



Horsham District Council

20th July 2011

To: Councillors:

John Bailey; Malcolm Curnock; Brian Donnelly; David Holmes; David Jenkins;
Elizabeth Kitchen; Gordon Lindsay; Sheila Matthews; Godfrey Newman;
Claire Vickers

Strategic Planning Advisory Group
26th July 2011, 5.30pm, Council Chamber

You are invited to attend the Strategic Planning Advisory Group meeting to consider the items set out below.

If you are unable to attend the meetings please advise Natasha Robinson by email or on (01403) 215398 so that your apologies may be recorded.

All Members of the Council are invited to attend these meetings; those wishing to speak may do so by prior agreement with the Cabinet Member for Living and Working Communities.

The purpose of this meeting will be for Members to be taken through Future Prosperity of Horsham Project - Draft Town Centre Supplementary Planning Document, Green Infrastructure Visioning consultation document as well as an update on other work being undertaken on the Local Development Framework including the Horsham Town Centre Office Reuse Draft Supplementary Planning Document and the Community Infrastructure Levy.

Ian Howard

Cabinet Member for Living and Working Communities

Strategic Planning Advisory Group – 5.30pm

Agenda

1. Apologies for absence
2. Notes of previous meeting: 14th June 2011 SPAG (attached)
3. Draft Interim Statement update (oral update)
4. The Future Prosperity of Horsham Project - Draft Town Centre SPD (report attached)
5. Horsham Town Centre Office Reuse Draft SPD (report attached)
6. Green Infrastructure Stakeholder Visioning consultation (report attached)
7. Community Infrastructure Levy update (report attached)
8. Local Development Framework work update (oral update)
9. Dates of Next Meetings:
27th September 2011
8th November 2011
31st January 2012
13th March 2012
10. Any other items of business that the Cabinet Member for Living and Working Communities wishes to raise.

Strategic Planning Advisory Group
Notes from
14th June 2011, 5.30pm, Council Chamber

Attendees: John Bailey; Malcolm Curnock; Brian Donnelly; David Holmes; David Jenkins; Elizabeth Kitchen; Gordon Lindsay; Sheila Matthews; Godfrey Newman; Claire Vickers

Leonard Crosbie; Duncan England; Kate Rowbottom

1) Apologies for Absence: Adam Breacher; John Chidlow

Due to the fact that this was the first meeting after the May elections, the Chairman Councillor Ian Howard, Cabinet Member for Living and Working Communities welcomed Councillor David Jenkins, the previous Chairman to the Group, and thanked him for all he has done. The Chairman also explained that SPAG is an Advisory Group only and not a decision making body. The group tries to be politically balanced, although all Councillors are sent a copy of the agenda. External bodies only involved in exceptional circumstances.

Barbara Childs, Spatial Planning Manager briefly introduced Officers from the Strategic Planning Team who attended the meeting to present agenda items. Those unable to attend will be introduced at future meetings. It was explained that SPAG is different to the Development Management Committees in the respect that all those involved in the technical work attend the meeting to present their reports and provide advice to the Chairman and Councillors.

2) Notes of previous meetings: 22nd March 2011 (attached to agenda)
Agreed

3) Draft Interim Statement: Managing Development in Horsham District and Draft Statement of Community Involvement – Consultation Feedback (report attached to agenda)

Horsham District Council has an adopted Local Development Framework with the Core Strategy running until 2018; the Core Strategy, adopted 2007, makes specific reference to the future roles of Billingshurst and Southwater. The Planning Inspector made it clear at the Examination and in his final report that there would be a need for an early review of the Core Strategy as, at the time, the South East Plan was yet to be finalised and published. The Core Strategy Review started in September 2009, consulting on 9 possible sites for future development; both Land East of Billingshurst and Land West of Southwater were included within the document. However, both sites were significantly larger than those detailed within the Draft Interim Statement.

With the change in Government a new Localism Bill was drafted setting the way for sweeping away all Regional Spatial Strategies. At present, no date is known as to when this is proposed to happen. Horsham District Council, as all other Local Planning Authorities, should be prepared for challenges and

appeals against future planning applications if not meeting a five year supply of housing land against the South East Plan requirements. The latest advice is that legally the South East Plan is still relevant. Planning Officers must take into account the abolition of the Regional Spatial Strategy as a material consideration when determining planning applications. However, when forward planning the housing requirements in the South East Plan must be planned for. The Government has made it clear to Local Planning Authorities that they must provide a five year housing land supply. However, this has not been made clear to members of the public who perceive the Localism Bill as a way of restricting future development within their settlements. This is obviously confusing for many people but it must be emphasised that this is not the purpose of the Localism Bill.

The Draft Interim Statement was published on the 21st January 2011 for an eight week period of consultation that closed on the 18th March 2011. The purpose of the Draft Interim Statement was to address the short term delivery of housing in Horsham District and maintain a plan-led approach to the delivery of housing and associated infrastructure. The Draft Interim Statement was prepared on the basis of the housing requirements of the South East Plan and the vision, objectives and development strategy of the adopted Core Strategy (2007), which focuses on development in or adjacent to the most sustainable settlements. It also refers to more recent work on housing needs in a way that seeks to minimise the environmental impact of development and provide the necessary infrastructure. Two sites were identified within the Draft Interim Statement, Land East of Billingshurst and Land West of Southwater. There were three options for each site; Option 1 – No Planned Growth, Option 2 – Limited Planned Growth, and Option 3 – Notably Planned Growth. Full details of each are provided in the report attached to the agenda.

Appendices 3-4 provide full summaries of responses received in relation to the document, these include written comments and the results of the questionnaire that was sent to each household within the Parishes of Billingshurst and Southwater.

Officers provided a brief summary of the comments received as well as a more detailed summary from the relevant Parish Council's and local organisations that represent views from the community, both in support of and against planned growth:

- Billingshurst Parish Council objects to further development as it believes that Billingshurst rapid growth in the last 10 years has already brought the village up to its 'natural' boundaries in landscape and is already struggling with its infrastructure. They also have serious concerns in relation to employment, housing, transport links, education provision, acute healthcare (wide spread issues raised previous to the Draft Interim Statement), water supply, sewerage and the environment. Full details are provided in Appendix 2a
- Billingshurst Chamber of Commerce is keen to see Billingshurst prosper and supports Option 3, Notably Planned Growth with the following constructive provisos:

- Commitment to the identified additional community and business benefits for Billingshurst must be enshrined in the scheme and guaranteed;
 - A cogent plan for Jengers Mead and Billingshurst retail must be given high priority;
 - Village centre parking, additional office space and an industrial park review;
 - Specific plans for additional employment.
- Southwater Parish Council objects to Option 3, Notably Planned Growth for several reasons which include; concern about the basis for the Draft Interim Statement. Whilst the Parish Council acknowledged that Southwater is considered a Category 1 Settlement, it felt that this is a less sustainable settlement than others within the District; Southwater not having its own railway station, Lintot Square struggling to provide adequate parking, the primary school at capacity, and the existing road network is also at capacity. Although it is accepted that there will be land provision for a secondary school there are no guarantees that one will be built. In addition the Parish Council has concerns in relation to healthcare (provision funding and existing capacity), access to acute healthcare and environmental issues such as the loss of countryside.
 - Southwater Sports Club support Option 3, Notably Planned Growth as they feel that a development of that size would provide the necessary funding for the to relocate and significantly enhance the size of the Sports Club to be Sports England standards. See Appendix 2b for full response.

Officers advised Members that there was overwhelming support for Option 1, No Planned Growth for each settlement in the comments received. As such, it is considered that there are two options that the Council could pursue; Option A would be to move forward to adopt an Interim Statement, taking into account the aspirations and issues from the comments received during the consultation including the questionnaire responses, planning short term development in the District proactively either at a level identified in option two or option three as set out in the Draft Interim Statement. Option B would be for the Council not to pursue an Interim Statement approach, and deal with planning applications as and when they are submitted. This would include applications for around 500 homes at both Billingshurst and Southwater following the developer's consultation earlier this year with those communities, as well as other applications which may be received across the District.

Local Members raised their disappointment at Southwater Parish Council's comments not being included within the SPAG agenda. Officers advised that Billingshurst Parish Council submitted a representation within the consultation period. This allowed their comments to be included within the consultation summary. However, Southwater Parish Council gave Officers a written response at a later date, as agreed with the Council which did not allow time for their comments to be summarised or included within the report, however both have been presented to Members at the meeting.

Members queried the difference in response rate from both Parishes; Billingshurst 8% and Southwater 38%. Councillors asked how representative is this figure? There were two very active groups within the communities; Keep Southwater Green and Save Billingshurst. One explanation is the strong influence of these groups. Officers referred to the response rate as being 'low' in the report because a leaflet was sent to every household within the Parish. The percentage when considered against the population of the Parish being much lower than those numbers stated.

Councillors felt that there wasn't a clear explanation of the need for housing in the District. Members of the public are not aware of details such as the New Homes Bonus and how this may be used to benefit their communities. Officers explained that the Government are using the New Homes Bonus as a 'carrot' for communities. Officers feel that this is not new money, and would replace previous grants received. The New Homes Bonus was mentioned within the document and the leaflet but it was not focused on as details were still emerging from Government.

Members also felt that there is a lot of confusion over the Localism Bill. Communities believe that if they choose Option 1, No Planned Growth then they will be able to control the amount of development within their settlements. However, planned growth enables the greatest benefits for the communities affected by developments to be gained. Members commented that it would be very disheartening for communities to look back in the future over the last 20 years and see the opportunities that it has missed which has occurred in the District previously, namely in Southwater.

The Cabinet Member for Living and Working Communities acknowledged all comments received and they will be reported to Cabinet its consideration.

4) Revised Statement of Community Involvement – Consultation Feedback (report attached to agenda)

The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) is a key document in the Local Development Framework (LDF) setting out how the community within and adjoining the District, as well as organisations and other stakeholders will be involved in the production of LDF documents, as well as Development Management applications in the District. Following the adoption of the Council's SCI in 2006, and review in 2007, there have been further changes to the planning system, particularly regarding the production of the LDF documents.

The consultation on the Draft Revised SCI lasted 8 weeks, from the 21st January to the 18th March 2011, alongside the consultation on the Draft Interim Statement: Managing Development in Horsham District. Consultation exhibitions were attended by Officers and meetings were held with a number of 'hard-to-reach' or 'seldom heard' groups to discuss the consultation and ensure they were able to give their views.

Officers have taken into account comments received through this consultation process and suggested changes to the document in light of these comments. The results of the consultation, including the special series of meeting with representatives of 'hard-to-reach' or 'seldom heard' groups, are set out in Appendix 1 of the report, together with indications as to which comments have been incorporated into the latest version of the SCI. Members were asked to consider the proposed changes to the revised SCI and recommend to the Cabinet Member for Living and Working Communities that it be considered and adoption by Council.

Members agreed with the recommendation. However, there were a few queries raised. Cabinet Member for Living and Working Communities asked if the document provides any guidance should one group try to 'high jack' a consultation? Officers advised that Planning Regulations do not make specific reference to this and as such it is not appropriate to place guidance in the SCI. The document has to ensure that during a consultation Officers talk to people in a way that is appropriate for them and engage where possible with the wider community. Members raised concerns over the removal of site notices in relation to planning applications, as show in Appendix 1, page 10. If notices are not in place then many people would not know when an application is in place that may have an impact on them. Officers advised that they would provide the Councillor with clarification of this, the change to the document removed reference in one section of the SCI to site notices, not all reference.

5) Planning for Traveller Sites Consultation (report attached to agenda)

The report asked Members to consider the Councils' formal response to the Government consultation "Planning for Traveller Sites". The document proposed a new Planning Policy Statement (PPS) to replace the existing circular. With the proposed abolition of the Regional Spatial Strategies, it is clear new guidance is necessary. The Government intends all guidance at a national level to be "light touch" and as with housing targets considers Council's should be allowed to decide for themselves how many traveller pitches are necessary.

Section 3 of the report attached to the agenda contains the 13 questions asked as part of the consultation and sets out our recommended responses.

Although Officers did not go through each individual response they did point out a couple of areas of concern.

- Question 5 raises the proposal that requires Local Planning Authorities to plan for a five year supply of traveller pitches/plots. It is anticipated that there would be difficulties in implementing such an approach; this also has to be viewed alongside the transitional arrangements whilst a five year supply is established. This would mean temporary permissions would have to be granted, please see Question 9.
- Question 10 states a limited six month period that Local Planning Authorities would have to put a five year land supply in place. Officers consider this timescale completely unrealistic and cannot be met.

- Paragraph 3.15 provides details of four other points that are made outside of the 13 questions; it is worth mentioning that there is widespread concern particularly from the traveller community that this approach may result in less provision than would have come about via the Regional Spatial Strategies, particularly without benchmarking of local needs surveys. From Horsham District Councils' perspective it is important that any system is fair and transparent.

If agreed, it is proposed that a response is sent to the Department of Communities and Local Government by the 6th July 2011. Members agreed but queried the timescale between the Gypsy and Travellers Sites: Issue & Options document in 2006 and nothing more happening until now. Officers advised that a policy was originally in place in the Core Strategy. However, at the examination the Inspector decided to remove this policy. The adopted General Development Control Policies Development Plan Document contains Policy DC32, Gypsies and Travellers which is a criteria based policy. Subsequently Officers waited for the target figure of the South East Plan. However, due to the new Government all has grinded to a halt and the Inspectors examination was closed.

The Cabinet Member for Living and Working Communities reminded Councillors of the District and Parish Councillors Event for potential sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople on 24th June 2011 and encouraged all Members to attend.

6) Local Development Framework Update (oral update)

Officers gave an oral presentation on a number of aspects of the current work on the LDF and its component Local Development Documents, including:

- **Localism Bill Proposed Changes**

The Bill received a tepid response at it's second reading in the House of Lords on the 7th June. Over 50 names were put down for the discussion before hand and over 6 hours were spent debating the Localism Bill. There were a number of detailed changes which have been proposed. Current expectations would be passing the Bill in November 2011. Once the Bill is passed a Sustainability Appraisal would need to be undertaken as to the removal of the South East Plan before it can be removed.

- **The Future Prosperity of Horsham Project – Draft Town Centre SPD**

Although at the last meeting it was discussed and stated that a draft would come to this meeting of SPAG, it is now intended that a Draft Supplementary Planning Document would be presented at the next meeting of SPAG on the 26th July 2011. The Draft document has now been prepared and is currently with Officers at Horsham District Council and West Sussex County Council for comment.

- **Relaxation of Planning Rules for Change of Use from Commercial to Residential Consultation**

James Williams, Senior Planning Officer is the lead Officer for this project; please contact James if you would like to discuss this further or have any comments on the document that you would like to add. A key concern,

following the preparation of the Office Reuse SPD, is the blanket approach this change would make and the protection of key commercial areas in the District. The document is out for consultation until the 30th June 2011, comments are awaited from colleagues in Development Management to feed into the Council's response.

