

# Haverhill Town Centre Masterplan

## Summary of Issues and Options identified to date May 2014

### ***A place to live, work and play***

*By 2031, Haverhill Town Centre will be a mixed use town centre which welcomes people, makes the most of existing attractions and adds to them so that people want to live, work shop and relax in the town.*

#### **Issues identified:**

- Lack of signs
  - To indicate what's on offer in the town centre
  - To find car parks, other than Arts Centre Car Park
  - Don't show people where to go
  - No brown tourist signs on bypass
- Car parks un-inviting
- Routes from car parks to town centre
  - Not clear
  - Not attractive
  - Arrival points generally at the backs of unattractive buildings
  - Should talk to applicants of Empire yard planning proposal
- Needs a "Getting to Town" package of measures to make it attractive to get to the town centre by whatever means
- Employees need to be encouraged to use long stay car parking and not congest service areas
- Parking stays not enforced
- Nobody wants to walk from new car park
  - Too far and perception of unsafe to use rear route to Leisure Centre
- Parking charges and strategy questioned.
  - Leisure Centre car park costs
    - Difficult to park between 4.00 and 9.00

- Blue badge parking charged in car parks is a deterrent
- Town centre offer is disjointed
  - Day time for shopping
  - Early evening for the takeaway run
  - Night time is cinema and Arts Centre
    - But little associated offers eg restaurant
  - Need to consider the links between leisure centre, arts centre and Queen Street
- Do the Police/Fire/Ambulance services need to be in the town centre and on separate sites?
- Little existing housing
- Residential areas shabby
- Unexplained history – eg railway bridge

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- Lack of public toilets at Queen Street end
- Lack of lighting at recreation Ground makes it feel unsafe

### **Opportunities?**

- Railway Walk
  - Promote it
  - Improve links
- Lighting improvements
  - Floor lighting along routes?
- Improve local transport and bus routes to town centre
- Land at rear of Leisure Centre needs tidying/using
- Consider opportunities for children's play in the town centre
- Create opportunities for café culture
- Need attraction strategy
  - Marketing and marketing group
- Need photos of the town centre that can be used to promote it
  - Run a photo competition?
- Stage more events in the town centre
  - Running races the length of the High Street/Queen Street??

### ***Ready for growth***

*By 2031, Haverhill Town Centre will have grown outwards from the High Street to provide the retail and other attractions an increasing population needs. It will be a centre that is well promoted as part of the wider offer of the town.*

**Issues identified:**

- Infrastructure development issues – links to electricity/water/transport etc. (see further points):
- Broadband – poor broadband decreases the value of a property by 20%.  
Note: Hollands Road is not in the strategy plan for better broadband – why is this? Mobile broadband is just as crucial.
- Electricity supply – is there scope for the capacity to be expanded?
- Transport links – connectivity
- Utilities – water supply – approach early on in process.
- Education – additional student places will be needed (land has been identified in Vision 2031).
- The need for dualling of the A1307
- In the future, the High Street is not likely to be the High Street, and therefore rates in the existing High Street will change accordingly.
- We will not achieve inward investment if key areas outlined above are not resolved.
- Broader choice of shops is needed
- There is a continual need for a skilled supply of labour
- Haverhill needs to be better promoted
- Marketing of town – no one particular website for Haverhill
- Lack of ‘attractiveness’ and ‘animation’ which is needed for growth

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- Retail offer does not provide full range of needs for Haverhill
- Does not present its best offer on the High Street (but on alleyways / side streets)
- Provision of servicing and access at rear a challenge

**Opportunities?**

- Ensure that the Haverhill Leisure Centre is better integrated with the High Street.
- Make Haverhill town centre more animated, to include:
- Extension of car parking

- Extend shopping hours to encourage the public to stay in the town and thus increase their spend.
- Coordinate a schedule of events (e.g. festivals and sporting events for the whole community) to bring in footfall and promote the town.
- Improved parking – is there a possibility of using the car park at Ehringshausen Way?
- Relocate the bus station (at the entrance to the town rather than inside of the town) – look into Section 106 money?
- Locate a safe place to store bikes / bike racks – could we have our own ‘Boris bikes’?
- Investigate public Wi-Fi in the town centre
- Increase available locations for conference facilities to encourage businesses to make use of the town / spend their money in the town.
- Produce a website strategy – an overarching website on Haverhill, that links to existing websites (since they all have their own focus).
- Investigate the potential for a Business Improvement District in Haverhill?
- Lobby Government (DCLG) for improvements to infrastructure (involving ONE Haverhill / SEBC with DCLG and utility providers)
- Use Duddery Hill site (old allotments) for further education (as per the existing allocation)
- Make better use of the attractiveness of the river – link to connectivity and attractive environment groups
- Produce and distribute Inward Investment Packs – produce packs that can be widely circulated, putting Haverhill on the map.
- Provide opportunities for additional town centre floorspace

