

Section Three

Context and issues

- 3.1 In preparing the AAP, reference has been made to available background material and evidence base documents including the Retail and Leisure Assessments and Urban Design Analysis (Bilfinger GVA, March 2016). This information has been analysed and key issues are summarised in this section.

The area today

- 3.2 Hastings Town Centre is the commercial and retail heart of the Borough. Most of the comparison retail trade takes place here and the town centre has a good representation of national high street retail, catering and other business chains together with many independent shops, cafés and bars. The latter are predominantly in the traditional shopping areas along Robertson Street, Queens Road, and Wellington Place. An important cluster of creative industries has also developed around the Trinity Triangle/Claremont.
- 3.3 The architecture of Hastings Town Centre takes on many forms and patterns and represents a mix of Victorian terraces; mid-20th Century retail blocks and recent retail, office and educational developments. There are also a number of distinctive buildings including Pelham Crescent, St Mary in the Castle and the Brassey Institute (library). The area contains many tourist attractions, such as the White Rock Theatre, Hastings Museum, the seafront and pier. Residential uses are predominantly located around St Andrew's Square, Wellington Square and Holmesdale Gardens. Conservation Areas cover much of Hastings Town Centre and it will be important to protect and, where possible, to enhance features of heritage value whilst securing viable new uses and accommodating appropriate forms of development.
- 3.4 Hastings is undergoing significant change with several regeneration initiatives planned and undertaken. The town centre underwent major planned improvement and expansion during the 1990s with construction of the Priory Meadow Shopping Centre and pedestrianisation of the main shopping streets. This enabled the town centre to better fulfil its role as a sub-regional centre. Its catchment area takes in Hastings, parts of Bexhill and the more rural communities to the north and east of Hastings. However, Hastings currently faces competition from neighbouring centres at Eastbourne, Tunbridge Wells and Ashford and there is a need to improve its competitiveness and the range and quality of its offer. Regeneration funding has been focused on the town centre in recognition of its importance, particularly in terms of improving the further and higher education offer and office space. Significant regeneration has taken place, notably the Lacuna Place development and One Priory Square, the railway station, a health centre and new accommodation for further and higher educational establishments. Major improvements have also occurred along the seafront with many of the formerly derelict seafront buildings being refurbished and brought back in use including White Rock Baths and Hastings Pier.
- 3.5 Hastings has a strong and diverse cultural infrastructure but there are a number of significant gaps which need strengthening particularly in terms of creative workspace and mid-scale cultural venues. The town provides a range of performance venues, museums; art galleries and studios and there is an added cultural dimension offered by the further and higher educational establishments and importantly, by the town's artists, performers and other creative businesses and communities. The Council and its partners have recently focused heavily on culture as an instrument of social change and economic growth. The arrival of the Jerwood Gallery and The Stade open space in 2012 marked a significant point on this journey. The Gallery has had a major positive impact itself, and

subsequently the potential of culturally based regeneration to deliver change has become much more widely accepted.

- 3.6 White Rock Gardens represent a significant and underutilised asset, with a stunning location and unrivalled views. The area is strategically located close to the town centre and between two rail stations but, at the same time, is isolated due to weak connections within the area and with the wider town. There are wonderful sea views but these are enjoyed by a limited number of people and the area has become neglected and difficult to define - nearly a park, but more of a common. Some of the facilities are currently poor quality and need reinvigorating. A key challenge is the re-definition of this space and its relationship with the wider town. Change is required if the area is to realise its full potential and provide a more attractive place to shop, work, live and visit, whilst protecting the essential character of the historic parts.
- 3.7 The area covered by the AAP is very varied in its character and function. To help understand the issues and opportunities this presents, a number of broad Character Areas were defined in the Retail and Leisure Assessments and Urban Design Analysis (March 2016). The Character Areas are illustrated in figure 2 and comprise:
- Summerfields/Bohemia
 - White Rock Gardens
 - Seafrost St Leonards
 - Seafrost Hastings
 - Town Centre core
 - Town Centre edge

- 3.8 Key features of the Character Areas may be summarised as follows.

Summerfields/Bohemia

- 3.9 This area comprises the land north of Bohemia Road, including: Summerfields Wood Local Nature Reserve, Horntye Park, Summerfields Leisure Centre, Hastings Museum, the police station, ambulance station and fire station. Summerfields Wood Local Nature Reserve is a unique natural space with a network of formal and informal footpaths and significant heritage and community assets in the form of the Bohemia walled garden, listed Victorian roman bath and ice house. Summerfields Leisure Centre is the Borough's main leisure centre and Hastings Museum serves residents and is an attraction for visitors to the town, but is currently underused by both. The area is poorly connected to Hastings Town Centre and White Rock Gardens and contains extensive areas of underutilised land and poorly defined uses.