Members queried the status of the Future Prosperities of Horsham Working Group, as discussed at the previous SPAG meeting. Officers advised that the document has remained with the Strategic Planning Team and that Kathryn Reeves is now the lead Officer. A workshop session is intended to be held during the consultation on the draft document.

7) Dates of Next Meeting:

26th July 2011

27th September 2011

8th November 2011

31st January 2012

13th March 2012

Noted

8) Any other items of business that the Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning wishes to raise

None

Strategic Planning Advisory Group

26th July 2011

Agenda Item 4

Horsham Town Plan Supplementary Planning Document

1. Introduction

- 1.1 As part of the overall background work to support the production of the Core Strategy Review Development Plan Document (DPD) and the Council's overarching drive to proactively maintain and build on the strengths of Horsham town into the future, the Council initiated the Future Prosperity of Horsham Project.
- 1.2 The Future Prosperity of Horsham Project is an initiative devised by Horsham District Council, in partnership with West Sussex County Council, to take a proactive approach to the future development and growth of Horsham town in relation to access enhancements, retail/commercial development and leisure opportunities. This future development growth will include the regeneration of key areas within Horsham town to increase the vitality and vibrancy of the town. It is a cross cutting project led by the District Council's Strategic Planning Team, but which involves input from a wide range of Officer's and Council Members across the Council and partnership work with the County Council and other interested parties and organisations.
- 1.3 The project aims to strike an appropriate balance within the town centre by steering the future development of the town to maximise its economic potential whilst sustaining and enhancing its attractive and historic environment for the optimum benefit of residents and visitors alike. To assist with this aim, planning consultants Urban Practitioners were commissioned in June 2010, to start the project and produce a Town Framework Report to identify the existing strengths and areas for improvement within the town and formulate a vision and strategy for the future.

- 1.4 The Town Framework Report looks at three specific target areas across the town which were previously identified as strategically significant for improvement and development. The three specific areas are the town centre, the Hurst Road area including the rail goods yard and railway station and the Broadbridge Heath Quadrant. The town centre is an important focal point for the town but there are also clear opportunities in areas of strategic importance across the wider town.
- 1.5 The Town Framework Report was published in February 2011 and is available to view on the Council's website at: www.horshamdistrictldf.info

2. Policy Background

- 2.1 The Council's Local Development Framework (LDF) provides the policy framework for the future planning of the District. There are two main Development Plan Documents set within the LDF that are used to inform the planning brief, the Core Strategy and the General Development Control Policies.
- 2.2 The Core Strategy defines a set of spatial objectives which provide the basis for the spatial strategy for the District. The objectives provide a clear statement of what this Council considered to be crucial in delivering sustainable development. The document was adopted and published in February 2007.
- 2.3 The General Development Control Policies were developed to reflect the vision and spatial objectives of the Core Strategy. They set out more detailed policies that help interpret the vision and objectives of the Core Strategy for the use in development management decisions and were adopted and published by the Council in December 2007.
- 2.4 The Horsham Town Plan seeks to build on Policy CP17 of the Core Strategy 'Vitality and Viability of Existing Centres' and will be published as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). SPDs form part of the LDF and may cover a range of issues, thematic or site specific, and provide further detail to policies and proposals within Development Plan Documents.

3. Draft Horsham Town Plan Supplementary Planning Document

- 3.1 The Horsham Town Framework Report has been used as the basis to formulate a Draft Horsham Town Plan SPD which translates the report findings into planning guidance for future retail, commercial and leisure development specifically for Horsham town centre and the Hurst Road area. The Draft Horsham Town Plan SPD is the first of a series of documents that will be produced by the Council as part of the Future Prosperity of Horsham Project. The Draft Horsham Town Plan SPD is appended to this Agenda as Appendix 1.
- 3.2 The aim of the guidance is to provide a planning structure for the town centre based on the Council's findings, aspirations, priorities for the area and to sustain and enhance the area for the future in the most effective way. The guidance will help to steer potential developers and will act as the Council's starting point for more detailed discussions and proposals that arise in the town over future years.
- 3.3 The Draft Horsham Town Plan SPD, and other subsequent SPD's, will enable the regeneration of key areas within Horsham town which will increase the vitality and vibrancy of the town. The key areas which have been identified for regeneration through the Draft Horsham Town Plan SPD are: Albion Way; The Quarter which consists of Piries Place, East Street and Denne Road; the Bishopric; and the Hurst Road area.

4. Structure and Content of the Document

- 4.1 The SPD can broadly be divided into three main sections. The introductory section outlines the Future Prosperity of Horsham Project and the subsequent Horsham Town Framework Report, which provides the basis for the SPD; reports on the performance of the town centre as retail centre; sets out the vision statement from the Horsham Town Framework Report; and what the Council is seeking to achieve through the SPD.
- 4.2 The second section uses the key principles set out in the Horsham Town Framework Report to set out the Council's overarching general development guidance for the town centre, in terms of retail uses, commercial uses, leisure

and cultural facilities, townscape and character design, sustainable design, public spaces and accessibility, parking and financial viability.

- 4.3 The third section builds on the general development guidance by adding further detail and site specific guidance for the four key sites identified for regeneration within the town centre - Albion Way, The Quarter, the Hurst Road and Nightingale Road area; and the Bishopric.
- 4.4 The latter two sections of the SPD are accompanied by maps and images from the Horsham Town Framework Report, to ease understanding of the guidance and to give an idea of what could be achieved through application of the guidance to any proposals within the town centre and key areas.
- 4.5 A Sustainability Appraisal of the Horsham Town Plan SPD is being undertaken and the proposed structure of the Sustainability Appraisal is appended to this Agenda as Appendix 2.

5. Conclusion and Next Steps

- 5.1 This report is intended to enable Members to make comments and consider the content of the Draft Horsham Town Plan SPD before it is reported to Cabinet on 22nd September and Council 19th October for approval for consultation.
- 5.2 If agreed, the draft SPD will be subject to a six week public and key stakeholder consultation in November 2011. This is anticipated to include another key stakeholder event, similar to the one held during the preparation of the Horsham Town Framework Report. The responses received through consultation will be subject to consideration by Officers and Members and be incorporated into the final version accordingly.
- 5.3 It is anticipated that the Horsham Town Plan SPD will be considered and approved for adoption in spring 2012.

Horsham Town Plan
Supplementary Planning Document

July 2011

DRAFT

DRAFT

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DRAFT

Horsham Town Plan

1. Introduction

- 1.1 As part of the overall background work to support the production of the District's Core Strategy Review Development Plan Document (DPD) and the Council's overarching drive to proactively maintain and build on the strengths of Horsham town into the future, the Council initiated the Future Prosperity of Horsham Project.
- 1.2 The Future Prosperity of Horsham Project is an initiative devised by both Horsham District Council and West Sussex County Council to take a proactive approach to the future development and growth of Horsham town in relation to access enhancements, retail/commercial development and leisure opportunities. This future development and growth will include the regeneration of key areas within Horsham town to increase the vitality and vibrancy of the town. It is a cross cutting project led by the District Council's Strategic Planning Team, but which involves input from a wide range of Officer's and Council Member's across the Council and partnership work with the County Council and other interested parties and organisations.
- 1.3 The project aims to strike an appropriate balance within the town centre by steering the future development of the town to maximise its economic potential whilst sustaining and enhancing its attractive and historic environment for the optimum benefit of residents and visitors alike. To assist with this aim, planning consultants Urban Practitioners were commissioned in June 2010, to start the project and produce a 'Town Framework Report' to identify the existing strengths and areas for improvement within the town and formulate a vision and strategy for the future. The report has been used as a basis to formulate this Draft Horsham Town Plan Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which translates the report findings into planning guidance for future retail, commercial and leisure development in Horsham town centre.

Scene Setting

- 1.4 Horsham town centre has a high quality historical core, most of which is designated as a Conservation Area and includes approximately 50 listed buildings, which has created a high quality shopping experience for residents and visitors alike. However, with the close proximity of larger competing centres such as Crawley, Guildford and Worthing, and the changing needs of modern retailers, it is essential that the Council continues to understand these changing needs and looks to strengthen the retail offer and promote a comprehensive plan that identifies and encourages future opportunities for further enhancement, without causing harm to the high quality historic environment.
- 1.5 This Draft Horsham Town Plan is the first SPD of a potential series that the Council will produce as part of the Future Prosperity of Horsham Project. Its primary aim is to translate the issues and opportunities identified in the Town Framework Report into clear planning principles to guide future development in the town centre in relation to economic uses, leisure uses and access arrangements. It focuses on key opportunity areas that form the foundation for the future success of the town centre, that when planned effectively will sustain and enhance the strong and attractive town centre experience that characterises Horsham.
- 1.6 In 2010, Horsham town centre was ranked 143 out of over 3,000 centres through the National Retail Centre Ranking and was identified as having prime zone retail rents of £75 per square foot. Recent independent research has shown though that within the South East, a town with Horsham's retail offer should be achieving prime zone retail rents of £115 per square foot. The research has shown that although Horsham is a strong and attractive town centre, it might not be capitalising on its full potential and are therefore opportunities for improvement to achieve higher rents and encourage further investment within the town centre. Suggested reasons to the town centres low

retail rents include that Horsham is not on the radar for many retailers; the current offer may not cater for all demographics in the wider catchment area; the proposition is too value based; Horsham may be losing out to larger centres such as Guildford, Crawley and Brighton; there is a lack of modern property stock and appropriate unit sizes; the town centre is held back by ownership structures; and it is under served by complementary uses such as A3 and leisure uses.

- 1.7 Although it is recognised that Horsham town may not capitalising on its full potential and that competing centres may be larger and currently provide a wider range of retail and leisure choice, it is also recognised that Horsham town offers an alternative experience based on its high quality public realm, attractive cafés, restaurants and independent shops supported by key anchor stores that provide the basis for the existing high levels of consumer retention. It is this alternative experience that needs to be built on to increase and strengthen the performance of Horsham town centre to put the town in line with current competing centres.
- 1.8 Therefore, the aim for this SPD will be to seek to sustain and enhance the existing attractive historical character and nature of the town centre, whilst maximising the future opportunity areas for better quality access and linkages into and across the town and more flexible retail floor space. It also aims to encourage people to spend more time in the centre by building on the town's strong combined shopping and leisure experiences for both the day time and night time economies.
- 1.9 The Draft SPD will be published as a Supplementary Planning Document in accordance with PPS 12 Local Development Frameworks and form supplementary guidance to the Council's current Core Strategy Development Plan Document. The draft SPD will be subject to a six week public and stakeholder consultation, the results of which will be incorporated into the final version accordingly and a table of responses will be published alongside the final document.

2. Background and Scope

Retail Study

- 2.1 In June 2010 the Council published an updated Retail Needs Study as part of the background work for the Core Strategy Review DPD. The study notes that Horsham town has a strong heritage and a historical core, and has generally kept pace with shoppers and retailers' needs through redevelopment and enhancement of shopping facilities, whilst maintaining and conserving an attractive, historic environment; therefore, ensuring that the town centre is functioning well against the majority of key retail health check indicators. The study also notes that the centre retains a large percentage of custom within the District despite the proximity of larger retail centres such as Crawley and Guildford. Despite this strong position the study recommends that there are clear opportunities to further strengthen the town centre's offer, particularly in terms of its evening economy, the specialist independent retail offer, Swan Walk Shopping Centre and the need to achieve larger retail units to satisfy modern retailer and shopper requirements. This would help to ensure the future retention of retailers and customers considering the potential major retail enhancements at the competing centres of Crawley and Guildford. It was also concluded that there is clearly potential to enhance the overall connectivity across the town centre and enhance linkages to other areas of strategic importance across the wider town. This conclusion links in with a specific Council priority to increase connectivity and the general awareness of the town centre from the railway station through signage and way finding.

Town Framework Report

- 2.2 The recommendations from the Retail study, combined with guidance set out in Planning Policy Statement 4: Planning for Sustainable

Economic Growth and increased development pressures across Horsham town provided the catalyst to plan proactively for the future prosperity of the town. The Town Framework Report set out to create an overarching vision for the future prosperity of Horsham Town Centre and a set of objectives to achieve it in relation to retail, commercial and leisure uses as well as overall connectivity and linkages. The study also looked at three specific target areas across the town which were previously identified as strategically significant for improvement and development. The three specific areas were as follows:

- The Town Centre
- The Hurst Road area including the rail goods yard and railway station
- The Broadbridge Heath Quadrant.

2.3 The town centre is an important focal point for the town and although there are opportunities for redevelopment or enhancement within and on the edge of the centre, there are also clear opportunities in areas of strategic importance across the wider town.

2.4 The Hurst Road area, incorporating the railway station and wider goods yard, is a key commercial location in the town and there is increasing developer interest across various sites that could represent an opportunity for coordinated future redevelopment that enhances connectivity with the rest of the town, whilst boosting the commercial offer.

2.5 Another important area that sits outside of the town but has a great influence on the health of the town as a whole is the Broadbridge Heath Quadrant. The Broadbridge Heath Quadrant sits adjacent to the recently allocated strategic development 'Land West of Horsham'. It is formed of the existing Broadbridge Heath retail park and the area to the south east of Broadbridge Heath encompassing the West Sussex County Council Depot, Tesco's superstore, the bowls club and the existing leisure centre, including the athletics track. The site has grown

and developed sporadically over the years, which has led to piecemeal development and an inefficient use of what is viewed as a strategically important piece of land. Due to increased developer interest and the desire to maintain and enhance the healthy retail and leisure offer at the site without prejudicing the town centre, the opportunity has arisen through the Future Prosperity of Horsham Project to guide any future redevelopment of the site in a clear and logical manner. Therefore, as part of the Future Prosperity of Horsham Project, the Broadbridge Heath Quadrant will be addressed separately in a detailed planning brief SPD that will be written later this year to guide the future development of that specific area.

- 2.6 In order to form the basis of the future work on the three specific areas, as part of the Town Framework Report the consultants were required to provide site-specific overarching guidance for each of them in relation to design, layout, use and connectivity, and show them on a key diagram of the town that also highlights retail/commercial and leisure opportunities including linkages and connectivity.
- 2.7 Officers from across the District Council and West Sussex County Council met with the consultants to relay their priorities and aspirations for the Report. The initial findings, analysis and potential opportunities were then presented to a key stakeholder workshop held in August 2010 at the District Council offices. The stakeholders included Council Members, Officers from the District and County Councils, important organisations and groups in the town, and key business owners and representatives, were all invited to discuss and comment on the initial work. The comments were used to inform the development of the study and further meetings during the drafting process were undertaken with key officers and Members, as well as a formal presentation and discussion with Horsham Unlimited (Horsham town centre business partnership) in order to gain their views and input before finalising the study. The final study titled the Town Framework Report and was completed in February 2011.

