



Hastings Retail Study
Background Document - Local Centre Reports
Prepared on behalf of Hastings Borough Council

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Knight Frank LLP has been instructed to address the Council's brief which sets out their requirements for a study of future shopping needs and the retail capacity of the Borough. This is principally dealt with in the Main Study Report but this Background Document presents our local centre reports which reflect our assessment of each centre and the outcomes of relevant focus group meetings.

1.2 For each centre we consider the following:

- The physical core
- Range of shops (including an assessment of each centre in respect of the PPS6 Annex A typologies.)
- Strengths
- Weaknesses
- Primary frontages
- Development opportunity sites.

2.0 St Leonards Town Centre

Physical Core

- 2.1 The physical core of St Leonards town centre incorporates the 'St. Leonards Warrior Square' station and the area immediately to the south along Kings Road, the lower part of London Road, parts of Norman Road, Saxon Street and parts of Grand Parade.

Range of Shops

- 2.2 A broad range of retailers are located within the centre comprising a mix of national traders (e.g. Boots, Spar and Threshers), independent traders (e.g. Kings Butchers, The Fruit Bowl Greengrocers, Wilson and Sons Bakery) and specialist traders (e.g. Kings Stationers, The Motorcycling World of JS Gedge and Adams and Jarrett Domestic Appliances). There are banks and building societies and a number of restaurants and cafes. In the PPS6 Annex A typologies, St Leonards would be identified as a "district centre". These are defined as follows:

"District centres will usually comprise groups of shops often containing at least one supermarket or superstore, and a range of non-retail services, such as banks, building societies and restaurants, as well as local public facilities such as a library".

- 2.3 The composition, number and percentage of town centre uses, contain within the Hastings Borough Council St Leonards town centre inset plan as at 8th April 2005 are indicated below:

Table 1: Floorspace Composition - St Leonards

Use Class	Number Of Units	Percentage of Units
A1	99	43.8%
A2	21	9.3%
A3	14	6.2%
A4	6	2.7%
A5	7	3.1%
B1	7	3.1%
C1	1	0.4%
C3	28	12.4%
D1	2	0.9%
D2	1	0.4%
Sui Generis	8	3.5%
Vacant	32	14.2%
Total	226	100%

Source: HBC/KF

Strengths of St Leonards Town Centre

- 2.4 A good mix of retail uses providing a variety of necessary services to local residents including butchers, bakers, newsagents, grocers and a post office.
- 2.5 It is relatively inexpensive to retail within St Leonards town centre due to relatively low property and rental values.
- 2.6 The centre is easily accessible to people from surrounding communities.
- 2.7 It is relatively well served by public transport including good rail links to and from Hastings town centre.
- 2.8 St Leonards town centre acts as a vibrant community centre and focal point for local residents.
- 2.9 It has a Conservation Area designation and notable architectural composition.
- 2.10 It has latent potential for growth and regeneration.
- 2.11 There is potential to increase the tourist element of St Leonards town centre focused around the promenade and sea-front area.
- 2.12 The increasing number of grants available from groups such as the Town Centre Management.
- 2.13 The centre has a number of opportunities for regeneration through the St Leonards Masterplan, the Southwater Housing Renewal Area and the St Leonards Renewal Strategy 2004.

Weaknesses of St Leonards Town Centre

- 2.14 There exists a severe deficiency of parking provision for shoppers leading to difficulties finding parking spaces.
- 2.15 Traffic congestion is particularly bad along the principal shopping streets.
- 2.16 A conscious perception of crime and anti-social behaviour with a relatively large number of local inhabitants being subject to ASBOs. CCTV coverage is not viewed as a particularly effective deterrent.
- 2.17 There are limited 'magnet' shops to lift the retail area and encourage further investment.

- 2.18 The lack of good quality restaurants and up-market pubs/wine bars does little to encourage or promote the development of an evening economy.
- 2.19 Too many A4 and A5 units located within the central retail area.
- 2.20 There exists a poor mix of non-retail uses, particularly in the financial sector.
- 2.21 The lack of a general multiple store has affected the area.
- 2.22 The lack of a decent clothes and shoe shop is construed as a weakness to the retail mix and hence does not attract customers away from other competing retail centres.
- 2.23 In the peripheral areas of St Leonards town centre (e.g. Norman Road, Silchester Road, Western Road); it is believed that properties are purposely being left vacant by owners, in order that they become further rundown with the intention of changing them to residential use.
- 2.24 The physical and aesthetic environment of St Leonards town centre is considered to detract from the area and is currently perceived as a constraint to the future regeneration of the retail centre

Where are the Primary Retail Frontages?