White Rock Gardens

- 3.10 This area includes the public open space south of Bohemia Road and north of St Margarets Road divided by Falaise Road, as well as the former Convent of the Holy Child Jesus. White Rock Gardens is a designated heritage asset of local importance with a mix of indoor and outdoor leisure facilities including long established bowling clubs, a well-used skate park and youth facilities. The convent buildings are listed and of national importance. The area provides an important green space between central Hastings and St Leonards and unrivalled sea views. However, the area is underutilised with poor connections to the seafrost and wider town centre, and there are neglected and largely unused areas. The landscape and public realm is in need of enhancement.

Seafrost St Leonards

- 3.11 This area includes the seafrost promenade, the A259 and terraced buildings from Warrior Square in the west to the pier in the east. The seafrost is characterised by distinctive 4-5 storey Victorian seafrost terraces with some areas of new build and the two-level wide

seafront promenade. The east-west cycle path forms part of a national cycle network route. The promenade affords long views to Hastings Pier and Hastings Castle to the east and Marine Court to the west. The area is impacted by the busy A259 road with limited pedestrian crossings and poor public realm and landscape quality. There is a lack of activities on this section of the promenade to draw people west from the pier.

Seafront Hastings

3.12 This area includes the seafront promenade, the A259 and terraced buildings from the pier in the west to Pelham Crescent in the east. Along with the seafront in St Leonards, seafront Hastings benefits from the natural beach environment and views. The wide promenade is well used by pedestrians and forms part of a national cycle network route. Hastings Pier and St Mary in the Castle are cultural landmarks and the restoration of the former White Rock Baths has provided a new attraction in the form of The Source Skate Park. The pier, St Mary in the Castle, Carlisle Parade car park and shelters are listed and of national heritage importance. The busy A259 road with limited pedestrian crossings acts as a barrier to movement between the seafront and town centre and the Harold Place underpass is unwelcoming.

Town Centre core

3.13 This is a large and varied Character Area which covers the town centre shopping areas including Priory Meadow, Robertson Street and Wellington Place, Hastings railway station and adjacent education buildings, and the bulk of higher quality office space focused on Havelock Road. It also includes surrounding residential areas at White Rock Gardens, Cambridge Gardens, Wellington Square and St Andrews Square. Priory Meadow Shopping Centre is a strong attractor and the main focus of retail activity in the town centre. The tight historic urban grain creates a compact, accessible retail core and the cluster of heritage buildings creates a distinctive and attractive townscape. There is a good mix of cultural, education and leisure facilities including the cinema and library and a cluster of creative industries in the Trinity Triangle/America Ground Cultural Quarter. Visual and in some cases physical pedestrian and cycle links to the seafront are poor and whilst improvements have been made, the townscape and public realm is of mixed quality.

Town Centre edge

3.14 This area includes the land between the railway line and Queens Road mostly occupied by Morrisons supermarket with the Britannia Enterprise Centre to the north and the terraced houses and shops along Queens Road. The distinctive listed railway bridge provides a strong gateway feature to Hastings Town Centre and there is a diversity of small scale businesses at Britannia Enterprise Centre with some striking views from parts of this area to the extensive Victorian terraces on West Hill. However, there is a loss of cohesive urban character due to the openness of the Morrisons site and dominance of car parking with poor quality townscape along Queens Road and poor quality pedestrian access into Hastings Town Centre.