Scope of the Draft SPD

- 2.8 This Draft SPD is the first of a series of documents that will be produced by the Council as part of the Future Prosperity of Horsham Project. The purpose of the Draft SPD is to translate the work undertaken in the Town Framework Report into planning guidance specifically for the town centre and Hurst Road areas of the town. Consultation on a separate SPD for the Broadbridge Heath Quadrant is planned for later this year.
- 2.9 The aim of the guidance is to provide a planning structure for the town centre based on the Council's findings, aspirations, priorities for the area and interests to maintain and enhance the area for the future in the most effective way. The guidance will help to steer potential developers and will act as the Council's starting point for more detailed discussions and proposals that arise in the town over future years.
- 2.10 The key output of the overarching Future Prosperity of Horsham Project work, which will be enabled by the Horsham Town Plan SPD and any other subsequent SPD's, is the regeneration of key areas within Horsham town which will increase the vitality and vibrancy of the town. The key areas within Horsham town centre, which have been identified for regeneration, are Albion Way, Piries Place and East Street, the Bishopric and Hurst Road. These key areas are all addressed within this the Horsham Town Plan SPD. The key areas are set out in more detail in Section 6 of this SPD.

3. Vision

- 3.1 A vision statement for the town was published in the Town Framework Report and sets out the overarching aim of the Future Prosperity of Horsham Project. This was produced working in partnership with West Sussex County Council and various interested groups across the town including the town centre business partnership Horsham Unlimited.
- 3.2 Alongside the production of the vision statement the Town Framework report sets out key principles for the town centre and Hurst Road area. These principles have been used as a basis for the general development guidance set out in section 5: General Development Guidance, below.

DRAFT

Vision Statement

Horsham town will continue to be a distinctive destination of choice which is safe, easily accessible and enjoyable to visit.

In parallel with the protection and enhancement of the town's attractive historic townscape and pleasant green character, the Council, together with its public and private sector partners, wish to identify innovative opportunities to boost its performance as a sustainable and commercially vibrant location. This will be achieved through the promotion of a sensitive balance of independent boutique and niche shops, High Street brands and higher end retailers as well as opportunities to enhance the town centre's cultural, leisure and evening economy offer.

Through this Draft SPD, the Council is seeking to promote a clear 'town-centre' first approach to retail development to ensure that piecemeal development opportunities in out-of town locations do not undermine the long-term vitality of Horsham town centre. This SPD also seeks to maintain Horsham Town as an excellent location for employment uses including commercial offices and civic administration.

The Council will continue to promote the town centre as a hub for culture and the creative arts, and will seek to protect and enhance the town centre's distinctive heritage as an ideal setting for these uses.

4. Development Plan Policy

4.1 The draft SPD is intended to provide more detail on adopted policies in the Core Strategy DPD (2007) and, in particular, aid in the interpretation of the maintenance of the 'vitality and viability' of the town as set out in Policy CP17. Therefore this draft SPD should be read alongside the adopted policies in the Local Development Framework (LDF) as well as National Policies such as PPS4. Other key policies within the Core Strategy DPD that should be taken into account when proposing development across the town are listed below for convenience, as well as key policies from the General Development Control Policies DPD. Policy AL2 in the Site Specific Allocations of Land DPD sets out the development potential for land at Lifestyle Ford on the western side of the town centre and any development proposed at this location should also consider this Policy.

4.2 As the Core Strategy Review progresses, emerging policies from this document should also be taken into account when proposing development.

4.3 *Core Strategy Policies (2007)*

- Policy CP1 - Landscape and Townscape Character
- Policy CP2 - Environmental Quality
- Policy CP3 - Improving the Quality of New Development
- Policy CP5 - Built-Up Areas and Previously Developed Land
- Policy CP10 - Employment Provision
- Policy CP11 - Employment Sites and Premises
- Policy CP13 - Infrastructure Requirements
- Policy CP14 - Protection and Enhancement of Community Facilities and Services
- Policy CP16 - Inclusive Communities
- Policy CP17 - Vitality and Viability of Existing Centres
- Policy CP18 - Tourism and Cultural Facilities

- Policy CP19 - Managing Travel Demand and Widening Choice of Transport

4.4 *General Development Control Policies (2007)*

- Policy DC2 - Landscape Character
- Policy DC6 - Woodland and Trees
- Policy DC8 - Renewable Energy and Climate Change
- Policy DC9 - Development Principles
- Policy DC10 – Archaeological Sites and Ancient Monuments
- Policy DC12 - Conservation Areas
- Policy DC13 - Listed Buildings
- Policy DC14 - Shop Fronts and Advertisements
- Policy DC19 - Employment Site / Land Protection
- Policy DC20 - New Employment Development
- Policy DC21 - Protection of Existing Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities
- Policy DC34 - New Retail Development within the Defined Town and Village Centres
- Policy DC36 - Change of Use within Defined Town and Village Centres
- Policy DC39 - Tourism
- Policy DC40 - Transport and Access
- Policy DC41 - Protection of Car Parks

5. General Development Guidance

- 5.1 This chapter sets out the Councils overarching development guidance for the town centre. This should not be seen as stand alone guidance and should be read alongside the existing planning policies in the Local Development Framework, as set out above, as well as the Town Framework Report. The guidance has been set out for ease of use with a short summary of the issues followed by guidance points and relevant Council and national policies relating to that particular issue.

G1 - Retail Uses

There is a need for a greater mix of large and small retail units to maintain the historic grain of the town whilst at the same time opening up greater opportunities for modern retailer requirements.

- 1. New retail development, including larger retail units and more flexible retail units, are encouraged but should be concentrated in the key redevelopment opportunity areas: The Forum, Swan Walk and the Bishopric and Albion Way area.*
- 2. Outside of the redevelopment opportunity areas the maintenance, reuse and refurbishment of existing units is considered more appropriate than redevelopment so as to continue to meet the needs of smaller and independent retailers and to retain the attractive historical core and varied shopping environment and offer.*

Relevant Policies: PPS4, CP11, CP17, DC34, DC36

- 5.2 Horsham town centre has an attractive environment which provides the town with a competitive advantage over towns nearby. However, this is not always positive for modern retail needs as Horsham, and other

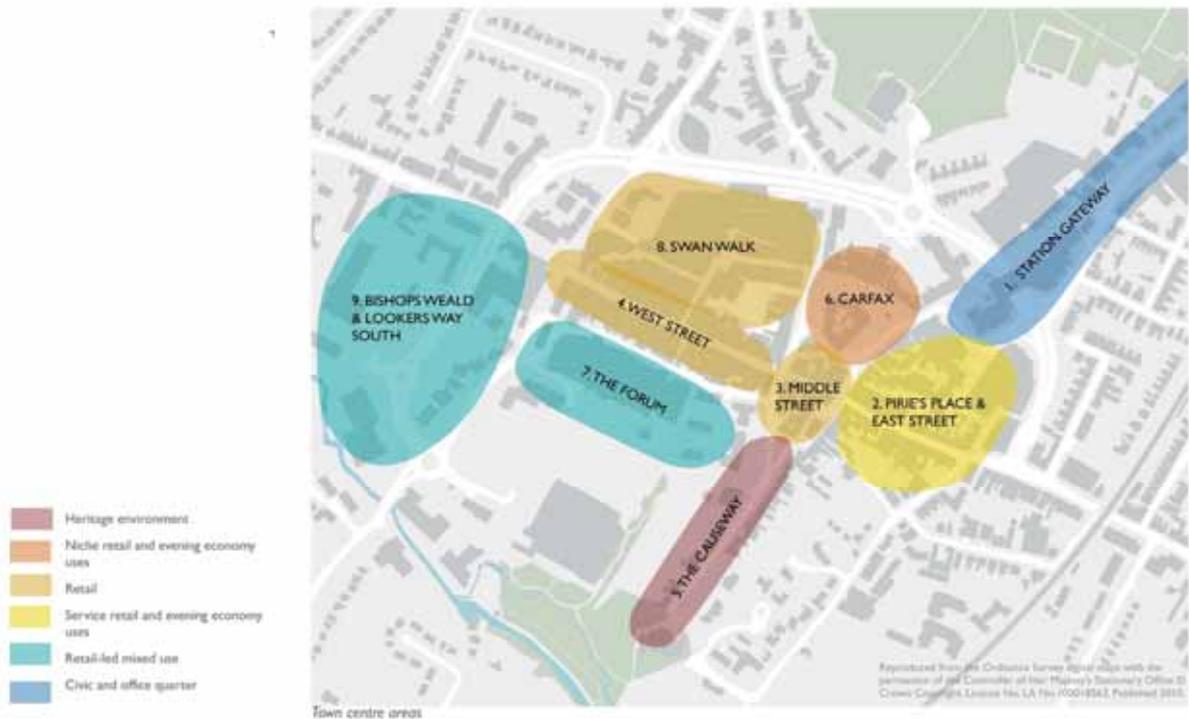
historical towns, will find it increasingly difficult to provide suitable accommodation to meet retailers' future needs. This is due to a number of reasons including; previously available sites have been released for residential development; much of Horsham Town Centre is rightly designated as a conservation area due to the quality of the historic environment and; historical property patterns also have implications for those retailers operating within them as retail unit needs are becoming increasingly varied. Nevertheless, the town centre has continued to develop and evolve over recent years and there is some scope for continued change and extension of the prime retail area, as many key retailers are not willing to take up units outside the prime retail area, particularly in the area to the west of Albion Way/south of The Bishopric, provided that the appropriate integration with the town centre can be achieved; in the area adjacent to Swan Walk (Swan Yard and Sterling Buildings); and the back of East Street and Denne Road. The focus of retail activity within the town centre has already shifted west in recent years and there are now parts of the centre where the integration and connectivity in terms of retailing is less than might be considered desirable, with implications for the form of activity now taking place, e.g. the 'café culture' in the East Street area, although this area has potential to be enhanced as a leisure/visitor area – 'The Quarter' where the emphasis is on safeguarding the restaurants and independent shops and creating a cultural area. The Quarter is a collective name for the area encompassing Piries Place, East Street and Denne Road.

- 5.3 It is important that Horsham retains the historical and attractive qualities that provide a unique shopping environment when compared to other competing centres. However, a balance must be struck between these qualities and the modern retailer needs of larger and more flexible retail units to ensure the vibrancy and viability of the town. Therefore there is a need for a greater mix of retail unit sizes in the town centre to attract both the modern larger retailers as well as to provide for the smaller independent retailers that already have a strong

presence in Horsham town. This can be achieved by encouraging new, larger and more flexible retail development in specific strategically located redevelopment opportunity areas in the town. Outside of these areas the Council will encourage the maintenance, reuse and refurbishment of existing retail units to meet the needs of smaller and independent retailers.

- 5.4 There are many key opportunity areas for potential redevelopment within the town centre and these are shown in Figure 1 below. Key areas for comprehensive redevelopment, however, will be the western side of the town centre incorporating the length of the Bishopric retail area across Albion Way and Bishops Weald, thereby encouraging the extension of the town centre to the west. Examples of potential redevelopment plans are included within the Town Framework Report and Chapter 6 of the SPD. The Forum represents an opportunity area to expand on the already successful larger floorplate retail units that are already present. Swan Walk shopping centre has the potential to increase floorplate size in the short term and represents a prime opportunity for redevelopment in the longer term that could include adjacent land ownerships such as Sterling Buildings and / or Springfield Court.
- 5.5 These redevelopment opportunity areas are strategically located and will encourage the circulation of pedestrians across a much wider area of the town with the ultimate aim of increasing footfall within the whole of the town centre and lengthening the 'dwell time' people spend in Horsham which would also potentially boost the café and restaurant uses.

Figure 1: Key Opportunity Areas



G2 - Commercial Uses

Future commercial development, B1, B2 and small scale B8 uses, should be focused on the Hurst Road and Nightingale Road area and the Council will consider the loss of office floor space in the town centre subject to conditions.

- 1. The loss of office floor space within the town centre will be considered if it contributes to the Council's overarching vision for the future prosperity of Horsham as set out in the Town Framework Report and this SPD. This loss, however, needs to be qualitative.***
- 2. Future commercial development within the town should primarily focus on the Nightingale Road and the Sidings land / Former Goods Yard identified in the Town Framework Report and in***

Figure 2 below. Hurst Road is also seen as an important area for mixed use commercial development.

- 3. Redevelopment should not take place on land occupied by public services and agencies in the Hurst Road area without pursuing the potential opportunities to consolidate facilities under the Governments Total Place Initiative.**

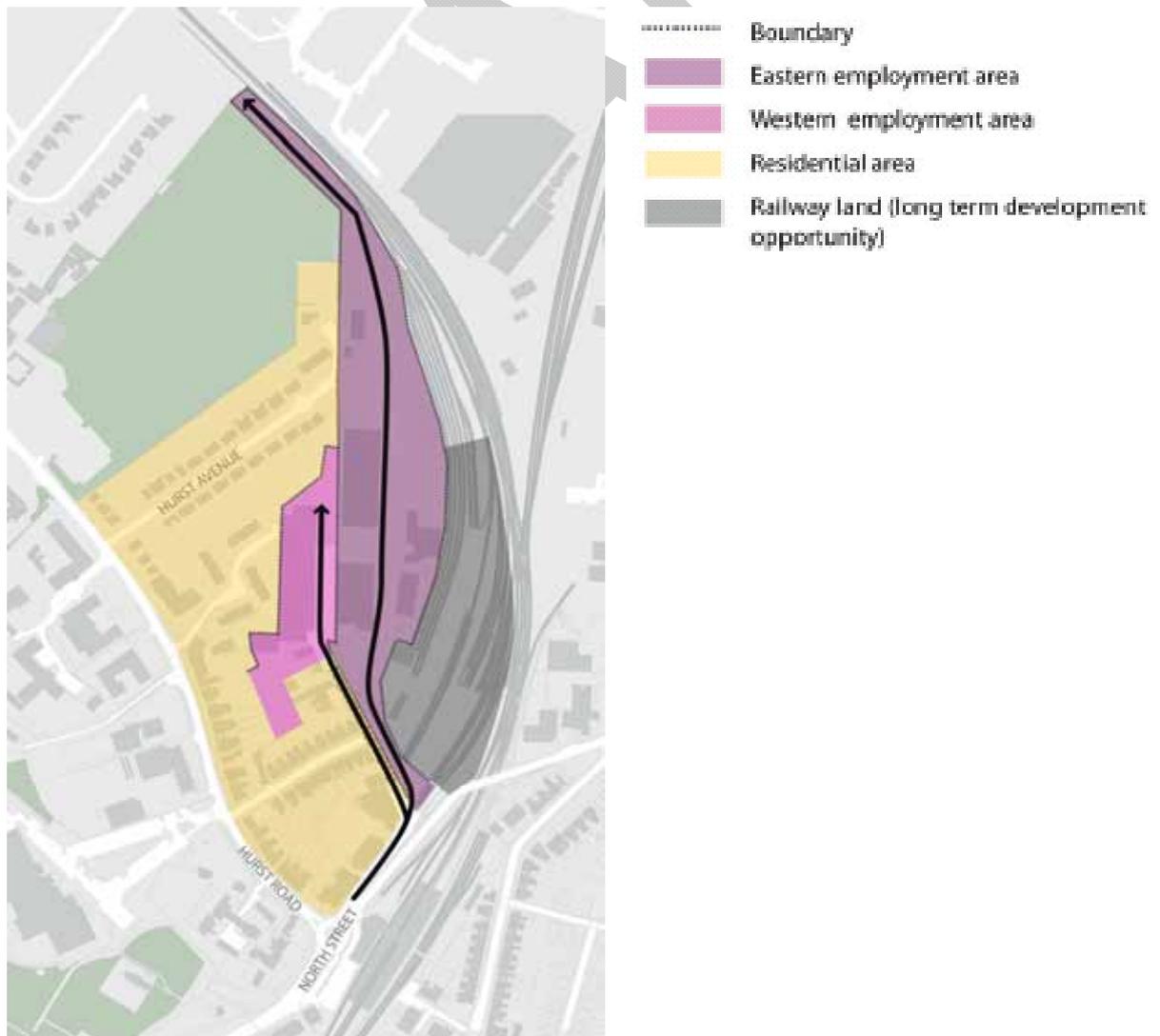
Relevant Policies: PPS4, CP10, CP11, CP17, DC19, DC20, DC36