- 2.25 The existing District Centre boundary, as defined by the St Leonards town centre inset, of the Adopted Hastings Local Plan 2004, shows 5 distinct areas. From the study undertaken, it is apparent that the retail core area is focussed upon Kings Road, the lower part of London Road and the eastern side of Norman Road. These are the busy retail areas and it is considered appropriate to define these specific areas as the retail core, to concentrate retail activity. Those areas such as Silchester Road and Marina/Grand Parade contain varying levels of retail activity, but it is interspersed with residential and commercial uses, and the pattern of retail is therefore disrupted and should not be defined as the retail core.
- 2.26 The retail activity along the Marina (below and adjacent to Marine Court), is significantly detached from the main part of St Leonards town centre. Consequently, it is considered that by physical location and the range of retail activities which occur currently, this parade of units does not form part of the St Leonards town centre retail core but could be designated as a neighbourhood centre.
- 2.27 The upper part of London Road (No 45 upwards) comprises a number of vacant properties and is considered to be peripheral to the retail core. It does not appear to be a sustainable retail location, judging by the composition of the buildings and the predominance of A2 uses and should therefore be

excluded from the retail core. Alternative forms of use other than retail (A1) should therefore be considered.

- 2.28 Consolidation of the retail core is imperative if the retail activity is to be sustained and longevity maintained. The primary shopping frontages should be identified as the whole of Kings Road, the lower part of London Road (Nos 1 - 45 and 2 - 48 inclusive) and the eastern side of Norman Road (Nos 2 - 26 and 1 - 23 inclusive). Concentration on the lower part of London Road/Kings Road/Norman Road (east side) as the retail core of St Leonards town centre to ensure that a vibrant and varied mix of town centre uses ensues.