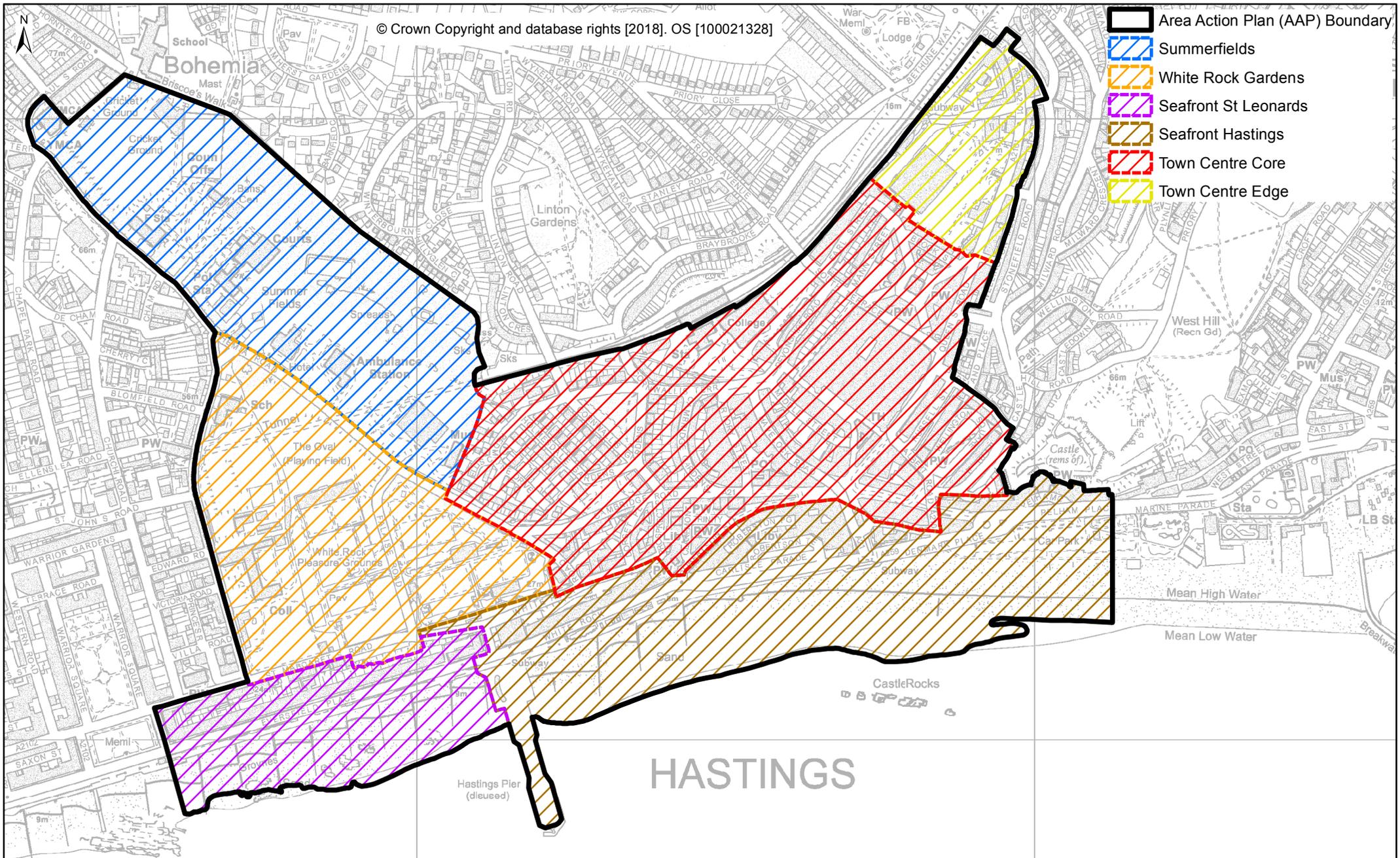


Figure 2
Character Areas

Scale: 1:8,000

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Key Issues

Built environment and heritage

- 3.15 Hastings Borough is made up of various places and areas each with their own distinctive attributes that together form the character of the area. The Council will make sure that care is taken not to erode this local identity through insensitive development.
- 3.16 Hastings topography is defined by the seafront, the cliffs and castle that preside over the town and development stretching along valleys and high ridges leading to a spectacular townscape. Wide views can be experienced from the pier looking back towards the town. Development should have an appreciation of Hastings' unique topography, and be sensitive to the scale, height, layout and massing of surrounding buildings as well as strategic views. Particular consideration should be given to buildings of special architectural or historic interest that provide richness and diversity to the local area and help create a sense of place. Many of the historic routes and spaces within Hastings can be easily recognised, and remain key to peoples understanding of where they are.
- 3.17 One of the key strengths of Hastings Town Centre and the Bohemia area derives from its history and wealth of heritage assets. The cluster of historic buildings and the 19th Century street pattern in Hastings Town Centre contribute to a distinctive urban character and the restored pier and new use for the former White Rock Baths have provided a renewed focus for the seafront. It will be important to protect and enhance the heritage value of the area and to seek the restoration and viable reuse of heritage assets. There is also the opportunity to use the area's unique heritage as a key driver of regeneration recognising the historic importance of the area as a major asset in delivering the AAP issues and objectives.
- 3.18 There are, however, a number of issues which the AAP must address in order to realise the regeneration objectives for Hastings. Busy roads and traffic dominate many parts of the public realm which restricts pedestrian movement and cycle access and negatively impacts on the character of the town centre and seafront. The A259 is a particular problem as the road severs the town centre from the seafront creating a physical barrier to easy pedestrian flows.

Green infrastructure and landscape

- 3.19 When it comes to green infrastructure the AAP area is one of contrast divided between the highly urbanised town centre with limited green infrastructure, and Bohemia to the west characterised by significant areas of open space. The beach and seafront are two of the town's primary natural assets and are a key attraction for visitors.
- 3.20 The area contains significant open spaces and natural assets. White Rock Gardens and Summerfields Woods provide multifunctional public green spaces with heritage, biodiversity and recreational value but are currently underutilised.
- 3.21 The AAP provides the opportunity to create a better connected network of spaces which will enhance the character of the town and its attraction as a destination.