- 5.6 The Hurst Road area encompasses the road itself, the commercial area surrounding the road including the railway station goods yard, and the railway station itself. The aim for this area is to improve overall connectivity with the town centre and maximise the potential opportunity for a more joined-up and comprehensive redevelopment that will enhance the towns commercial offer and provide a more legible and attractive approach and access for visitors using the railway station.
- 5.7 Economic development is the Council's current top corporate priority as set out in the District Plan 2011-2015, and it is important, particularly at this time, that we have the land and facilities to enable employment growth in the town into the future. The Nightingale Road, Sidings land / Former Goods Yard and Hurst Road area is seen as a key area and strategic focus for future commercial development in the town with important links to the town centre and the railway station. Hurst Road has further potential for a mix of uses including residential due to its proximity to the Pavilions in the Park leisure facilities and park setting. The potential for the consolidation of public services and agencies, through the Total Place Initiative to lead to better services at a lesser cost, could also free up land for improved facilities and linkages.
- 5.8 The loss of commercial uses in the town centre will be resisted; however, it is clear that to achieve the aspirations, as set out in the

Town Framework Report, there may be certain occasions when the loss of commercial floorspace is outweighed by the benefit to the community and overall contribution to the future prosperity of Horsham. In this instance the loss of commercial use may be acceptable

5.9 As there is c. 350,000 square feet of vacant office space within the town centre, the Council will consider proposals which result in the loss office floor space, if it can be demonstrated this office floor space is low quality or obsolete and contributes to the Council's vision for the town centre. The loss of office floor space needs to be measured qualitatively so as to not impact on the high quality office space within the town centre. There should be the presumption against the loss of high quality office space within the town centre.

Figure 2: Nightingale Road and the Sidings land / Former Goods Yard



G3 - Leisure and Cultural Uses

The enhancement and development of leisure and cultural facilities in the town are encouraged.

- 1. As part of the overall vision for the future prosperity of the town the development of one or possibly two hotels would be considered favourably in the town centre or along Hurst Road.***
- 2. Proposals that will enhance the restaurant offer and night time economy are encouraged but should be concentrated on, but not limited to, the 'Quarter'.***

Relevant Policies: CP17, CP18, DC34, DC39

- 5.10 When compared to other nearby centres Horsham has a clear deficit in hotel provision, particularly considering the town's close proximity to Gatwick airport and good rail links. The Council is actively promoting the potential development of hotels in the town and any proposal will be considered favourably if it is within the Council's preferred locations of the town centre or along Hurst Road.
- 5.11 The restaurant and café culture that has grown in the town in recent years has significantly boosted the economy and attractiveness of the town to potential visitors. The main focus of this growth has been in the 'Quarter' where a number of restaurants, cafes and independent niche and boutique retail units have been established. Areas like the 'Quarter' have a positive impact on the historic character of the town and are found in the historic core of other Sussex and south eastern towns. Encouraging further restaurant uses and exploring the potential for an improved night time economy, by increasing restaurant opening hours for example, will build on and enhance the existing strengths of the area. The night time economy is an important aspect of the town's

leisure offer and the 'Quarter' would be an ideal location to bring forward these improvements.

- 5.12 Public art is already present within the town centre, namely the Forum, Piries Place, Swan Walk and West Street and, therefore, the Council will continue support of public art through development within key areas of the town centre.

G4 - Townscape Character and Design

Horsham should continue to be an attractive location through maintaining the town centres historical core and the delivery of a high quality environment.

- 1. Proposals which protect and enhance the heritage assets of the town centre and work within the constraints of the historic core in a sensitive manner will be considered favourably.***
- 2. Development should respond positively to the existing character of the town centre through extension to the high quality pedestrian environment and delivery of high quality architectural and landscape design.***
- 3. Comprehensive proposals will be considered favourably in locations with a low townscape quality and poor relationship with adjacent sites, or is out of character with the town centre's historic environment.***

Relevant Policies: PPS5, CP1, CP3, DC2, DC9, DC12, DC13, DC14

- 5.13 Horsham is a thriving market town and its centre has a fine historic grain characterised by smaller retail units and historic development plots, which play a key role in defining the historic street layouts and

public spaces. The historic character is a key factor which should be valued and continue to inform development proposals including the refurbishment of key historic assets. Therefore, the Council will seek to retain the character of the town as much as possible, as it is a key aspect of the town's competitive advantage and offers a suitable, attractive and individual environment for a wide range of retailers and evening economy.

5.14 Horsham provides the ideal setting for cultural uses and the creative arts and as these are a priority for the Council, support will be given to development proposals that enhance and maintain this distinctive environment, and that promote this life and vibrancy within the town centre but that also enhance the experience of visiting the town.

5.15 It is recognised that there are locations within Horsham town centre where buildings are out of character with the town centre's historic environment; in particular, there is disparity between the attractive historic core of the town centre and the collection of larger buildings adjacent to Albion Way as shown in Figure 3 below, which contribute negatively to the character of the town centre. In these locations, logical comprehensive development will be considered, where it is shown to facilitate a positive contribution to the character of the town centre.

Figure 3: Poor quality spaces defined by Albion Way



G5 - Sustainable Design

Proposals for Horsham town need to embrace the highest standards of sustainable design in relation to sustainability guidance in the Local Development Framework.

- 1. The Council support innovative sustainable design solutions including the potential for a range of initiatives particularly a Combined Heat and Power (CHP) district heating system within the Hurst Road area.*
- 2. Proposals that enhance the existing green infrastructure within the town but that also provide opportunities for new green infrastructure,*

in accordance with the Council's emerging Green Infrastructure Strategy, will be considered favourably.

Relevant Policies: CP3, DC8, DC9, DC40

- 5.16 Providing a better environment for today and tomorrow is recognised as a priority in the District Plan 2011-2015, and it is important, that the Council incorporates high standards of sustainable design and construction and maximise opportunities for cost effective renewable or low carbon energy schemes.
- 5.17 Horsham town centre has been identified as a Heat Priority Area within the West Sussex Sustainable Energy Study 2009. To contribute towards achieving planned reductions in carbon emissions in Horsham District, the Hurst Road area in particular, including Pavilions in the Park and Horsham Hospital has been identified as having sufficient heat demand to house a CHP district heating system. This could contribute to a 10% reduction in the districts carbon emissions if linked with any residential or commercial development in the Hurst Road area. The Council is in the early stages of considering its feasibility. In addition to this, the Council will support high standards of sustainable construction, including site waste disposal, which should be integral to the design and build criteria for any development.
- 5.18 Renewable or low carbon energy schemes, as well as small district heating systems, should also be encouraged in other development areas in the town centre e.g. the Bishopric area, as these can make an important contribution to a reduction in the Districts carbon emissions.
- 5.19 Green infrastructure within the urban context includes features such as trees, parks, road verges, allotments and cemeteries. The existing green infrastructure within Horsham town centre includes of parks, smaller open spaces and tree lined streets and it is important that these are conserved but also enhanced as part of any development

proposal. In addition to the conservation and enhancement of existing green infrastructure, opportunities for new green infrastructure should be considered favourably, and these could include features such as small accessible parks, green corridors, allotments and green roofs.

G6 - Public Spaces and Accessibility

Horsham Town will benefit from the strengthening of legible connections in key areas such as between Hurst Road, Horsham Park and the town centre; and between Horsham station and the town centre. In addition to this, the town centre will also benefit from enhancing the boulevard qualities of Albion Way; and improving public spaces.

- 1. As well as sustaining and enhancing the town centres historic layout, character and connections, proposals should contribute to better accessibility and enhanced legible connections to the town centre, through key routes, gateways and thresholds.***
- 2. Opportunities that enhance Albion Way through boulevard qualities without reducing transport capacity will be considered favourably.***
- 3. Proposals should seek to improve public spaces and make the town centre more welcoming through specific public realm enhancements.***

Relevant Policy: CP19, DC9, DC40.

5.20 A series of interventions to improve the quality and choice of legible connections both into and within the town centre are promoted within the Town Framework Report with the aim of strengthening key retail circuits and providing opportunities to improve the quality of the retail offer and environment. The key areas of focus for these interventions are linking Hurst Road to the town centre, using links through the

attractive Horsham park environment; and linkages between the train station and the town centre.

- 5.21 Hurst Road would benefit from enhanced connections to Horsham Park and also continued connections through to the town as this will potentially open up the park for further leisure uses. Further leisure uses, together with the potential of an increased commercial offer, will increase the vibrancy of this area and contribute towards providing a more attractive gateway into the town centre. In addition to the above, comprehensive development in the Hurst Road area should facilitate the creation of new routes which will contribute to providing a more welcoming environment to the town for all modes of transport.
- 5.22 The station and North Street are important points of arrival to Horsham town, by both vehicle and by foot. North Street, in particular, plays an important role, not only as an office and civic corridor, but also as the most direct route into the town centre from the station. The route from the station towards the town centre is strong, however, this area would benefit from a smoother transition between these particular areas. Therefore, development proposals should seek to improve this.
- 5.23 One of the main gateways into Horsham town is Albion Way. Albion Way and its associated car parks currently take up a wide area of the town centre and creates a poor quality environment surrounding the town centre. Therefore, opportunities are encouraged to improve the quality and integrity of Albion Way as a whole including the quality of townscape and spaces adjacent to the ring road. This could be achieved through the re-establishing of active frontages and the enclosure of spaces; enhancing the boulevard qualities of Albion Way such as the planting of trees on both sides and wide single lanes; and improving connections across the ring road by putting in place features that encourage pedestrians to cross.

5.24 The vibrancy of the town centre can be improved by creating good, welcoming public spaces, through efficient use of space with clear distinctions between public and private areas but also a clear relationship between active built frontage, streets and landscape design. Improvements to town centre public spaces, which contribute towards improving the attractive, high quality town centre environment, are encouraged. The Council will also support appropriate shared surface streets similar to that in Ashford, Kent, which have proved successful. In addition, there is the potential, particularly in the Hurst Road and Nightingale Road area for the creation of Home Zones and community gardens, to create attractive and safe places which the community can take pride over.

G7 - Parking

To support the future enjoyment of Horsham town and enhance its retail and leisure offer, parking should be concentrated in a few key locations and should contribute to a positive experience of the town centre.

- 1. Consideration will be given to the provision of additional parking at locations outside of the Albion Way ring Road that contribute to, and are linked with, any comprehensive proposals which meet the vision for the town centre.***
- 2. Opportunities to close smaller car parks within the town centre to open up areas for development, should only be considered where these car parks do not fill a specific local need; or the current or projected need can be provided in a suitable location as part of the development proposal.***

Relevant Policies: CP19, DC40, DC41

- 5.25 Although the Council is seeking to achieve a modal shift towards more sustainable means of transport, it recognises the importance in ensuring that the car continues to be a viable and popular means of access, as a significant proportion of customers will continue to use the car for their journey to the town centre to enjoy the proposed enhanced retail and leisure offer. Therefore, all development proposals should indicate appropriate parking provision to meet these needs. The creation of car clubs and the advancement of the electric car changing points being two recent initiatives towards more sustainable car travel in the District. Notwithstanding the above, however, it is also a priority to enable the continued enjoyment of all aspects of the town centre as a pedestrian and cyclist and to consider all abilities and needs of these users.
- 5.26 To enable this, it is acknowledged that additional parking will be required to meet local town centre needs, but this additional parking should be focussed on a few key sites outside Albion Way which are less used or new sites such as the Bishopric area or existing and future park and ride sites. It is recognised that this shift could potentially reduce peak period pressure on existing car parking, but the closure of smaller car parks within the town centre, to open areas up for development, will be resisted unless these car parks do not fill a specific local need, such as parking for specific community facilities; or the need can be provided in a suitable location considering the need the existing car park provided, as part of a development proposal.
- 5.27 The Council supports investment to improve the environment of the town centre car parks to achieve Park Mark standards, including high quality signage and way-finding to promote Horsham, to ensure an enhanced experience is provided for arriving visitors, as the town centre car parks are a key point of entry.
- 5.28 In addition to the above, development proposals should indicate parking provision, in line with West Sussex County Council parking

standards, to meet local identified parking needs within the town centre.

G8 - Financial Viability and Deliverability

In light of the current economic climate strong support will be given to schemes that represent a step towards the Councils aspirations and vision for the town centre as set out in the Town Framework Report and can prove financial viability and deliverability.

- 1. Development Proposals, particularly in the identified redevelopment opportunity areas, need to be able to demonstrate financial viability and deliverability within a reasonable timescale. The Council will be receptive to proposals provided they can demonstrate that they contribute to or facilitate the aspirations of as set out within the Town Framework Report.***

Relevant Policy: CP17

5.29 The Town Framework Report sets out the Council's ultimate aspirations for the future development of the town. It is however recognised that in the current economic climate some of the aspirations highlighted are unlikely to be viable options at this point in time. However, they are and should continue to be seen as longer term aims for the Council, as recognised in the District Plan 2011-2015, particularly during economic recovery. Therefore, this Draft SPD allows for some flexibility in the planning guidance to enable more viable schemes to come forward in the short term. However, it is crucial that for any scheme to come forward the proposer demonstrates to the Council that the scheme is part of, contributes to, or is a stepping stone towards the ultimate aspirations of the Council set out in the Town Framework Report and the overarching vision and an open book approach would be expected.

- 5.30 Notwithstanding the above, viability and deliverability will be considered positively and the Council should be receptive to schemes that may not comply fully with this SPD but that will enable positive development to take place. In this situation, schemes must be able to prove a robust business case.
- 5.31 Progress with development projects is in many circumstances reliant upon achieving satisfactory land assembly. Should issues arise which hinder or prejudice such progress, the Council will consider the use of statutory processes to achieve appropriate land assembly in the interests of proper planning in accordance with the relevant sections of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. Prior to considering the use of compulsory purchase powers, the Council will endeavour to facilitate and enable progress with development proposals through negotiation and agreement with relevant parties.

