

Littlehampton Town Centre Strategy



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1. Introduction by the Town Mayor

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

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

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

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

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

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

Councillor Jill Long

2. Purpose of the Strategy

2.1. The Mission

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

2.2. Why Is a Strategy Needed?

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

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

2.3. The Action Plan

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

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



2.4. Informing of the Strategy

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

2.5. Key Partners

- Arun District Council
- Littlehampton Town Council
- Littlehampton Business Representatives
- West Sussex County Council
- Sussex Police

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

3 Vision Statement

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

4. The Ambition

Wide consultation identifies that Littlehampton Town Centre should be:

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

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

These ambitions form the spine of this Strategy and are supported by the key partners.

5. Area of Coverage



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



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

High Street



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

Anchor Springs



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

Beach Road



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

The Arcade



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

Surrey Street



6. The Strategic Objectives

The Strategic Objectives have been developed and will guide the actions required to deliver the Vision. It is envisaged that the lead on this will be a newly constituted Town Centre Action Group, details of which are covered under section 7.

1. To work in partnership to formulate an action plan that encourages an attractive, welcoming, and thriving town centre for our businesses, community, and visitors.
2. To ensure that the town centre has a welcoming, safe, and attractive physical environment that supports the needs of both business and town centre users, enables delivery of a range of events and activities and provides a focus for a healthy and thriving community.
3. To improve the commercial viability of the town centre for existing and potential new businesses.
4. To ensure that town centre accessibility is inclusive, supports all modes of transport and meets the needs of all users.
5. To improve interconnectivity between the Town Centre, seafront, riverside and wider Town, making access to business areas and tourist attractions much easier.

7. Town Centre Action Group – TCAG

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

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

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