Movement and connectivity

- 3.22 Whilst strategically located close to the town centre and seafront, the network of pedestrian and cycle routes within Bohemia is poorly defined with a lack of wayfinding. Pedestrian and cycle connections between the town centre, Bohemia and the seafront are in need of improvement.

- 3.23 Hastings Station is a key gateway into the town and the main transport interchange between bus and train, but pedestrian routes from the station into the town centre are poorly defined and in need of improvement.
- 3.24 Pedestrian access from the seafront to White Rock Gardens and Bohemia is constrained by topography. There are no direct east-west pedestrian links through White Rock gardens between St Leonards and Hastings. Bohemia Road presents a barrier to pedestrian connections between White Rock Gardens and the leisure facilities, museum and Summerfields Wood that are located to the north of Bohemia Road. A key challenge will be to address the significant level change severing the spatial connection between the seafront and the Bohemia area.
- 3.25 Traffic on the A259 negatively impacts on the quality of the seafront and creates a significant barrier to pedestrian movement, with a limited number of crossing points. Safety railings add to street clutter and inhibit pedestrian movement. A key challenge will be to reduce the impact of traffic on the pedestrian environment and to address the severance caused by the A259.

Efficient use of natural resources

- 3.26 The Climate Change Act 2008 establishes a legally binding target to reduce UK greenhouse emissions by at least 80 per cent by 2050 relative to 1990 levels. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) expects plans to take a proactive approach to limit the impacts of climate change and create more resilient environments for communities, including supporting the transition to a low carbon future. Adopted local planning policies within the Hastings Planning Strategy (HPS) (Policies SC1 – SC6) recognise the importance of the built environment in tackling climate change requiring all development to be designed to include appropriate adaptation and mitigation measures.
- 3.27 Policy SC4 of the HPS establishes a local carbon reduction policy for residential development based on the implementation of the energy hierarchy. This policy was developed to align with the expected introduction of the government ‘zero carbon homes’ policy implemented through Part L of the Building Regulations. The Housing Standards Review was undertaken to streamline local technical performance standards for homes and resulted in a number of significant changes to the Building Regulations. An outcome from the review (March 2015) was that the Government does not expect local planning authorities to set conditions for energy requirements above a Code level 4 equivalent (around 19% better than Building Regulations Part L 2013) instead relying on building regulation standards to achieve the desired energy and carbon dioxide targets².
- 3.28 Further to this, in July 2015 following concerns about significant regulatory burdens on house builders and developers the Government announced that it would not continue with the zero carbon Allowable Solutions element of its policy (which allows residual carbon emissions to be delivered either onsite or offsite), or the proposed 2016 increase in on-site energy efficiency standards. Instead it will keep standards under review³. This does not modify the NPPF policy allowing for the connection of new housing development to low carbon infrastructure such as district heating networks.
- 3.29 National planning policy recognises the responsibility of all communities to contribute to energy generation from renewable or low carbon sources. Many examples of enterprising community-led initiatives are starting to emerge throughout the country, from community-owned electricity generation, such as solar photovoltaic (PV) panels to wind turbines. Community energy projects have the benefit of engaging the local community, providing leadership and control, with the local community collectively benefiting from the outcome.

²Written Ministerial Statement – Housing standards: streamlining the system (March 2015)

³ Fixing the foundations: Creating a more prosperous nation (July 2015)

In principle, the Council will support community-led initiatives for renewable and low carbon energy.