6. Site Specific Guidance for Key Sites

6.1 This chapter builds on the General Development Guidance set out in Chapter 5 of this SPD. It adds further details and more site specific guidance for the key sites within Horsham town centre which have been identified for regeneration. The key sites as identified in Chapter 2 are: Albion Way, The Quarter, Hurst Road and Nightingale Road area and the Bishopric. As with Chapter 5, this should not be seen as stand alone guidance and should be read alongside the existing planning policies in the Local Development Framework, as well as the Town Framework Report. The guidance has been set out for ease of use with a summary of the site specific issues followed by guidance points and relevant Council and national policies relating to that particular issue.

S1 - Albion Way

Creation of a positive introduction to Horsham town centre through the establishment of an attractive boulevard environment with improved crossing lines, appropriate landscaping and the redevelopment of adjacent sites will be supported.

- 1. Development proposals which look to reconfigure traffic lanes and pavements along Albion Way will be supported by the Council, provided that the scheme does not significantly reduce transport capacity.***
- 2. Simplification of connections across Albion Way as well as appropriate landscaping to soften the urban transition at this key gateway into the town centre will be encouraged.***
- 3. Proposals which seek to re-establish an active frontage and consistent building line along Albion Way through comprehensive redevelopment of adjacent underused sites to create flexible retail***

units will be considered favourably, as long as these units build on, and do not compete with, the town centre offer.

Relevant policies: PPS5, CP19, DC9, DC12, DC13, DC40

- 6.2 Albion Way is a wide dual carriage way which runs around town centre from Park Way in the east, to Worthing Road in the south and the junctions along Albion Way encourage short, fast bursts of traffic. The central reservation of Albion Way is unusable by pedestrians and the connections across Albion Way consist of underpasses and staggered crossings which are considered to hinder pedestrian's abilities to cross. Albion Way is not considered to create a positive introduction to Horsham town centre and therefore considered to present an opportunity to address this issue through the creation of an attractive boulevard environment with improved crossing lines, appropriate landscaping and also the redevelopment of adjacent sites with a view to creating a positive frontage onto Albion Way.
- 6.3 As identified in the Town Framework Report, Albion Way has much in common with many European boulevards which have achieved the balance between functioning as high volume traffic arteries and being attractive, pedestrian friendly places that are easy to cross and pleasant to be in. The Council, therefore, feels that Horsham town would benefit significantly if this balance could be achieved with Albion Way.
- 6.4 Opportunities will therefore be taken to create an attractive boulevard environment such as the example shown in Figure 3, if this does not have a significant effect on the capacity of the road. This could include wide single lanes; simplifying crossings and junctions, with the possibility of an additional crossing south of the Bishopric and West Street junction to connect with any future development in the Bishopric area; and introduction of formal tree planting, to give definition to the area and encourage more considerate driving at a more constant

speed than at present. In addition to this, the creation of wider pavements and cycle lanes with the possibility of introducing on street parking would create a safer and more secure environment for people on foot and bicycle.

6.5 Albion Way has an inconsistent building line which creates a vast amount of adjacent underused sites. Boulevard environments, however, can create an attractive environment for buildings to face on to which encourages people to use and enjoy the space. Therefore, re-establishing an active frontage and consistent building along Albion Way through comprehensive redevelopment of adjacent underused sites to create flexible retail units is considered to be beneficial for the town as it could assist in populating the currently underused space along Albion Way and the creation of an attractive, useable environment for all, which could become a significant new public space and asset to the town at this key gateway.

6.6 Notwithstanding the above, the development of Albion Way and adjoining sites should respond positively to the setting, character and development pattern of both London Road Conservation Area and the Horsham Town Conservation Area, as well as enhance the setting of any listed buildings.

Figure 3: Albion Way as it could be



S2 – The Quarter

The Quarter would benefit from strengthening the quality of independent niche and boutique retail, high quality restaurant and night time economy offer through promoting the historic development pattern and character, to create a more prominent key location for the eastern side of the town centre.

- 1. Use of the existing historic building pattern to improve and enhance definition between public and private spaces will be encouraged through proposals, provided proposals maintain the town centres historical core and deliver a high quality environment.*
- 2. Opportunities to create further active frontages in this area for independent niche and boutique retail, market based activities,*

high quality restaurant and night time economy offer; and the strengthening and creation of accessible and legible connections particularly between East Street, Piries Place, Stan's Way and the Carfax, will be considered favourably through development proposals.

Relevant policies: PPS5, CP17, CP18, DC12, DC13, DC34, DC39

6.7 The Quarter consists of three key areas - East Street, Piries Place and Denne Road. East Street consists of a variety of restaurants, as well as more specialist and independent retailers and is considered a successful part of the town. The area has recently been subject to significant improvements to create a shared surface environment which the Council will seek to retain, as the current mix of vehicles and people provide this area with activity and character. Piries Place benefits from attractive and historically sensitive unit frontages and has two alleyway entrances encouraging people through from the Carfax to a public space surrounded by small retail units, evening economy offers and a Waitrose anchor store. Both areas are considered, by the Council, a major asset to the town centre which is why this area's role should continue but also be enhanced through redevelopment opportunities.

6.8 It is essential that the quality of the retail offer in this area is maintained. Depending on the requirements of an anchor store, there could be the opportunity to create a new link north; opening views to St. Mark's spire, linking the main pedestrian arrival route into the town centre from the station. Should units in this area come up for replacement this link could be extended through to East Street and opportunities could include the creation of a new public space surrounded by smaller retail units, some of which can be used to expand the evening economy offer and independent or boutique hotels.

6.9 Opportunities for the currently vacant parts of the Kings Head Hotel are already being progressed with the introduction of A3 uses, but there may be further, small scale, opportunities in this area including a further mix of independent niche and boutique retail and restaurants at ground floor level with the possibility of residential uses above, providing the introduction of residential use does not restrict development of the evening economy offer. It may also enable the creation of new links from Piries Place to the Carfax, East Street and Stan's Way. An example of how this area could look is shown in Figure 4. In addition, Piries Place car park, the garage site on Denne Road and Denne Road car park and environs present opportunities for further mixed use areas within the town centre.

Figure 4: Piries Place as it could be



S3 - Hurst Road and Nightingale Road area

The Hurst Road and Nightingale Road area should be enhanced as a mixed used area through the consolidation of existing uses and the

introduction of additional uses. In addition, this area is key to strengthening and simplifying legible connections with the town centre.

1. The introduction of additional uses including residential, leisure and commercial uses in particular, to enhance this area as a mixed use area will be encouraged; however, any development proposal must consider the wider aims for this area as set out in this SPD and the Horsham Town Framework Report.

2. Development proposals should contribute to enabling opportunities to improve the connectivity of the area but also the connectivity of the area with the town centre, particularly through use of Horsham Park and the gateway at the eastern end of the town.

Relevant policies: PPS4, CP10, CP11, CP17, CP19, DC9, DC19, DC20, DC40

6.10 Hurst Road is a mixed use area comprising of larger family housing along with medium density flatted development and a variety of civic, educational and public sector uses, such as Horsham police station. The majority of the buildings along Hurst Road are relatively low density, poorly designed and contribute negatively to the character of the area. There is a lack of high quality connections in this area particularly through to the park and on to the town centre, but also, the junction at the eastern end of Hurst road is illegible and creates an access barrier.

6.11 Nightingale Industrial Estate is a successful industrial estate, however, suffers from a poor quality public realm and has an un-neighbourly relationship with the adjacent residential areas. The key route to access the estate involves a difficult left in / left out turn on to North Street and because Nightingale Road is narrow, this causes conflict between industrial traffic and traffic for other uses, such as the Premier Inn. The Council, therefore, sees the Hurst Road and Nightingale

Road area as a major opportunity area, but realises the area is constrained by physical infrastructure and ownership issues.

- 6.12 Along the western edge of Hurst Road, the Council will take opportunities, where suitable, to consolidate and redevelop the various public sector sites, which could include the co-location of services as promoted through the Total Place Initiative. This could free up various sites along Hurst Road and on the edge of Horsham Park, in which new uses could be introduced. Due to the proximity to Horsham Park, the station and the town centre, this area could become attractive for residential led development and could open up a possible site for a new high end hotel operator with conference facilities. New pedestrian links through to the park could then potentially be introduced to the south of the existing police station and to the south of Horsham Community Hospital, to link this area with the park and routes to the town centre. Any development in this area must be of high quality design and should look to innovative sustainable design solutions such as a Combined Heat and Power (CHP) district heating system.
- 6.13 On the eastern side of Hurst Road, the opportunity exists to enhance the Nightingale Road area by either refurbishment or redevelopment of the site for a mix of uses. Small amounts of employment land could be released to enable an extension to the existing residential areas of Hurst Avenue, Hurst Court and Gladstone Road, and there could be the opportunity to create an attractive Home Zone in Hurst Avenue, which could incorporate a shared surface space for residents to enjoy, as well as the possible introduction of a new allotment.
- 6.14 It would be positive to retain the majority of this area in employment use, in the short term, but to consider a comprehensive scheme in the longer term which might include the release of further land to enable an extension to Hurst Court and the creation of a community space for the consolidated community. It could also allow for significant improvements to and the extension and connection of Nightingale

Road to Hurst Court and improvement to the existing green strip so that there is a clear separation between the residential area and the industrial estate. Separation of employment traffic and the residential part of Nightingale Road would be beneficial for this area and this could be achieved through realignment of North Street and the delivery of a new bridge over the railway line, alongside a new access roundabout connecting directly to North Street. An example of the opportunities for the Hurst Road and Nightingale Road area are shown in Figure 5.

6.15 The route along North Street, located at the eastern end of Hurst Road, to the town centre, is considered to have commercial potential, as it is a key gateway with excellent transport links. Therefore, proposals which seek to introduce appropriate commercial and leisure uses to this area will be considered favourably by the Council.

Figure 5: Hurst Road and Nightingale Road area opportunities



S4 - Bishopric

Creation of a high quality western extension to Horsham town, which seeks to refresh the town centres retail offer, through redevelopment of the Bishopric area will be supported, as long as appropriate connections are made.

1. Comprehensive development will be considered in this area to enable provision of flexible retail units and provision for a high quality anchor store, to build on the town centres current retail offer and create a key location for the western side of town.

2. Proposals which seek to strengthen the existing pedestrian routes west of the town centre by providing appropriate connections, routes and sightlines from the town centre to this area but also through to the wider area will be considered favourably.

3. Parking linked to comprehensive development will be considered in this area if it can be demonstrated that it meets the wider vision for the town centre.

Relevant policies: PPS4, CP10, CP11, CP17, CP19, DC9, DC12, DC19, DC20, DC34, DC40

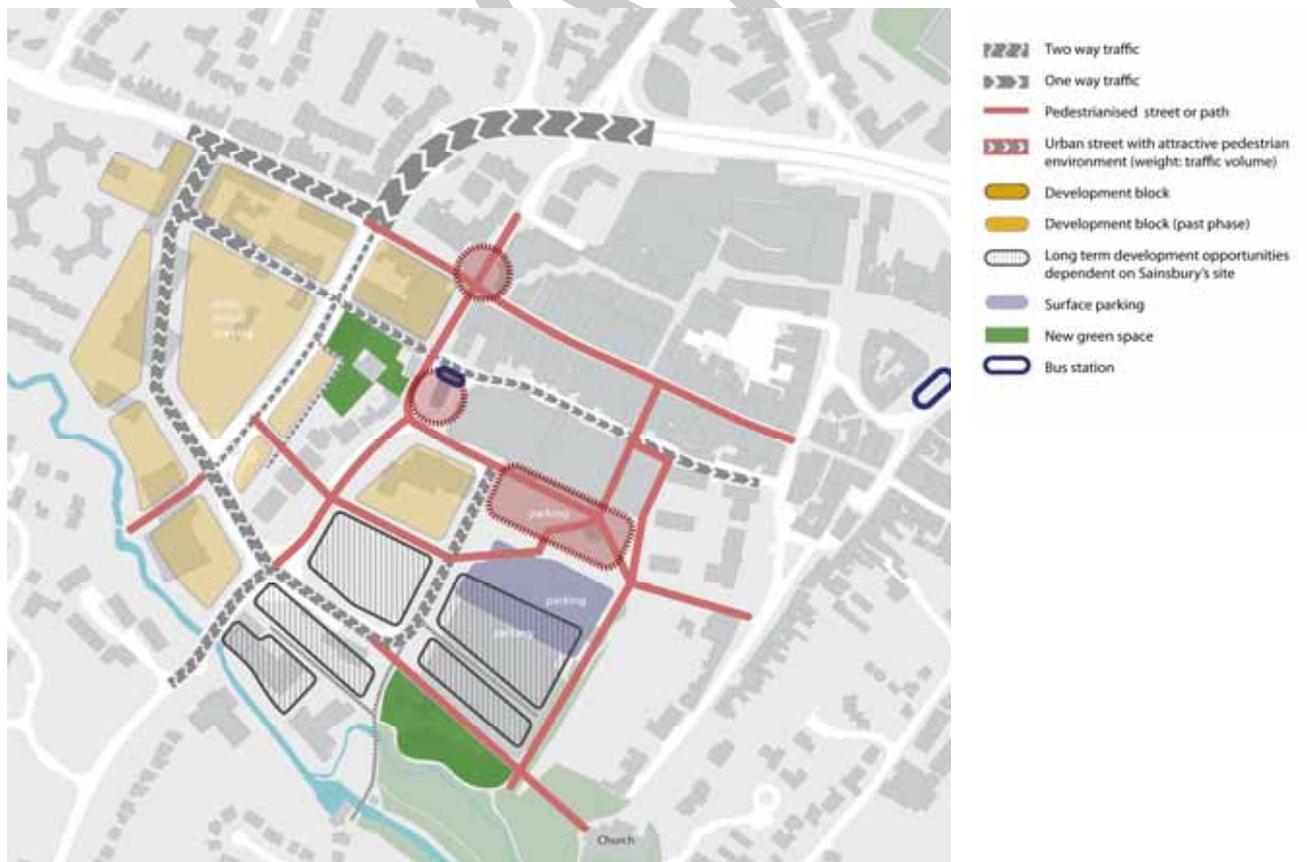
6.16 The Bishopric area consists of various sites south of the Bishopric and to the immediate east and west of Albion Way. It is located outside the town centre retail core; the majority of the area is separated by Albion Way and contributes negatively to this southern gateway to the town. The Bishops Weald site, located to the east of Albion Way, is a poorly designed building which consists, currently, of 25,000 square feet of vacant office space and occupies a key sight line at the western end of West Street. There are many barriers to movement in this area including the roundabout of Albion Way and Worthing Road, which restricts east to west movement; the bus station, which restricts movement southwards from West Street to the Forum; and the junction

of Albion Way, the Bishopric and West Street, which forms a major barrier to pedestrian movement.

