

APPENDIX 3

STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

1. Epping Town Council, Waltham Abbey Town Centre Partnership, Loughton Town Council, Loughton High Road Town Centre Partnership, Ongar Town Forum and Buckhurst Hill Parish Council were contacted as part of stakeholder consultation. Feedback was received from all parties other than Buckhurst Hill Parish Council. In addition, a specific session with District Councillors was held to gather further stakeholder views. This Appendix includes a summary list of the issues raised in the stakeholder consultation.

Record of Key Issues

Epping

- The town centre has a niche for interior design and also has a popular Monday street market.
- There is generally a good retail offer apart from shoes.
- A good range of other services are also available.
- Shop vacancy levels have remained static over the last three years.
- The location of existing car parks is good however the supply of them is poor.
- The town centre has good accessibility by car however public transport links are only seen as adequate.
- In terms of amenities, the security measures, police presence and quality of shops is poor.
- From the Market perspective, proper and adequate parking needs to be provided for traders as well as a flat operating space with good drainage and no trip hazards.
- Needs to be a reduction in the focus of the district council for the North Weald Market on bank holiday Mondays.

Loughton High Road

- There are a mix of shopping facilities
- It is a long road that has no actual centre which is a disadvantage in terms of identity, promotional events and entertainments.
- It has good transport access but poor parking facilities and the locations of most of the small car parks are difficult to reach.
- Sainsbury's ensures that there is a good influx of shoppers but the store is located slightly out of the main shopping area.
- M&S brings a good footfall to the High Road.
- Small shops struggle to compete with larger retailers
- There are a large number of food outlets which has reduced the number of retail shops.

- However there are a significant number of shops offering quality goods and services that are not available in larger retailers. E.g. Quality ladies fashion, hardware, camping/outdoor store.
- The presence of a large number of cafes and restaurants has given rise to a 'café culture' which has enlivened the town centre during the day and the evening.
- The loss of significant stores such as Woolworths, Burtons and Curry's has left gaps in the retail requirement which have yet to be filled.
- Vacancy levels have not decreased dramatically but potential new businesses want to open food/entertainment outlets rather than retail.
- Security measures on the High Road are inadequate, there is no co-ordinated outdoor CCTV.
- Street lighting is generally good but needs updating
- The radio link scheme sponsored by the Police has had a poor response and Police presence has been improved but it is still not consistently good.
- Public toilet facilities are inadequate.
- Quality of shop fronts is mixed and there is no co-ordinated plan to ensure consistency in the quality or identity of premises on the High Road.
- Traffic lights at the junction of the High Road and the Drive/Brook Road should be modified to ease congestion.
- A co-ordinated Town Centre Plan should be initiated to ensure direction and consistency for the area.
- The third and fourth phases of the High Road enhancement scheme should be started as a matter of urgency.
- A security review should be carried out, to explore the possibility of monitored CCTV and other security and amenity measures.
- No more car parking areas should be sold or redeveloped without like-for-like replacement. Increased and easier car parking facilities should be actively sought.
- Local authorities and businesses should take more of an interest in the overall prosperity of the town centre. Satisfied shoppers are the key to success; they need easy access and parking, an excellent range of goods and services, first-rate amenities and a feeling of security. If they don't get all of these, they will go elsewhere.

Waltham Abbey

- Trade was improving three years ago which coincided with a decrease in empty properties. However this year trade has deteriorated and there have been more changes in tenancy. There are still fewer empty shops and fewer charity shops than four years ago.
- Traders attribute the cause of recent poor trade to the development of a Tesco store on the border of the town centre. Whilst there is some indication that the

Tesco store is attracting back residents who formerly travelled out of town for bulk shopping, these residents have not yet made their way back into the town centre.