- 3.30 Combined heat and power (CHP) is a highly efficient process that generates both electricity and heat at the point of use. CHP becomes viable once demand for heat and power is in excess of 5,000 hours per annum. Typically, buildings with these sort of high-energy requirements include hospitals, hotels, leisure centres and universities. This technology can significantly reduce a building's running costs, CO₂ emissions and increase fuel supply security.
- 3.31 Linking groups of buildings together through a district heating network can offer further significant savings as a single centralised plant can meet all the development's energy needs⁴. Policy SC5 of the HPS identifies the Conquest Hospital, Summerfields Sports Centre and Hastings Town Centre as locations with potential for CHP network. Recent evidence undertaken on behalf of the Council also highlights Bohemia as an area that lends itself to CHP linked to district heating due to the proximity of public buildings and the existing leisure centre that would provide an appropriate anchor load⁵.
- 3.32 The Council is committed to delivering a greener town and getting the infrastructure in place to support the transition for residents and businesses to low carbon transport. Making provision for electric vehicle charging points will be a primary step to growing this sector.
- 3.33 Southern Water manages potable water supply in the Hastings Borough. The whole of the Southern Water supply area is highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change with a delicate supply-demand balance. The Environment Agency has identified the South East (which includes Southern Water's supply area) as 'seriously water stressed'⁶. This is where 'current household demand for water is a high proportion of the current effective rainfall available to meet that demand'. It is therefore imperative that local authorities, water companies and developers work together to deliver the water efficiencies needed to help meet future demand as identified within Southern Water's Water Resource Management Plan (WRMP) (2015-2040).
- 3.34 Water companies face a number of water demand challenges including the impacts of climate change causing more extreme weather, working within environmental limits for water abstraction, population growth and changing lifestyles towards smaller households. Reducing water consumption forms a key part of Southern Water's WRMP with a target to reduce average water consumption by 10% (a reduction of 15 litres per person, per day) to 133 litres per person per day by 2020.
- 3.35 Hastings forms part of the Cuckmere and Pevensey Levels catchment. The nearest main river to the AAP area is Combe Haven between the Powdermill Stream confluence and the coast that is located to the west in West St Leonards. Managing urban diffuse pollution is a priority issue for the Environment Agency within this catchment. Pollution from drains, roads and pavements can be washed away by rainfall into the river system. The South East River Basin Management Plan⁷ has identified sustainable drainage and water efficiency as positive measures in helping to manage this issue.
- 3.36 Policy SC3 of the HPS requires development to incorporate climate change mitigation and adaptation measures such as water efficiency measures in new development. However, it is considered that there is a clear local need to reasonably justify a new more measured

⁴ Combined heat and power for buildings Good Practice Guide (2004) Carbon Trust

⁵ Hastings Borough Council Sustainable Energy Options Study July 2017 & Energy Options Study Report for HBC by CLS Energy Ltd

⁶ Water stressed areas – final classification (July 2013) Environment Agency

⁷ South East River Basin Management Plan (December 2015) Environment Agency.

water efficiency standard for new dwellings within the AAP area to help manage water usage by occupiers.

Housing

- 3.37 The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) undertaken in 2013 identified that the Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) for new homes in Hastings in the period 2011-28 was 404 dwellings per annum (6,863 dwellings in total). However, due to the constraints on the availability of development land, the HPS, which provides for at least 3,400 net new homes by 2028, goes as far as it is able in meeting housing need. Updated analysis of objectively assessed housing shows a small reduction but that the need remains significantly higher than the current Plan target.
- 3.38 Whilst there is significant activity in the residential market in Hastings, there are concerns around the rate of housing delivery. The Council is therefore keen to attract new investment to improve the performance of the housing market.
- 3.39 The HPS identifies the town centre as a sustainable location for residential development where it helps to increase the vitality of the town centre. Maintaining a strong retail presence is a priority, however, and residential uses should not displace retail (A1) uses or office space. Residential use may be beneficial above shops or in buildings where the upper floors are under used. The White Rock Park & Bohemia Strategy document has identified the significant opportunity for new and innovative forms of residential development in Bohemia which has the potential to improve the quality and mix of housing in the area.

Retail

- 3.40 Hastings Town Centre is currently performing well with a good mix of national chains and local shops. It is important that this area continues to be viable and to evolve if the town is to continue to attract visitors and investors and compete with other centres. Around 50% of the retail floorspace in the Borough is located in Hastings Town Centre.
- 3.41 The requirement for additional retail floorspace was reviewed as part of the Hastings Town Centre and White Rock Retail and Leisure Assessments and Urban Design Analysis (March 2016). As a consequence of continued population and expenditure growth, and the strong over trading performance of a number of food stores across the Borough, there is an identified need for additional convenience goods floorspace over the plan period. This is estimated to be around 3,000m² net by 2020, 3,400m² net by 2025, and 3,500m² net by 2030. In respect of comparison goods, Hastings Town Centre is performing reasonably well, achieving borough trade retention of 48%, and wider survey area trade retention of 30.3%. Sales figures indicate that the town centre is trading well for a centre of this size. There is an identified need for additional comparison goods floorspace over the plan period which is estimated to be around 3,100m² net by 2020, increasing to 7,300m² net by 2025 and 12,400m² net by 2030.
- 3.42 A large proportion of Robertson Street and the Seafront Hastings lies within Hastings Town Centre Shopping Area and currently comprises a mix of comparison retail, creative businesses and commercial leisure activities. A key issue relates to the quality of the retail offer and low footfall on the seafront particularly on White Rock. There is potential to extend the regeneration benefits achieved in Robertson Street, Claremont and Trinity Street into this part of the seafront and to enhance the retail offer. This would strengthen the existing cluster of creative industries and create a more vibrant cultural quarter.
- 3.43 It is important the vitality and viability of retail areas in Hastings, including Hastings Town Centre, are safeguarded and enhanced. Failure to plan for future retail needs will mean

that competing centres will begin to absorb the share of the spending that Hastings currently attracts.