- 6.17 The Council therefore considers the Bishopric area to offer an ideal opportunity for comprehensive redevelopment to address these issues and create a high quality western extension to the town centre, along with enhancing the quality of the connections across Albion Way and out to the wider area. In addition, it might be considered appropriate to introduce further uses in this area such as residential to create further mixed use town centre living but also the introduction of small district heating systems to contribute to a reduction in the Districts carbon emissions.
- 6.18 The creation of a new vehicular route or the major redesign of Albion Way in this area will be encouraged to make the environment more inviting to cycles, buses and pedestrians. A new vehicular route would enable the reduction of traffic on the old section of Albion Way and allow for better connections between this area and the town centre, in particular across Albion Way to West Street. Development sites to the east of Albion Way could then enable further connections south from West Street past the bus station to the forum, which could help reduce traffic on Worthing Road; west with the creation of a new public green space; and the possibility of downgrading of the roundabout to a cross road. As well as new connections, the restoration of historic routes will be encouraged and all development must respect the areas historic development pattern and character of the conservation area. There is also the potential for a new car park to the east of Albion Way which may be required in relation to the expansion of retail floorspace. However, this should only be considered if it meets the wider vision for the town centre and does not adversely impact on parking provision within the town.
- 6.19 The Council will support the redevelopment of the south side of the Bishopric as a high quality retail extension to the town. This could be in

the form of either a number of larger retail units or a single anchor store, with development contributing to the improvement of access in this area such as to the river path to the south where there could be the creation of an active frontage creating an attractive, tree-lined street that people would enjoy visiting. Another possible opportunity in this area would be the redevelopment of the library site to create a more mixed use area and enhance the existing public space with the aim of attracting pedestrians to this area. Prioritising pedestrian movement through simplifying junctions and routes in this area will be beneficial, as it would help to reinforce a pedestrian friendly environment. In the longer term, possible redevelopment of the Sainsbury's store could open up the opportunity of comprehensive development to incorporate a mix of uses with a strong anchor store. An example of the possible opportunities for this area is shown in Figure 6.

Figure 6: Bishopric opportunities



7. Conclusion and Next Steps

7.1 This Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) has been produced following the production of the Town Framework Report, February 2011 that looked into the future prosperity of Horsham in relation to economic uses, leisure uses and connectivity across strategically significant areas of the town. The SPD is intended to draw out important principles from this study in relation to land use and provide guidance for future development proposals in order to deliver the vision for the town centre.

Next Steps

7.2 The draft SPD will be subject to a six week public and stakeholder consultation, the results of which will be incorporated into the final version accordingly and a table of responses will be published alongside the final document. The anticipated timetable of production for this draft SPD is as follows:

Production Timetable	
Early Winter 2011	Six week public consultation on the draft SPD
Late Winter 2011 / 2012	Consideration by Officers and Members of the responses received and subsequent changes to the document
Spring 2012	Council to consider and approve SPD for adoption

7.3 For any queries on this document, please contact a member of the Strategic Planning Team on 01403 215398, email: strategic.planning@horsham.gov.uk.

Strategic Planning Advisory Group 26th July 2011

Agenda Item 4, Appendix 2

Proposed Structure of the Sustainability Appraisal of the Horsham Town Plan Supplementary Planning Document

1 Introduction

This section will provide a brief introduction to the subject of Sustainability Appraisals and its requirements.

2 Sustainability Appraisal Process

This section will set out the different stages involved in the Sustainability Appraisal process.

3 The Planning for the Horsham Town SPD

This section will provide a brief summary of the aims and objectives of the Horsham Town Plan SPD in order to provide some context to the Sustainability Appraisal process.

4 Screening and Scoping of the Sustainability Appraisal

This section will identify why a Sustainability Appraisal is required. It will then go on to identify the key documents and baseline data in relation to the Horsham Town SPD. Key sustainability issues for the Horsham Town Plan SPD are then identified on the basis of these findings.

5 Identification and Assessment of Sustainability Impacts

This section will set out alternatives to the Horsham Town Plan SPD and assess the impacts of the Horsham Town Plan SPD against a range of sustainability issues.

6 Results and Key Recommendations

This section will discuss and interpret the results of the assessment process, and make recommendations as to how the Horsham Town Plan SPD could be amended to ensure that it is as sustainable as possible.

7 Next Steps

This section outlines how comments can be made to the Council on the Sustainability Appraisal documentation, and how these will feed in to the next stages of the production of the Horsham Town Plan SPD.

Strategic Planning Advisory Group

26th July 2011

Agenda Item 5:

Office Reuse in Horsham Town Draft Supplementary Planning Document Update

Relaxation of planning rules for change of use from commercial to residential consultation – Communities and Local Government

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This report provides a summary of the progress of the 'Office Reuse in Horsham Town' draft Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and an update on the consultation undertaken by Communities and Local Government (CLG) 'Relaxation of planning rules for change of use from commercial to residential consultation'.

2 Office Reuse in Horsham Town

- 2.1 In August and September 2010 work began on a draft SPD exploring the relationship between employment and housing within Horsham Town, focusing on empty and unused office space. This built upon work previously completed as part of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), which requires the Council to consider all potential sources of land for housing. As part of the SHLAA process, the conversion or redevelopment of redundant office buildings was considered a potential source of housing in the future. To explore this further a series of studies were undertaken to gain an understanding of the office market within Horsham Town and the surrounding area and to establish the contribution this source could potentially make to the housing supply. First an 'Office Market Demand Assessment' (March 2009) was completed to increase understanding of

market conditions and the existing stock, which was then balanced against the demand for office space. Whilst this initial study provided a clear understanding of the market, it did identify that, due to the rapidly changing nature of the office market, it was not possible to identify specific sites. Therefore it was not possible to accurately predict a figure that might be provided by this source to incorporate into the SHLAA process. Due to this the follow up study, 'Horsham Office Conversion Capacity Study' (June 2009), was designed to approach this issue with a criteria based assessment rather than by identifying individual sites. This method takes account of the rapidly changing market conditions and still allows a pro-active policy-led approach to managing the office market within the wider context of the town centre.

2.2 Utilising these previous studies, the 'Office Reuse in Horsham Town' draft SPD sought to identify a series of criteria that would facilitate the reuse, through conversion or redevelopment, of redundant office space within Horsham Town to residential or mixed use schemes. The draft SPD was designed to meet two key aims and benefits:

- Support the local economy through the removal of redundant and under-used office provision thereby resulting in increased quality and suitability of office stock within Horsham Town.
- Facilitate the conversion or redevelopment of suitable buildings and sites to residential or mixed use, therefore contributing to the housing requirements of the District and improving the aesthetics and vibrancy of the Town.

2.3 In considering the various approaches to rebalancing the office market and contributing to the housing supply position, there is a risk of over responding to short term pressures to the detriment of long term stability. The criteria based approach seeks to balance the predicted requirement for employment and residential space over the long as well as the short-term. This approach provides a flexible mechanism for addressing windfall sites within Horsham Town, whilst giving increased certainty to applications that support appropriate development.

- 2.4 The draft SPD was under early preparation when the Government announced it would be consulting on relaxation of use classes. Therefore, the draft SPD has been postponed pending the outcome of the consultation by CLG.

3 Relaxation of planning rules for change of use from commercial to residential consultation – Communities and Local Government

- 3.1 Communities and Local Government (CLG) published the 'Relaxation of planning rules for change of use from commercial to residential' for consultation between 8th April 2011 and 30 June 2011. The consultation sought views on the proposals to grant permitted development rights to changes of use from commercial to residential. Effectively allowing change of use from commercial (B use classes) to residential (C3 use class) without the need for planning applications.

- 3.2 The overarching aims of the consultation document are similar to the draft SPD; encouraging economic growth by bring redundant commercial premises back into use and at the same time helping to tackle the need for more housing. Whilst these ambitions are similar, within the Council's response concern was raised to ensure sufficient safeguards are incorporated to make sure key employment areas are protected. The primary issue is the ability to preserve key areas of employment, whilst targeting areas and sites suitable for change of use to residential or mixed use.

4 Conclusion and Next Steps

- 4.1 The 'Office Reuse in Horsham Town' draft SPD is currently on hold as the CLG consultation supersedes the aims of the SPD. Current work is focused on monitoring the national position and awaiting the formal outcome of the consultation process. Once the outcome is known, the position regarding the draft SPD can be reviewed and, if still proceeding, amended if required.

Strategic Planning Advisory Group 26th July 2011

Agenda Item 6

Draft Green Infrastructure Strategy: Visioning Document

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Green Infrastructure is a term which is used to describe the living network of green spaces, water and other environmental features, and the wide range of benefits it confers in both urban and rural areas. Examples of Green Infrastructure include trees, parks, gardens, road verges, allotments, cemeteries, woodlands, rivers, together with services such as flood protection, carbon storage and water purification. Green Infrastructure also maintains critical ecological links between towns and the surrounding countryside.

1.2 In order to meet a number of its functions, this Council is looking to produce a Green Infrastructure Strategy for the District. This process will map, plan and identify a coherent network of green spaces across the District and identify mechanisms to ensure its delivery. This will assist the Council across many of its functions, including leisure services, informing the production of an Open Space Strategy, and also forming part of the evidence base and informing the review of the Horsham District Council Core Strategy. The Draft Green Infrastructure Visioning Report is appended to this Agenda as Appendix 1.

2.0 Policy Background

2.1 The importance of green infrastructure is recognised at a national level. PPS9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation highlights the importance of retaining a network of habitats and green spaces in rural and urban areas, and examples of Green Infrastructure Strategies are provided in the Good Practice Guide published alongside PPS9.

2.2 The current Government is also supportive of Green Infrastructure, and the issue is covered in the recent White Paper 'The Natural Choice – Securing the Value of Nature'. In this document, the Government highlights the importance of Green Infrastructure and indicates that it will provide support to Local Authorities and their partners in planning and developing green Infrastructure.

3.0 Details

- 3.1 Preliminary work on the Green Infrastructure strategy began in late 2010. Research was undertaken into current best practice, and preliminary mapping work was also undertaken, for example collating data on the location of flood plains, protected habitats, ancient woodland, allotments, play spaces and key rights of way within the district.
- 3.2 Initial results from the research and data collection process were considered and used to develop the draft Green Infrastructure Strategy Visioning Document. The draft report is divided into a number of different sections. The first part of the document defines Green Infrastructure, before moving on to discuss the range of economic, social and environmental benefits that it confers. The next section of the Visioning Report then identifies how the Green Infrastructure Strategy will help to meet the objectives of the District Plan, and other Council plans and strategies including the Local Development Framework.
- 3.3 The second section of the draft Visioning Document introduces the proposed vision for the Green Infrastructure Strategy, as follows:

Draft Vision for the Horsham District Council Green Infrastructure Strategy

A network of high quality multifunctional greenspaces and waterways that are protected and managed in partnership, and delivering environmental, social and economic benefits for businesses, communities and the environment of the District.

The document then moves on to set out the results of the preliminary Green Infrastructure mapping exercise. Due to the amount of data that was collected, the District was divided into three sections. The results are discussed under three sections with strengths and weaknesses in Green Infrastructure being identified for the northern, central and southern thirds. After the identification of existing strengths and weaknesses in Green Infrastructure, a number of opportunities to preserve and enhance Green Infrastructure across the District are identified.

- 3.4 Existing strengths in green infrastructure that have already been identified in Horsham District include the network in ancient woodlands (particularly in the north of the District), strategic rights of way such as the Down's Link, urban green spaces such as Horsham Park, Southwater Country Park, and protected landscapes such as the South Downs National Park and the High Weald AONB. The data does however reveal that some weaknesses also exist, and some communities in the District, for example those in Billingshurst or Ashington may have more difficulty in accessing green spaces than some other settlements in the District.
- 3.5 It is recognised that for the Green Infrastructure Strategy to be successful it needs to be produced in collaboration with a wide range of partners, both internal and external. The document has already been circulated to a number of officers within the Council, including the Leisure Team and Landscape Architect, which incorporates their views. If other comments on the document are received prior to the SPAG meeting on 26th July, these will be reported orally.
- 3.6 It is also considered that it would be beneficial to seek the views of a number of external stakeholders. If this is agreed, it is suggested that consultees should include members of the West Sussex Green Infrastructure Partnership, which covers a number of other local authorities, the Sussex Wildlife Trust, South Downs National Park as well as countryside user groups such as Sustrans and the British Horse Society.

4.0 Conclusion and Recommendation

- 4.1 This report is intended to enable Members to comment on the content of the draft visioning document and recommend to the Cabinet Member that it is circulated to key stakeholders for their views and contributions to the strategy.

5.0 Next Steps

- 5.1 Subject to the discussions at this meeting and agreement for the circulation of this draft Visioning Document; it is intended to consult key stakeholders during August and September 2011. Comments received during this process will be used to update the existing green infrastructure evidence base, and identify any key weaknesses and opportunity areas where green

infrastructure can be enhanced. It is anticipated that this work will take place over the autumn, in collaboration with a range of Council Officers and Members as well as a number of key Stakeholders. It is anticipated that a Green Infrastructure Geographical Information System (GIS) tool and Draft Final Green Infrastructure Report be completed by the end of 2011.

Strategic Planning Advisory Group 26th July 2011

Agenda Item 6, Appendix 1

Green Infrastructure Strategy

Visioning Document



**Horsham
District
Council**

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 In order to fulfil its functions, Horsham District Council is looking to produce a Green Infrastructure Strategy for the District. This process will map, plan and identify a strategic network of green space across the District and identify mechanisms to ensure its delivery. This will assist the Council across many of its functions, including Leisure, informing the production of an Open Space Strategy, and also forming part of the evidence base and informing the review of the Horsham District Council Core Strategy.
- 1.2 In order to develop a Green Infrastructure Strategy it is considered that an essential starting point is to identify strategic priorities and opportunities and encourage the involvement of key partners. This document has been produced for exactly this purpose as it sets out a potential overarching vision and approach for the production of a Green Infrastructure (GI) Strategy for discussion. It also identifies, at a high level, potential areas of green space deficiency and highlights opportunities for enhancement for initial consultation.
- 1.3 Following consultation, work will begin on the final GI Strategy which will identify existing green infrastructure in the Horsham District and consider in detail the enhancements and improvements that could be made. The document will also identify how these improvements could be delivered through Local Partnerships, other Council plans and strategies, together with the planning system and provide recommendations on how the strategy could be taken forward for example through the identification of Nature Improvement Areas (NIA's) and other priority areas for action. Finally the GI Strategy will provide detail on costs, including how funding will be secured for it the creation and long term management of improvement areas.
- 1.4 This Visioning Document sets out the Council's proposed approach to producing a Green Infrastructure Strategy and provides a broad strategic overview of the District's existing situation in relation to the provision and accessibility of green space. The document identifies broad action areas and areas of enhancement and opportunity for existing green infrastructure to inspire initial consultation, debate and discussion.
- 1.5 As Green Infrastructure networks often span local authority boundaries, this document has been prepared following discussions with neighbouring West Sussex authorities and local stakeholder groups.