### **Possible actions**

Contact stake holders (All);

- Housing
- Education
- NHS
- Leisure
- Police
- Fire Service
- Public Transport providers (including Taxis)
- Voluntary sector

- Faith groups
  - Any others?
- Compare Haverhill with Bury St Edmunds, Sudbury and Cambridge in terms of retail floor space rental per sq. metre and business rates (AN)
  - Continuous support for our local markets from Sharon Fairweather, Market Development Officer for West Suffolk.
  - Economic Development and Growth team's West Suffolk Six Point Plan for Jobs and Growth flyers to be passed to Roger Andre for distribution at Mayoral events (AN)

### ***An attractive environment***

*By 2031, Haverhill Town Centre will be a place which develops its physical environment, celebrates its local heritage and encourages people to spend quality time in it.*

#### **Issues:**

- Shoddy shop fronts
- Stour Brook water course
- Hidden Victorian architecture
- Public toilets on square (eyesore)
- Poor state of some trees and trees
- Town centre space for families
- Town centre planning for the elderly
- River corridor
- Links across the river
- Road from Tesco to town
- Link from leisure centre to town
- Gurteens' entrance for high street
- Queen Street shops/square
- Poor architecture in high street
- Entrances to town
- Parking areas and bus station
- Poor street scene

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- Physical impressions need improvement such as blank frontages and the view from the bus station towards the High Street
- There are some benches and street furniture in poor condition and not enough bins
- Negligence of historic buildings such as window fronts

#### **Actions/Opportunities:**

- Shop improvement grants
- Weir to improve current and appearance
- Appropriate restrained up lighting
- Town trail leaflet

- Remove toilets at Market Square
- Develop a treescape/woodland management plan along river
- Install play areas in town centre
- Plan early for age increase of population
- Develop, enhance attractive public spaces
- Develop alleys as attractive routes
- Consider shared space from Tesco and Leisure Centre to High Street
- Consider getting rid of parking and turning Gurteen's entrance into piazza
- Turn Queen Street into alternative retail offer independent shops
- Consider knocking down some High Street buildings as part of new development
- Be robust on quality design of any new developments
- Highlight heritage, consistent signage make it welcoming, brown signs
- Rationalise car parking, move bus station
- Invest in quality street furniture and public art reflecting the town, good planting
- Arrange events down the street - Wheelbarrow race? Running events?

### ***Connectivity***

*By 2031, Haverhill Town Centre will relate to the wider town, which traffic flows around, where access for deliveries and services has been planned and with well-signed and attractive walking routes around the centre and from car parks*

It has not proved possible to date to arrange a workshop for this group to examine connectivity issues and options. However, a number of comments from the other groups relate to connectivity, as follows:

- Routes from car parks to town centre
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- The need for dualling of the A1307
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- Traffic violations + parking: the number of vehicle users ignoring the access and parking restrictions has a negative impact on the place and creates a safety issue
- Access + pathways:
  - underfoot conditions need improving, as do the alleyways.
  - A-boards on the street further narrow pavements – also noted that they do prevent illegal parking
  - Lips on doorways of shops create an access problem for those with reduced mobility
- Disconnected town centre:
  - Cut through / disjointed by Ehringshausen Way
  - Several barriers such as walls or trees that have gone unmanaged
  - Signage needs improving to provide clarity
- Speed and parking in High Street
- Control parking
- ½ hour free parking in car parks
- Level of blue badge holders and how to accommodate them
- Disregard of 10.00 to 4.00 restriction in High Street
- On-line survey feedback
  - Parking
    - Good in some places
    - Do not understand variation in costs / regulations between car parks
    - Not enough, need more
    - No one wants to pay to park for a newspaper
    - Ample parking in the many town centre car parks to allow pedestrianisation of High Street
  - Walking and Cycling
    - Poor and non-existent for cyclists
    - Walking links are basic
    - Young cyclists do not have a safe route
    - There are plenty of wide pavements for walking
    - Crossing Lord's Croft Lane / Ehringshausen Way is very difficult
  - Bus and Taxi service
    - Look at getting busses to drop off just off Market Square
    - Taxis are expensive and busses inaccessible

- Bus station is central to the town at the moment
- Bus needs circular route around the town every hour
- Access for the disabled
  - Parking in the High Street very helpful
  - Wish there was a good even pathway
  - Ease of accessing the bus station from both ends needs improving

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