	144	10.1%
Criminal damage and arson	129	9%
Other theft	91	6.4%
Vehicle crime	35	2.5%
Burglary	30	2.1%
Drugs	26	1.8%
Theft from the person	17	1.2%
Possession of weapons	14	1%
Other crime	14	1%
Bicycle theft	8	0.6%
Robbery	7	0.5%

Source : www.police.uk/your-area/sussex-police/beach-littlehampton/?tab=statistics

Leisure and attractions in the Town Centre

Littlehampton Town Centre lacks leisure services, attractions and hotels meaning that many tourists do not venture into the centre when they visit the beach for the day. The town also lacks a nightlife presence which can be incredibly positive for town centre’s economy.

In a survey ran by Visit Britain it showed that in the UK in 2011 20% of 1.5-billion-day visits were to restaurants, bars, and nightclubs, at the time this represented 21% of the £52 billion spend in the UK on day visits.

https://www.visitbritain.org/sites/default/files/vb-corporate/Documents-Library/documents/England-documents/evening_night_time_economy.pdf

Evening and night-time activities have the potential to increase economic activity within Littlehampton. It would allow the town to reach new demographics and create job opportunities for people in the town.

A study by the Local Government Association found that the importance of leisure to individuals is on the rise. Consumers are demanding more experiences and entertainment meaning High Streets will become increasingly more dominated by leisure and hospitality. This has become clear as more towns introduce activities such as escape rooms and crazy golf where High Street shops once were.

<https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/creating-resilient-and-revitalised-high-streets-new-normal>

Appendix B

Town Centre Health Check

Commissioned by Arun District Council, a health check was undertaken by Nexus Planners on the three Towns in Arun. Published in February 2022, this was particularly well-timed and has been included in its entirety as Appendix. This provides good evidence to support the direction and Strategic Aims

The key messages and findings regarding Littlehampton are:

- a. The acknowledgement of the need for planning authorities to support the viability and vitality of Town Centres (paragraph.1.2).
- b. The breakdown of types of use of premises in the Town Centre and vacancy levels are set out in figures 10 and 11. These also show vacancy rates which are largely better than the national average, but with the floorspace figure significantly impacted by the empty former Waitrose building.
- c. Figure 12 sets out the key trends, showing a growth in convenience stores; lower floorspace for comparison retailers than nationally and a significant growth in services, which now equate to more than 50% of the units in the Town Centre.
- d. The vacancy rate has worsened but remains within healthy tolerances and below UK averages.
- e. There is a relative lack of national multiples, but a higher than usual level of independent retailers.
- f. Prime rents are below those of Bognor Regis.
- g. Both ends of the High Street have good pedestrian flows.
- h. The disc-parking scheme is noted.
- i. Despite negative perceptions, the Town Centre was observed to feel safe.
- j. There is a limited evening economy.
- k. The Town Centre was thought to be attractive, with tired street furniture and the upcoming public realm works noted.
- l. The competition with larger retail hubs was noted, together with the range of vacant units that could allow a wide variety of investors to locate to the Town.
- m. The conclusion was that:
 - The composition of uses is broadly in line with UK averages with a lower-than-average vacancy rate
 - The street furniture was tired.
 - Car parking was an issue at the time of the health check, but this could be as a result of the use of St Martins Car Park for COVID tests and the Public Realm.

- Long-term vacancies such as the former Waitrose site and the Indoor Market were detrimental to the Town.

These findings broadly align with the thinking that had gone in to preparing a first draft of this Strategy but emphasise the importance of actively progressing an Action Plan to address the Strategic Aims set out in the body of this paper.

DRAFT