Offices

- 3.44 The town centre presents a significant opportunity to the Borough in terms of office stock. Around 65% of office floorspace is located in Hastings Town Centre.
- 3.45 Office accommodation has grown in Hastings Town Centre, with new floorspace in the Priory Quarter area – in One Priory Square and Lacuna Place. The HPS seeks to develop the town centre as a location for new businesses and those needing to expand. This is of critical importance to the local economy given the need to diversify and strengthen the economic base of the town, encourage new investment and provide new employment opportunities.
- 3.46 The Hastings office market provides considerable supporting evidence for the positive impact that new office space can have on driving an uplift in performance. Prior to the delivery of the Creative Media Centre, Priory Quarter and Havelock Place, the office market within the town struggled. However rents have consistently increased (and have now settled at a much higher average), occupancy rates have increased and a range of new businesses have been attracted to the town (Eastbourne Office Market Report, GVA 2016). Nonetheless, the enhancement of the town centre environment and offer will be critical to attracting new businesses to the town.

Sport and leisure

- 3.47 Hastings Town Centre and Bohemia area contain a number of existing sport and leisure facilities but the quality of provision is relatively poor compared to other centres.
- 3.48 The Bohemia area is an important focus for sport and leisure provision with a wide range of existing facilities. Future provision must be considered within the context of a Borough-wide strategy. The Leisure Facilities Strategy (2015) identified the following requirements:
- **Sports halls** - additional space required at peak times with enhanced community access;
 - **Health & Fitness** - deficit in existing provision at Falaise Hall;
 - **Swimming** - new provision required: leisure pool, dedicated learner pool and an extended 25m pool;
 - **Artificial pitches** - 1-2 full sized 3G pitches;
 - **Indoor bowling greens** - no additional provision required but improvements to existing facility;
 - **Outdoor bowling greens** - no additional provision required;
 - **Indoor tennis** - low cost indoor courts;
 - **Outdoor tennis** - adequate supply but enhancement of Alexandra Park a priority;
 - **Multi-use Games Areas (MUGA's)** - additional courts;
 - **Climbing Walls** - enhancement required to meet needs;
 - **Water sports facilities** - further assessment required;
 - **Skate Parks** - extension to existing facility.
- 3.49 Any future sports and leisure provision must be considered in the context of other opportunities such as the proposed Combe Valley Sports Village and Rother District Council proposals for Glyne Gap Swimming Pool and Bexhill Leisure Centre. Key issues to be addressed in assessing the potential for future leisure provision in the Bohemia area include:
- condition of existing facilities and requirement for investment to improve the quality of provision;

- constraints on funding availability- whether for refurbishment of existing facilities or the provision of new facilities;
- the importance of partnership working between the public and private sector and sports bodies;
- the need to ensure the long term maintenance and viability of the facilities;
- the need to ensure good access to facilities for the community, taking account of the high proportion of residents who travel to facilities by foot or public transport;
- fragmentation in existing provision;
- the need to ensure that Hastings and Rother facilities are complementary;
- the importance of a coordinated approach to ensure an effective mix of facilities;
- the potential to look at new models of provision.

3.50 Consultation with existing providers has highlighted the operational and management constraints presented by split site operation of indoor sports facilities and the costs of maintenance and issues of energy efficiency associated with the ageing building stock.

3.51 There is the opportunity to strengthen and enhance the sport and leisure offer to increase its attraction to the sub-regional market. There is also the potential to build on the success of new sectors such as skate/BMX, where Hastings excels, and to consider new models of provision where sport/leisure and culture overlap more strongly. This would strengthen the distinctiveness of the offer and the attraction of Hastings to a wider visitor market.

3.52 In terms of commercial leisure, a need has previously been identified for commercial leisure facilities to diversify the leisure experience and attract users from a larger catchment area (Hastings Town Centre and White Rock Retail and Leisure Assessment and Urban Design Analysis (March 2016)).

Culture

3.53 Hastings has a strong and diverse cultural infrastructure including a number of important components - performance venues, museums; art galleries and studios; the cultural dimension offered by further and higher educational establishments in the town centre; and most importantly, its artists, performers and other creative businesses and communities. The Council and its partners have recently focused heavily on culture as an instrument of social change and economic growth. The arrival of the Jerwood Gallery and The Stade open space in 2012 has had a major positive impact and the potential of culturally based regeneration to deliver change has become more widely recognised. There are however a number of gaps in cultural provision and there is the opportunity to address these in the AAP.