Defining Green Infrastructure

- 1.6 It is important from the outset that this document clearly defines the term 'green infrastructure' as the definition will be at the core of all work produced throughout the process of developing a strategy for the whole of the Horsham district. A range of bodies and organisations have established definitions for the term and although all agree on the fundamental principles some do vary slightly from one another.
- 1.7 For the purposes of this District's strategy it is considered appropriate to use the nationally recognised definition set out by the Governments in its White Paper *The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature (2011)* was considered the most fitting. This states:

“Green Infrastructure is a term used to refer to the living network of green spaces, water and other environmental features in both urban and rural areas. It is often used in an urban context to cover benefits provided by trees, parks, gardens, road verges, allotments, cemeteries, woodlands, rivers and wetlands.

Green Infrastructure is also relevant in a rural context, where it might refer to the use of farmland, woodland, wetlands or other natural features to provide services such as flood protection, carbon storage or water purification. Green Infrastructure maintains critical ecological links between town and country.”

1.8 In 2009 Natural England published a Green Infrastructure Guidance document to aid primarily Natural England Officers but also Local Authorities in understanding the concept of green infrastructure planning. In this document the organisation defines Green Infrastructure as:

“Green Infrastructure is a strategically planned and delivered network comprising the broadest range of high quality green spaces and other environmental features. It should be designed and managed as a multifunctional resource capable of delivering those ecological services and quality of life benefits required by the communities it serves and needed to underpin sustainability. Its design and management should also respect and enhance the character and distinctiveness of an area with regard to habitats and landscape types.”

1.9 Green Infrastructure includes established green spaces and new sites. It should thread through and surround the built environment, and connect the urban area to its wider rural hinterland. Consequently it needs to be delivered at all spatial scales from sub-regional to local neighbourhood levels, accommodating both accessible natural green spaces within local communities and often much larger sites in the urban fringe and wider countryside.”

1.10 There are a wide range of typologies which together contribute to Green Infrastructure in its entirety. Those features which can be found within the Horsham District are listed below:

Table 1: Green Infrastructure Typologies

Parks and Gardens	Urban parks, country parks, formal gardens
Amenity Greenspace	Informal recreation spaces, greenspaces in and around housing, outdoor sports facilities, domestic gardens, village greens
Natural and Semi-Natural Urban Greenspaces	Woodland, urban forestry and scrub, grasslands e.g. downland, commons and meadow, hedgerows, heathland, wetlands, open and running water, natural features for carbon storage or water purification, wastelands and disturbed ground, bare rock habitats e.g. cliffs and quarries, protected habitats such as SSSI and BAP areas

Green and Blue Corridors	Rivers and canals including their banks, road verges and rail corridors, cycle routes, pedestrian paths, bridleways, public rights of way
Other	Allotments, community gardens, farmland, cemeteries & churchyards, accessible countryside to urban fringe areas, provision for children and teenagers e.g. skateboard parks, ponds, trees in urban areas and green roofs and walls

2. Benefits of a Green Infrastructure Strategy

- 2.1 Green Infrastructure planning can provide a variety of functions that benefit not only the community and the environment but also the economy. The benefits for each area are discussed in more detail below. Most importantly however, it should be recognised that a strategy for green infrastructure can pull all these functions together into a logical plan of action that addresses deficiencies and promotes opportunities.

Economy

- 2.2 It has now widely recognised that the provision of green infrastructure can have a significant benefit on the economic prosperity of an area. The provision of green open spaces can contribute directly to economic growth by having a positive impact on land and property markets, and revenues raised from leisure facilities. This in turn creates a setting for investment and acts as a catalyst for wider growth. Research has also shown that businesses opt to locate in greener settings as it helps to attract and retain staff. People also prefer to live in attractive 'leafy' areas and this has been shown to increase property values.
- 2.3 Well connected greener environments tend to attract skilled and mobile workers which will again benefit the local economy. A substantial provision of green infrastructure will also support jobs in tourism, the green economy (e.g. land management) and agriculture.

Community

- 2.4 Socially, green infrastructure can improve quality of life by providing safe, easily accessible green spaces which can be used by all age groups to encourage healthier lifestyles. When integrated with a good public transport system, a well connected green infrastructure network can also encourage people to walk rather than using their car, which in turn has related benefits in terms of climate change. Green Infrastructure can also act as a resource for more formal education on the natural environment which encourages people to live within their environmental limits.
- 2.5 It has been shown that attractive green open spaces can have a positive impact on health and well being as they provide mental stimulation and a place to relax. Creating space for local food production, for example through the provision of allotments and community gardens can also improve health by increasing access to healthy foods, the exercise they provide, and reconnecting communities with their local environment.
- 2.6 Green infrastructure can also reduce the risk of health problems such as asthma by reducing air pollution. The provision of open spaces allows pollutants to be diluted or by vegetation trapping particulate matter.
- 2.7 Green Infrastructure can also play a key role in place-shaping. A well designed public amenity space, for example a local pond, can help preserve the cultural heritage of an area or create a sense of place which the local population identify with, thereby fostering a sense of community and belonging. Green infrastructure can also serve as a landscape buffer from development making living spaces more attractive and

providing access to nature. Attractive living spaces also tend to be associated with lower levels of fear and crime and anti-social behaviour.

Environment

- 2.8 The direct environmental benefits of providing Green Infrastructure are well documented and include the provision of new wildlife habits and connections between existing areas of environmental importance which enables species movement between different sites and areas.
- 2.9 The provision of green infrastructure can also have other more indirect environmental benefits such as the provision of surface water attenuation. Green open spaces reduce the rate at which rainfall reaches rivers, thereby reducing the risk of flooding. This benefit can be incorporated into a Green Infrastructure through the provision of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS). These design features will not only act as flood storage areas to attenuate surface water run-off, but will also enhance biodiversity and in some cases provide areas for recreation. The location of SuDS features along highways can also act as a filter to rainwater thereby reducing the risk of groundwater contamination. Restored mineral and waste sites are an areas which can have considerable Green Infrastructure functions.
- 2.10 Increasing the provision of green infrastructure throughout the District will pose a multitude of benefits in terms of climate change adaption and mitigation. Firstly, increased canopy cover will reduce the urban heat island effect by providing shading and evapo-transpiration. It is also likely to improve air quality which often deteriorates as a result of higher temperatures. As mentioned above the connectivity of green spaces is also of growing importance when ensuring species can migrate readily between habitats in the face of a changing climate.
- 2.11 With respect to mitigation, trees and landforms can reduce energy use for heating and cooling by providing shading in the summer and shelter in the winter. Renewable energy systems such as ground source heat pumps and biomass production can also contribute to Green Infrastructure.

Connectivity

- 2.12 Green Infrastructure is also able to provide connections within the landscape and link people with their local environment. Green Infrastructure provides an opportunity to protect existing corridors as well as new areas being enhanced. It also provides an opportunity for enhancement for non-motorised access between settlements (e.g. recreational routes including cycle paths and pedestrian routes). As has already been indicated this has the additional benefit of reducing congestion and vehicular emissions.

3. Green Infrastructure in Horsham District

- 3.1 A Green Infrastructure Strategy has the potential to assist the Council in achieving a number of its key aims and objectives. This section sets out how the Green Infrastructure Strategy will contribute to other key policies and strategies already produced by Horsham District Council.

Green Infrastructure and the District Plan

- 3.2 In February 2011, Horsham District Council published its District Plan for the period until 2015. This document sets out a number of priorities for the District. It is considered the Green Infrastructure Strategy will contribute to the District Plan in the following areas:
- *Economic Development* - by ensuring a good Green Infrastructure network, inward investment and staff retention in the area can be retained, assisting local businesses and increasing employment.
 - *Arts, Heritage and Leisure* – Green Infrastructure can help to ensure the continued excellent range and quality of leisure services within the District
 - *Living Working Communities* – Green Infrastructure provision will help provide high quality and accessible living environments which meet the needs of all sections of the community
 - *Environment* – As has already been indicated Green Infrastructure has a number of environmental benefits from nature conservation to reduced flood risk and improved adaptation to climate change
 - *Safer and Healthier* – Green Infrastructure also helps to promote healthy lifestyles by reduced air pollution and through provision of leisure facilities, walking and cycling opportunities as well as the general wellbeing that is generated from living in a high quality environment.

Green Infrastructure and other Council Plans and Strategies

Sustainable Community Strategy

- 3.3 In addition to the District Plan, the basis for the Green Infrastructure Strategy work is embedded in the objectives of the District's Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS). It spans across a number of the Community Strategy's main goals and particularly builds on the objectives to protect and improve the natural and built environments and biodiversity as well as the promotion of better health and well being for all. The specific SCS objectives that a Green Infrastructure Strategy would help to meet are set out in the table below under the relevant goals:

Table 2: Relevant SCS Objectives

Goal 1: A Better Place to Live	Goal 2: Opportunity for All	Goal 3: Better Health for All
Exploit the potential of the planned new Community Infrastructure Levy to support the needs of the local community	Support the West Sussex County Council Rights of Way Improvement Plan	Provide and sustain accessible opportunities that enable all people to follow active and healthy lifestyles
Improve access to health and social/leisure facilities for individuals without private transport	Exploit the tourist opportunities of the new South Downs National Park	Provision of community based opportunities to improve physical and mental wellbeing
Increase facilities for	Seek an additional visitor	

walking and cycling	attraction for the District	
Mitigation and adaptation to climate change	Support local producers – food drink and crafts	

The Core Strategy Review

- 3.4 At a planning and land use level a Green Infrastructure Strategy can help to identify assets and linkages that need strategic protection or enhancement through the Local Development Framework. It is also a useful tool to underpin key decisions on potential locations of strategic development and as a basis for identifying opportunities for green space and linkage improvements that not only will improve the local area but will also positively affect the wider District and benefit the environment. It can also for example provide a basis for projects to be brought forward as part of development contributions.

Green Space Strategy

- 3.5 The Green Infrastructure Strategy will also provide a framework for more detailed plans and strategies developed by the Council. This includes the Green Space Strategy which is in the early stages of development by the Council's Leisure team. The Green Infrastructure Strategy may also provide a basis on which projects being run and managed by other organisations such as the Sussex Wildlife Trust, the South Downs National Park and the Environment Agency can be identified.
- 3.5 As the previous paragraphs have indicated, the Green Infrastructure Strategy will be cross cutting in nature. In order for the strategy to be effective, it is therefore critical that a number of key partners collaborate to produce the strategy. This includes other officers and departments within Horsham District Council, including Strategic Planning team, Leisure team and Landscape Architect. It is also anticipated that external organisations will also be key participants and include organisations such as the Sussex Wildlife Trust, the Environment Agency and West Sussex County Council as well as more locally based organisations such as Parish Councils. A key aim of this document is to help initiate the process of partnership work and spark interest amongst key stakeholders in achieving a strategy that will produce genuine opportunities to enhance the provision and connectivity of green space for the benefit of the wider public.

4. Draft Vision and Opportunity Area Maps

- 4.1 Any Green Infrastructure Strategy that is progressed by Horsham District Council will need to fit in with the Green Infrastructure frameworks and strategies produced by neighbouring authorities. Work is currently underway to develop a joint vision that all organisations within the West Sussex area can work towards. As the county wide vision has not yet been finalised, a draft vision and key principles that the HDC Green Infrastructure Strategy should work towards are set out below;

Draft Vision for the Horsham District Council Green Infrastructure Strategy

A network of high quality multifunctional greenspaces and waterways that are protected and managed in partnership, and delivering environmental, social and economic benefits for businesses, communities and the environment of the District.

Work to Date

- 4.2 Preliminary scoping work into the District's green infrastructure has already been undertaken. This includes a review of existing studies and includes the following:

- A review of biodiversity information for the District. Horsham District supports a wide variety of plant and animal life. Habitats found within the District include arable, woodlands, Ancient Woodland (approximately 3,000 hectares) hedgerows, a wide variety of grasslands, heathland and aquatic environments including rivers, ponds and floodplain grasslands. The urban environment also provides a home to a wide variety of wildlife and green spaces.

Approximately 8% of the land area of the District is designated for its importance in nature conservation terms. The Arun Valley Special Protection Area (SPA) comprises 1% of the District's area and are a 23 national Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), There are also 74 locally important Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCl) and 22 Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGS) as designated by WSCC.

A recent assessment of the condition of all SSSI's found that 45% were in a favourable condition. Although this means that 55% are in an unfavourable condition, only 7% were found to be declining. In addition, monitoring for National Indicator 197 – Improve Local Biodiversity, found that the total percentage of locally designated sites i.e. SNCl & RIGS, deemed to be in positive conservation management was 49%.

- Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGSt) – Natural England has for many years been working towards ensuring that the natural environment is accessible to all. The ANGSt standards were developed as a means of helping to bring this about. ANGSt recommends that everyone, wherever they live should have accessible natural greenspace:
 - a) of at least 2 hectares (ha) in size no more than 300 metres (5 minute walk) from home;
 - b) at least one accessible 20 hectare site within two kilometres of home;
 - c) one accessible 100 hectare site within five kilometres of home; and
 - d) one accessible 500 hectare site within ten kilometres of home; plus

- e) a minimum of one hectare of statutory Local Nature Reserves per thousand population.

The three underlying principles of the ANGSt are to

- a) Improve access to green spaces
- b) Improve the naturalness of green spaces
- c) Improve connectivity with green spaces

The ANGSt standards will therefore provide the Council with a useful tool in developing a Green Infrastructure Strategy (e.g. in identifying areas where there are currently deficiencies in accessing green space). The standard will however need to be used in conjunction with other data in order for the Green Infrastructure Strategy to be most effective.

- The Horsham District Council PPG17 Assessment. This 2005 study sought to identify the level of provision of open spaces, sport and recreation facilities in the District. This PPG17 assessment identifies that there is a total of approximately 411ha of accessible natural greenspace (open, natural spaces that are close and easily accessible from home) in the District and over 29ha of amenity greenspace (green space that has been planned for and specifically designed into the urban or rural scene). Furthermore the assessment indicates that this equates to about 32.5sqm of accessible natural greenspace per person in the District and around 2.3sqm per person of amenity greenspace. This is well above Natural England's Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGSt). However, these figures do not show how the space is distributed across the District, or how levels compare with other Districts and Boroughs adjoining Horsham. The high levels of natural greenspace may therefore not be equally accessible to all. It should be noted that the PPG17 assessment will be revisited as part of the Core Strategy Review.
- The District Infrastructure Study (May 2010). This study undertook preliminary work to identifying existing and required provision of green infrastructure in the District using a combination of the Fields in Trust's 'Planning and Design for Outdoor Sport and Play' (formerly the 'six acre standard'), the Council's PPG17 Assessment and Natural England's Accessible Natural Green Space Standards (ANGSt). The study sought to show distribution of assets and identify preliminary priority areas for green infrastructure enhancements. It is envisaged that the work will be used to inform the strategy as well as this visioning document.