- Footfall in the town centre has decreased and the main street is often empty on days where there is no market.
- Excellent museum and library in the town centre and it has retained its Post Office and Police Station.
- There are also a pharmacist, an optician, a greengrocer, a florist, a small Co-op supermarket, a TV and electrical supplier, several hairdressers and stationers amongst a variety of other traders.
- There are no blue chip companies in the town centre.
- There is a wide variety of restaurants, varying in cuisine and price as well as several pubs which create an adequate footfall in the evenings.
- Recent improvements have been made to the rear of properties and this has encouraged the re-population of the area with many flats developed above the shops, helping to increase the footfall in the town.
- Supply of car parks in the town centre is adequate and their locations are good. Car parking charges need to be made lower otherwise shoppers will defect to the supermarket and its free car park.
- The town centre has good accessibility by car but its public transport links are poor.
- In terms of amenities, the security measures and police presence are adequate but the street lighting and quality of buildings are good.
- Need to accept that larger and more prosperous retail outlets cannot be accommodated in the town so it is necessary to advertise the town centre's other advantages, especially as the Olympic White water events will be held on the town's boundary in 2012, bringing in many people who have never been to the area before.
- More visitors should be attracted to the town centre for its historical heritage

Loughton Broadway

- Mainly independent outlets with a butcher and greengrocer.
- Old fashioned shops e.g. eel parlour.
- Near station and bus terminus so caters for returning commuters.
- No leisure uses in the town centre.
- Needs a larger supermarket as the existing one is very small.
- Some outlets are basic and unappealing.
- Needs to have a big draw outlet to attract more customers to the area.
- Good for staple items, e.g. food, household, pets but nothing much else on offer
- Limited clothes shops.
- Has a pub and a café with seating outside has recently been opened.

- Library was moved to the other side of the A1168 but people think it should be moved back.
- There is very little non- retail and what is there is sometimes unattractive. However there are a vets, dentist and council information.
- In the last three years the vacancy levels in the town centre have increased.
- The public transport is very good but the interchange is poor and the town centre shops are ill-positioned.
- The car parking provision is ok but could be improved.
- There is only one means of access from the Broadway to A1168 which gets very congested.
- Encourage EFDC to foster small businesses by flexible rent arrangements
- The town centre enhancement scheme has been finished but is not universally liked and should be continued to the A1168 junction.
- The Broadway should be made into a conservation area and enhance its unique 1950s atmosphere to make it into a civilised, friendly shopping area. Shop fronts and signage need to be more in keeping.
- Continue minor enhancements of the town centre such as flower baskets, seats etc.
- Wide choice of shops but no major retail brand in the centre.
- Quality and mix of services and other uses is sufficient.
- Vacancy levels have remained static over the last 3 years.
- Town centre parking facilities are good.
- The town centre is accessible by car and public transport.
- In terms of amenities, security measure, CCTV and street lighting are good; however the quality of buildings varies from adequate to poor.
- Revamp Sainsbury's outlet and move the garage.
- Same parking regime on either side or at the rear of shops.
- Improve the outlook of the rear of shops where customers park.

Chipping Ongar

- Strength of the town centre is that it has a lot of individual shops i.e. fewer chain stores.
- There are no book or record shops.
- The quality and mix of services and other uses is good.
- The town centre's car parking facilities are adequate.
- The accessibility of the town centre by car and public transport is adequate.
- In terms of amenities, security measures, police presence, street lighting and quality of shop buildings are all adequate.

Member Consultation

2. The key findings of the emerging study were presented to Epping Forest District Council's members, and some community members, on 4 August 2009. This included an outline of the following:
 - Context of the study and key tasks;
 - Study zones;
 - Telephone survey zones and results;
 - Patterns of convenience expenditure retention within the study area;
 - Initial outputs on convenience need;
 - Initial outputs on comparison need; and
 - Leisure uses.

Record of Key Issues

3. The following matters were discussed at the presentation:
 - Methodology of healthchecks;
 - The size of the household survey sample;
 - Scale of floorspace requirements
 - The balance of growth in comparison/convenience/ and leisure orientated food and drink uses;
 - Consideration of the age of the local population and how their needs can be better catered for;
 - The importance of voluntary uses; it was suggested that they contribute greatly to the vitality of town centres.
 - The importance of markets to the vitality and viability of centres