3.54 The White Rock Theatre is the town's main cultural performance venue and an important year round attraction but experiences significant constraints in its ability to accommodate larger and more complex performances, and the venue does not meet modern requirements for performers, participants and audiences.

3.55 The Odeon cinema is well used, but the existing site is constrained. Refurbishment or relocation to an alternative site with the potential to strengthen and expand the film offer could be considered but a cinema should be retained within the town centre, or on a site with strong pedestrian links to the wider town centre.

3.56 There is a growing cultural sector in Hastings and it will be important to create an environment which enables the cultural and creative economy to expand. This requires consideration to be given to venues, programming and promotion and to the provision of appropriate creative workspace including studios and co-working spaces. The town's heritage assets offer significant potential, with Hastings ranked 5th in the Royal Society of

Arts Heritage Index 2015 with greatest potential economic benefit linked to heritage assets. Existing facilities offer significant untapped potential.

3.57 The Development Management Plan identifies three Cultural Quarters in Hastings Town Centre and the White Rock Area:

- **White Rock and the America Ground** – The cluster of the theatre, the pier and the White Rock Baths and Bottle Alley define the western end of this area which extends eastwards along the seafront to the America Ground area with the library, the Creative Media Centre and the collection of restaurants and cafes around Robertson Street and the creative industries cluster around the Trinity Triangle and Claremont;
- **Academic** – The core of this area is the buildings occupied by the further and higher educational establishments around the station and in Havelock Road and Priory Street and the cultural activity generated within them. Complementary activities such as shops and cafés could be encouraged further.
- **Old Town and The Stade** – A small part of this area falls within the boundary of AAP around Pelham Place.

3.58 Culture-Led Regeneration: A Strategy for Hastings 2016-21 sets out the following key priorities:

- Support social engagement and community cohesion through accessible and diverse cultural activity;
- Ensure high quality cultural opportunities within formal and informal education are available to all;
- Build the creative economy, supporting creative and cultural businesses and practitioners to develop and become more sustainable, and attract new investment;
- Develop and promote a refreshed identity for Hastings and 1066 Country, which brings contemporary culture and traditional heritage together in a coherent and marketable brand;
- Develop and support a high quality year round cultural programme that links to regeneration and tourism strategies;
- Support and enable the preservation, development and use of the town's cultural assets.

3.59 This is reinforced by the East Sussex Cultural Strategy 2013–2023 which seeks to:

- create an environment where great cultural experiences are available to everyone to enhance their quality of life with the outcome of a growing cultural sector striving for excellence which enables East Sussex residents to have great places to live in, visit and enjoy, and have safe, healthy and fulfilling lives;
- create an environment which enables the cultural and creative economy to expand and enhances our ability to attract and retain other businesses with the outcome of a resilient and growing cultural and creative economy which contributes to a vibrant, diverse and sustainable mixed economy for East Sussex;
- develop and promote well packaged cultural tourism offers which celebrate the identity of East Sussex, raise its profile and attract more visitors and businesses to the County with the outcome of a thriving and high value visitor economy, with great places to visit and enjoy, renowned for its natural assets, unique heritage, culture, market and coastal towns.

3.60 A study funded by the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) – Towards a National Prospectus for the Creative Economy in the South East sets out a portfolio of sector-led initiatives to build a more self-sustaining, creative and cultural infrastructure in the South East. The prospectus highlights the potential of Hastings to benefit from investment in the creative economy and recognises that the town has a growing reputation as a cultural hotspot. The Jerwood Gallery has been a catalyst for culture-led

regeneration and has gained a reputation for its ambitious curatorial programming, increasing, not only its own profile, but also that of the town itself.

- 3.61 The expectation is that Bohemia, strategically positioned between Hastings Town Centre and Central St Leonards, will play an important role in the development of the cultural sector and that development within this area will build on the momentum generated by recent initiatives to ensure maximisation of the economic and social benefits of this cultural renaissance. The aim is to breathe new life to this area and re-position Hastings as a national and international visitor attraction.
- 3.62 A Creative Workspace Masterplan has recently been adopted by SELEP which makes the case for investment in creative open workspace to support the growth of the creative economy including the development of creative clusters and creative enterprise zones. Open workspace includes business incubators, accelerators, co-working spaces, managed workspace, makerspaces and artists' studios. Open workspaces have grown as a result of global workplace changes, with technology making it possible for employees and the self-employed to work from anywhere with a good internet connection. Most users are microbusinesses and a significant proportion are creative businesses; open workspaces also bring together professionals working in other areas, including biotech, business services and the charity sector.
- 3.63 Culture-led Regeneration: A Strategy for Hastings 2016-21 specifically seeks to develop cultural quarters built around studio and workshop space for the creative industries. Key issues to be considered in future cultural provision may be summarised as follows:
- Opportunities to enhance provision for theatre, dance and music;
 - Potential for a new arts venue which would complement rather than compete with the De La Warr Pavilion (in Bexhill) or Jerwood Gallery and the pier.
 - Benefits of a cultural hub as distinct from dispersed venues;
 - Potential for enhanced museum offer;
 - Development of the music sector and music town brand;
 - The future of the White Rock Theatre as a site for cultural production as well as presentation;
 - Opportunity to develop the cultural tourism sector and for Hastings to shift from a day trip destination to a short break destination;
 - The viability and potential future use of listed buildings for cultural facilities and creative arts;
 - The need to maintain strong links between the cultural and education sectors;
 - Potential to attract a nationally significant cultural production organisation due to the Arts Council increasing encouragement for shifting production away from London and metropolitan centres;
 - Clear need and opportunity around creative industry workspace.