Green Infrastructure Characterisation Mapping Exercise

- 4.3 In addition to the studies above, a preliminary mapping exercise has been undertaken by the Strategic Planning team to start to bring together the range of data that contributes to the Green Infrastructure network in the District. This exercise will provide a visual account of the quantity and distribution of green infrastructure within the district, operating on a range of scales.
- 4.4 A wide range of data has been collected, including the location of internationally and nationally sites of importance for biodiversity, together with sites of more local importance including biodiversity opportunity areas. Other data collected includes landscape designations, the location of river corridors and strategic recreation routes, the location of countryside and public Rights of Way (PROW) and the location of community facilities such as allotments and leisure sites. This information will continue to be expanded upon as data becomes available, through as discussions with the West Sussex Green Infrastructure group and key stakeholder consultation.

By collating this information in a visual format, it has been possible to begin to identify areas of strength and weakness in the GI network and the early consideration of locations which could be prioritised for improvement through the final GI Strategy.

- 4.5 The final maps will include a number of layers which demonstrate networks of connectivity not only for local communities, but also for species and habitats. These various mapping layers will be interrogated to ensure the best possible solutions are brought forward through development and other projects.
- 4.6 The results of the Mapping Exercise are illustrated in Figure X but a descriptive account of the overarching green infrastructure in the District is set out below. This commentary is intended to provide a **starting point** for consultation and discussion before it is expanded through a more detailed analysis in the main strategy. The overview has been arranged to show the existing strengths and weaknesses, followed by potential opportunity areas for enhancement.

North of District

- 4.7 This area covers the northern 1/3 of the District and includes the settlements of Horsham, Broadbridge Heath, Slinfold, Rudgwick, Rusper and Mannings Heath.

Existing Strengths

- 4.8 The northern area of Horsham District has a particularly strong provision of green infrastructure. The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) adjoins the built up area boundary of Horsham and is also in close proximity to a number of other villages (e.g. Mannings Heath). Horsham town also has a number of other Green Infrastructure features including Chesworth Farm, Rookwood Golf course and Warnham Nature Reserve. Within the wider area there are also a number of routes and leisure sites that are of strategic importance to the District. The key features include:

- High Weald AONB
- High Weald Landscape trail linking to the centre of Horsham town into the AONB
- Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOA's) adjoining east and south and just north of Horsham town
- Good existing links from Horsham town to rural outskirts and recreational areas such as Chesworth Farm and St Leonards Forest
- Sussex Border Path runs across northern border of the District
- A number of SSSIs and SNCI's across the north of the District
- The Down's Link passes through Slinfold and Rudgwick, linking the settlements to Guildford and the south coast.
- Horsham Park is an important green lung within the main town in the District
- The river Arun is an important resource for flood attenuation, biodiversity and recreation.
- The north of the District has large areas of Ancient Woodland

Weaknesses

- 4.9 This is the most densely populated and developed area in the District and pressure for further development over green infrastructure here is much stronger than in any other area of the District.

Mid District

- 4.10 This area covers the middle 1/3 of the District and includes the settlements of Billingshurst, Southwater, Cowfold and Partridge Green.

Existing Strengths

- 4.11 The central area of the District has strong green infrastructure provision in the east due to the presence of the High Weald AONB, however it is lacking in provision elsewhere. Southwater also has reasonable Green Infrastructure provision with a County park (also an SNCI) and the Downs link. Key features to note are:

- The High Weald AONB boundary, located close to the north east of Cowfold;
- The Arun and Adur River valleys in the west and east respectively. These areas are important for flood attenuation, biodiversity including the Upper Arun SSSI, and recreation;
- A number of Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOA) including the Knepp Castle estate to the south of Southwater;
- The Down's Link which passes through Partridge Green and Southwater linking the settlements to Guildford and the South coast;
- Wey South Path and the Wey and Arun Canal located on the western boundary of the District and provides an important recreational resource offering canal trips and walking opportunities. The canal is also of importance from a biodiversity perspective.
- Southwater Country Park

Weaknesses

- 4.12 Maps identify a gap in green infrastructure provision in the triangular area between Pulborough, Ashington and Billingshurst. The ability of the residents of Partridge Green and Cowfold to easily access the wider countryside may also be limited

South of District

- 4.13 This area covers the southern 1/3 of the District and includes the settlements of Pulborough, West Chiltington, Storrington & Sullington, Ashington, Henfield, Steyning, Bramber & Upper Beeding.

Existing Strengths

- 4.14 The southernmost part of the District generally already has a good green infrastructure network. Most residents have good access to Green Infrastructure, particularly in the South Downs. Many settlements also have a range of parks, leisure centres and allotments. This area's key features include:

- South Downs National Park – this nationally important landscape contains a number of key components of green infrastructure. It is primarily used for agriculture, but also is of importance for biodiversity (including a number of SSSIs and SNCIs) and recreation, including the South Downs way and Monarch Way;
- Arun and Adur river valleys – important for flood attenuation, biodiversity and also for recreation. They also provide a GI link beyond the District towards the coast;
- Amberley Wildbrooks and Pulborough Brooks – part of the Arun valley these floodplains are sites of international importance for biodiversity. Pulborough Brooks is owned by the RSPB and has a visitor centre;

- Beeding and Bramber Brooks. Locally important floodplains with importance for biodiversity. There is also some access for informal recreation depending on the ground conditions.
- The Downs Link passes through, Henfield, Steyning and Bramber before linking the settlements to Guildford and the south coast.
- The Headquarters of the Sussex Wildlife Trust is located in the District to the south of Henfield; and
- Sullington Warren, Monkmead Woods, Heath Common and Washington Common are all important sites for local residents and biodiversity

Weaknesses

- 4.15 Land in the Ashington area appears to have limited accessible green infrastructure due to the fact that the A24 acts as a barrier and there is a poor footpath network in this area.

Initial Assessment of Green Infrastructure Opportunities

- 4.16 By considering the strengths and weaknesses in the existing green infrastructure throughout the District network, it is possible to identify a number of opportunities for improvement. Some of these are set out in the list below, however it is stressed that these are very much a starting point for discussion, and there may be other priorities from other organisations that can be incorporated into this list.
- Potential for any new development to contribute to enhancements to green infrastructure provision, both within the development site and within the wider countryside;
 - Potential to improve links from towns and villages such as Billingshurst and Ashington into the wider countryside, including the AONB and National Park, and to other sites beyond the District's boundaries;
 - Potential to extend the Riverside Walk in Horsham further along the River Arun;
 - Increased recognition of the strategic importance of the Down's Link, for example providing cycling facilities at Southwater Country Park and improve links to this route from other settlements in the District;
 - Potential to provide enhancements to the 'green infrastructure gap' between Pulborough, Ashington and Billingshurst;
 - Potential to work with other organisations to help bring about enhancements in the Biodiversity Opportunity Areas identified. There may also be opportunities to link with Environmental Stewardship scheme – particularly to help buffer sites and establish stepping stones and ecological corridors;
 - Improved recreation links along Adur, for example around Partridge Green;
 - Identification of key wildlife corridors and opportunities for their enhancement;
 - Improving links from publically owned land into the wider countryside; and
 - Opportunities for town / village centre greening.

Once a final list has been drafted, work will begin on identifying projects and National Improvement Areas (NIA's) for prioritisation through the GI Strategy in conjunction with work being undertaken for the Core Strategy Review.

5. Consultation and Next Steps

- 5.1 This document forms the starting point for a Green Infrastructure Strategy for Horsham District, and is the basis for an initial consultation with a number of key stakeholders. Comments are welcomed on all aspects of this document, but there are a number of issues on which we are particularly seeking your views. These are set out below:
1. Do you agree with the draft vision and approach that the Council is suggesting that it takes in developing a Green Infrastructure Strategy for the District?
 2. Are there any other key benefits of Green Infrastructure that you consider should be highlighted in the document
 3. What further information do you consider should be incorporated into the existing assessment of Green Infrastructure in the District? (Please make this information available to us where possible).
 4. Do you agree with the initial Green Infrastructure Strengths and Weaknesses identified in Chapter 4? What further strengths and weaknesses should we include
 5. Do you agree with the opportunities presented in Chapter 4 of this visioning document? Are there any further opportunities and areas for joint working that should be identified?
- 5.2 The results from this initial consultation will feed into subsequent stages of preparation of the Council's Green Infrastructure Strategy. Comments that we receive on this document will be used to further refine the Green Infrastructure Characterisation Maps, strengths and deficiencies. The opportunities and key delivery mechanisms will also be developed further.
- 5.3 The Green Infrastructure Strategy will form part of the Evidence base feeding in to the Core Strategy Review, and will be used to inform a number of decisions from the location of development, to the nature of provision of green spaces within new and existing developments within the District.
- 5.4 Should you have any comments on this document they can be made to strategic.planning@horsham.gov.uk or alternatively you can write to

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Strategic Planning Advisory Group

26 July 2011

Agenda Item 7

Community Infrastructure Levy

Introduction

1. The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) has been presented to the Strategic Planning Advisory Group (SPAG) previously; including 23 March 2010. Since then the position has become clearer with additional guidance being published by the Department for Communities and Local Government. This SPAG report is a further update and reminder about CIL and how it links with the Core Strategy Review.

Community Infrastructure Levy

2. The Community Infrastructure Levy is a new planning charge that local authorities can choose to charge on developments in their area. The Levy came into force on 6 April 2010 through the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (now amended by the Community Infrastructure Levy (Amendment) Regulations 2011) and allows local authorities to raise funds from developers who are undertaking new building projects in their area. The money can be used to support a wide range of infrastructure which the council, local community and neighbourhoods believe is needed as a result of that development, for example, the provision of new or safer road schemes, flood defences, schools, hospitals and green spaces.
3. The Government introduced the new tariff-based approach because it is believed to be fairer, faster and more transparent than the current system of planning obligations. It will avoid lengthy negotiation times and offer greater transparency for local people because they will be able to understand how the new development is contributing to their community. The Levy will provide developers with much more certainty about how much money they will be expected to contribute. The new system will also deliver greater flexibility

allowing local authorities to set their own priorities for what the money should be spent on.

4. Using new powers introduced in the Localism Bill, the Government will require charging authorities to allocate a meaningful proportion of levy revenues raised in each neighbourhood back to that neighbourhood.

Setting the CIL rate

5. Charging authorities must produce a document called a Charging Schedule which sets out the rate for their levy. This will be a new type of document within the suite of documents making up the Local Development Framework (LDF), however it will not form part of the statutory Development Plan. When setting the levy rate, Charging Authorities should draw on the infrastructure planning that underpins the development strategy for the area to help identify the total infrastructure funding gap. The rates should be also be supported by evidence such as a Viability Assessment of the area's infrastructure needs so as to ensure that the rates are not set so high as to put serious risk the overall development of their area.
6. The process of preparing a charging schedule is similar to that of Development Plan Documents in that it requires consultation with the local community. Firstly on the preliminary draft charging schedule, then, before it is examined, the draft charging schedule must be formally published for representations. If the charging authority makes any further changes to the draft charging schedule after it has been published for representations, any person may request to be heard by the examiner, but only on those changes, during a further four-week period. Following a public examination, by an independent person, the document can then be formally adopted.

Monitoring and reporting spending of the levy

7. To ensure that the levy is open and transparent, charging authorities must prepare short reports on the levy for the previous financial year. These reports will set out how much revenue from the levy has been received and how much was unspent at the end of the financial year. In addition, they must also report on total expenditure from the levy, with summary details of what

infrastructure the levy funded, how much of the levy was spend on each item of infrastructure and how much on administrative expenses.

The relationship between CIL and Planning Obligations

8. Planning obligations will continue to play an important role in helping to make individual developments acceptable to local planning authorities and communities. However, reforms have been introduced to restrict the use of planning obligations. Most importantly, from April 2014 or as soon as the charging authority starts to charge the levy, planning obligations can no longer be used as the basis for a tariff to fund infrastructure. Instead the levy will be used as the mechanism for pooling contributions from a variety of developments to fund infrastructure.
9. CIL is intended to provide infrastructure to support the development of an area rather than make individual planning applications acceptable. Therefore, there is still a legitimate role for development specific planning obligations as there may be site specific impact mitigation requirements which would not be funded through CIL. Planning obligations enable the local authority to be confident that the specific consequences of a development can be mitigated.
10. Pooled contributions may still be sought from up to five separate applications for an item of infrastructure that is not locally intended to be funded by the levy. Where a charging authority sets out that it intends to fund an item of infrastructure via the levy then it cannot seek a planning obligation contribution towards the same item of infrastructure. For provision that is not capable of being funded through the levy, LPA's are not restricted in terms of the number of obligations that may be pooled, but they must have regard to the wider policies set out in *Circular 5/05 Planning Obligations*.

Horsham District Council and CIL

11. Charging authorities should implement the levy on the basis of an up-to-date development plan. A charging authority may use a draft plan if they are planning a joint examination of their core strategy and their CIL charging schedule.

12. Therefore, for Horsham District Council to introduce CIL, it needs to be closely linked to progress on the Core Strategy Review. CIL, obviously, is designed to help fund infrastructure provision and, therefore, there needs to be a clear understanding of where and what level of development is proposed.
13. This work is ongoing and the evidence base supporting the Core Strategy Review will also support the development of the preliminary draft charging schedule. There are two main elements that contribute to the Core Strategy Review and also supplement CIL. Establishing the housing requirement, now to be set at the local level, and identifying the infrastructure to support this are the two main elements of the Core Strategy Review process that overlap with CIL. Of these, the Infrastructure Development Plan is fundamental; as it establishes the infrastructure required to support the proposed level of development. Whilst part of this work can occur concurrently with CIL, once complete the Infrastructure Development Plan will directly influence the charging schedule.
14. Separate to this, a viability assessment will be undertaken to ensure that the proposed levy is set at a rate which does not put at serious risk the overall development of the area.

Timetabling and future work

15. Currently the timetable is reliant upon some of the background evidence base work being undertaken for the Core Strategy Review. This work is ongoing and the next period of consultation will begin to provide greater certainty regarding future development in the District. With CIL reliant upon the Core Strategy Review evidence and timetable, a comprehensive CIL programme including details on the preliminary draft charging schedule, will emerge as the Core Strategy Review progresses. The anticipated final date for adoption of CIL is prior to April 2014, as this is when (or upon the adoption of CIL) planning obligations can no longer be used as the basis for a tariff to fund infrastructure.
16. The Department for Communities and Local Government is anticipating carrying out further consultation on CIL over the summer (2011) and,

therefore, details regarding the adoption and implementation of CIL could alter. The situation will be continually monitored and any changes within the legislation or guidance will need to be incorporated into the approach taken by Horsham District Council and will be reported to Members.