



Proctor and Matthews Architects

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## Workshop Note

### Hastings Town Centre and White Rock Area Action Plan (AAP) Stakeholder Workshop

**24<sup>th</sup> November 2015**

Hastings Borough Council in conjunction with their consultant team of Bilfinger GVA \* hosted a workshop with key stakeholders and partners to inform the preparation of an Area Action Plan (AAP) for 'Hastings Town Centre and White Rock Area'. The workshop feeds into a number of key studies that will help shape the preparation of the AAP.

The workshop provided an early opportunity to seek views from stakeholders with interests in the Town Centre and White Rock area, along with Councillors and Council Officers. The discussions focused on collecting insights and ideas about how the study areas are performing today in terms of their various land uses and contribution to the vitality of the Borough and how this might be improved in the future. Opportunities to improve the buildings, public spaces, range of uses, including links to the Town Centre and how people move in and around the area were all explored.

The workshop was opened by Cllr Dawn Poole (HBC) lead member for Regeneration, Communities & Culture followed by Monica Adams-Acton (Assistant Director, Regeneration and Culture, HBC) who introduced the objectives and scope of the AAP and the study Bilfinger GVA are carrying out.

The Bilfinger GVA team then presented the initial findings of their work; the results of the retail and leisure surveys of local residents and the early urban design analysis of the study area. The key findings to date are that Hastings performs very well, compared to other similar sized towns, in terms of the proportion of local residents who shop in the town centre and the expenditure that is captured in the shops. However, the frequency of visits to and use of leisure facilities in the White Rock area is weaker. The urban design analysis highlights distinct character areas related to their: street pattern and historic buildings; their topography; distribution of retail, leisure and commercial uses; the density of development; the relationship of these to the seafront; the quality of the public spaces and landscape; and the pedestrian experience.

Four working groups went on to discuss particular issues relating to each character area and their potential to improve: the Seafront - from the Pier to Pelham Crescent; the town centre; the area above White Rock including the Pleasure Gardens and public buildings along Bohemia Road and a strategic group that looked at wider issues across the study area. The key issues that were covered



during these sessions included:

- the strategic economic context including Hastings employment base and ability to attract new business into the town centre,
- the demand for student housing,
- the layout of roads and provision of high quality pedestrian environments,
- the changes in levels between the White Rock area and the Pleasure Gardens,
- the current retail offer of Hastings Town Centre and its future course,
- the impact of new visitor patterns once the Pier and BMX park are open,
- an understanding of the history and historic buildings and spaces and how to conserve and make more of them,
- the potential to create new cycle routes,
- peak car parking demand in the summer and seasonable issues for visitors to the area,
- how to improve the visitor offer and in particular enhancing links to the seafront,
- the potential to provide new housing within the study area,
- the leisure and cultural offer in the White Rock area and the opportunities for cultural renewal/regeneration,
- the opportunity to improve the use of the facilities located along Bohemia Road.



The workshop provided a positive, open and productive session, during which many issues and ideas were discussed. These will inform the consultant team's work for the Council and the ongoing work on the Area Action Plan for the study area.

The Hasting Borough Council Members and Officers and Bilfinger GVA team would like to thank the participants for giving up their time and providing valuable input into this important process.

\*The Bilfinger GVA team includes Proctor and Matthews Architects and Nicole Collomb Landscape Architect.