Tourism

- 3.64 Tourism is of significant importance to the local economy and supported around 5000 FTE (full time equivalent) jobs in 2016. There has been a steady increase in tourism value in the town with the volume of staying visitors up 2% between 2014 and 2015 and £100m spent by staying visitors in 2015 (up 6.1% compared to 2014). However, the volume of day trips fell by 3.1% and day trip expenditure by 2.9% over the same period. The town centre and Bohemia offer significant potential to attract increased tourist spend and to increase employment opportunities in the tourism sector through the development of new and improved leisure and cultural attractions, visitor facilities and improved connections to the seafront.
- 3.65 Visitor statistics for the Jerwood Gallery in 2015 showed that over two thirds (66%) of visitors travelled to Hastings just to see the gallery and around two fifths of these (42%) were first time visitors to the area. Seven out of ten (71%) visitors to the gallery thought

that this venue raised the town's profile. The Source Park has also had a significant visitor economy impact. This highlights the importance of cultural tourism to the town and its links to the wider development of the cultural offer.

- 3.66 There is a need to enhance the quality of visitor accommodation, facilities and attractions. Hastings Town Centre and Bohemia have a key role to play in improving the tourism offer and creating a balanced attraction to the Old Town and eastern seafront which will encourage a greater number of visitors to the western part of the town.

Question 3: Have we identified all of the key issues within the AAP area? If not what issues have we missed and how should these be addressed?

Table 1: Summary of key issues & opportunities

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Location ➤ Cultural heritage and history of area ➤ A range of well used retail, cultural and leisure facilities ➤ Existing green space and landscape features ➤ Heritage buildings ➤ Summerfields Wood Local Nature Reserve - a unique asset ➤ Sea views and vistas ➤ Important cultural assets- Hastings Pier and White Rock Theatre ➤ Investment in Hastings Pier and White Rock Baths ➤ Access to Rail Station and public transport ➤ Vibrant independent sector, in both retail and creative industries ➤ Development of a cultural cluster in Robertson Street/Trinity Triangle ➤ Compact, accessible retail core ➤ High level of community involvement in all aspects of Hastings life including the packed annual calendar of events, many run by volunteers 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of sub-regional profile of facilities in the area ➤ Underutilised areas ➤ Extensive areas of open space which are poorly connected ➤ Poor maintenance and management of open areas ➤ Poor quality pedestrian environment ➤ A large number of disparate occupiers and poorly defined uses ➤ Quality of visitor offer does not meet market expectations ➤ Leisure facilities do not meet identified needs ➤ Poor connections between White Rock, the seafront and wider town centre ➤ Dominance of traffic on seafront ➤ Lack of signage and wayfinding ➤ Poor quality gateways into the town centre
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Significant areas in public ownership ➤ Potential for consolidation of existing uses ➤ Release of land for mixed use development ➤ Innovation and adaptation which will also act as an attractor to investors and visitors ➤ Unlock potential of seafront, landscape and views ➤ Potential for partnership working ➤ Potential to anchor the town centre at its western edge by driving footfall ➤ Build on assets such as Hastings Pier, Source Park, Hastings Museum and White Rock Theatre ➤ Growth of the 'staycation' market ➤ Improve the quality of the visitor offer ➤ Continued exodus of people from London and Brighton, particularly creative professionals. ➤ Proximity of retail areas to the seafront ➤ Higher and further education facilities in town centre ➤ Opportunity to tell the 1066 story in a way that is more relevant to the town and creates a new visitor attraction 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ageing retail and leisure facilities in need of investment ➤ Uncertainty regarding future of White Rock Theatre ➤ Deterioration of heritage buildings unless funding and a suitable use is secured ➤ Availability of funding and Investment in new facilities ➤ Piecemeal approach to development ➤ Loss of retail, sports and cultural facilities ➤ Competition from other destinations with superior facilities ➤ Poor quality and quantity of retail space