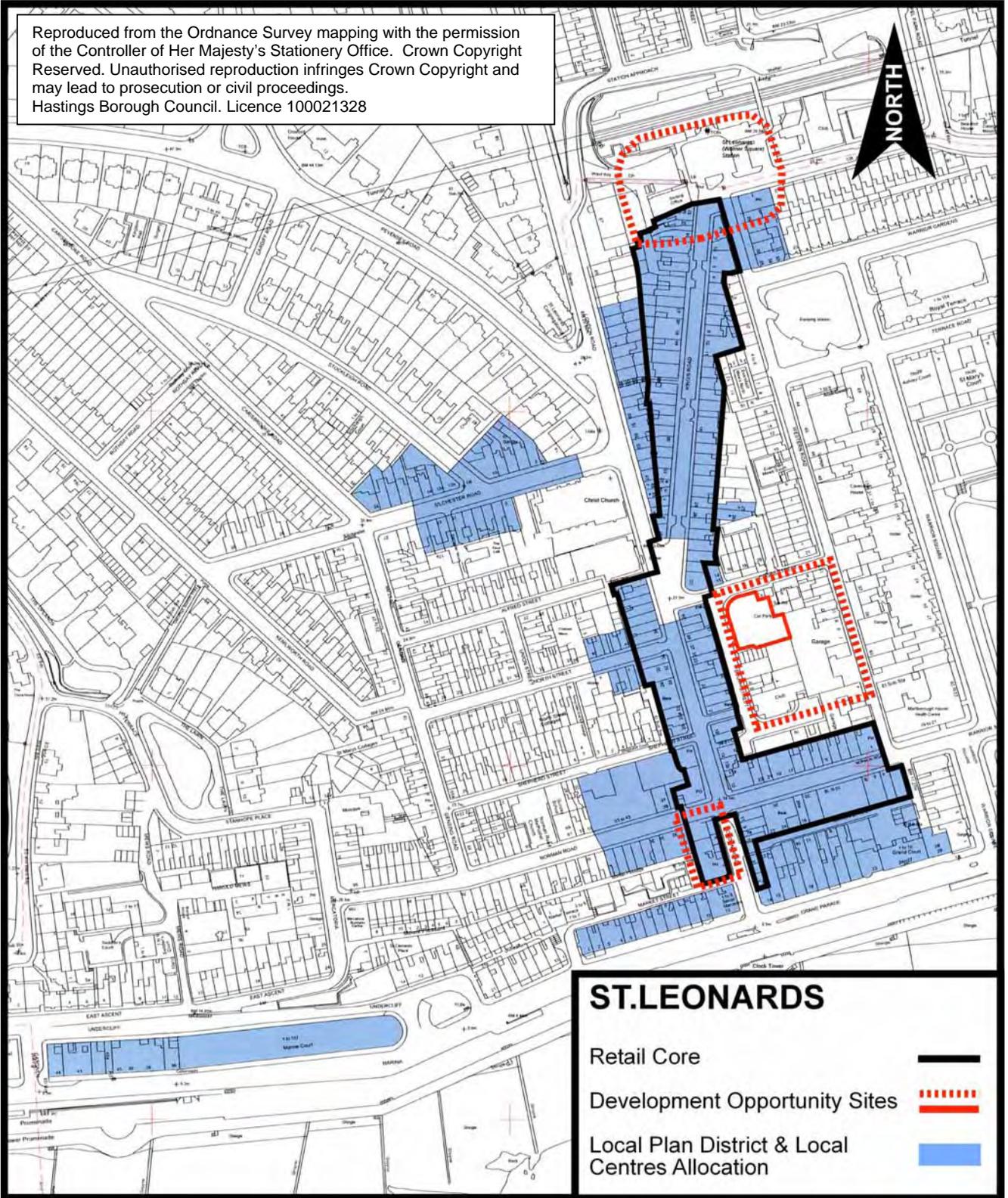
Development Opportunity Sites

- 2.29 Due to the compact and densely developed nature of St Leonards town centre, existing road layouts and conservation area designation, development is limited to a relatively small number of readily identifiable opportunity sites. Whilst there are few sites immediately available for new retail uses, regeneration work currently underway in St Leonards town centre may provide the opportunity to assemble larger sites for retail or A3 uses as part of mixed use schemes. The review of the retail core has concluded that it is focussed on a relatively small central area and consequently wholesale redevelopment of existing retail units in this area, is complicated by ownership, conservation and heritage issues and difficulties associated with construction in a busy urban centre.
- 2.30 Where limited development opportunities have been identified within the main retail area (e.g. former sorting office site in Kings Road), small mixed use development is considered acceptable. However there are larger development opportunities which have the potential for redevelopment (which should include retail development) and will support and bolster the retail core, although these appear to be complex sites to develop due to multi-ownership, restrictive site boundaries and complications that could arise from constrained on site constructional issues. The sites which are considered suitable for development which could have a positive impact upon the retail vitality of St Leonards town centre are:
- Kings Road/Warrior Square Station Area
 - Western Road/Cross Street
 - Cross Street/South Street car park
 - Corner of Market Street/London Road/Norman Road (west side)
- 2.31 Some of these sites are currently under consideration by Broadway Malyan, as part of the St Leonards Masterplan, under the site identification in the adopted local plan or included in the St Leonards Renewal Strategy 2004. They do provide an opportunity individually or collectively to support the wider

regeneration package for St Leonards and hence provide a positive impact upon current and future retailing activity in the location.

- 2.32 The sea front is a wholly underutilised asset which should be encouraged for the benefit of St Leonards generally. The Burtons' St Leonards Seafront is an integral part of the wider Seafront Strategy and regeneration proposals for this area will boost the retail activity and become an attraction, which will specifically encourage further investment and interest in St Leonards.

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ST. LEONARDS

- Retail Core
- Development Opportunity Sites
- Local Plan District & Local Centres Allocation

3.0 The Old Town

Physical Core

- 3.1 The physical core encompasses the entire length of George Street running east to west and the southern part of High Street running north to south up to Nos. 21 and 99 High Street. Courthouse Street is also incorporated within Old Town's District / Local Centre.

Range of Shops

- 3.2 It can be seen from the below table that the majority of units in the Old Town are in A1 retail use with the units selling items such as antiques, furniture, jewellery and speciality shops. Restaurants and cafes (Class A3) had the second highest percentage. In the PPS6 Annex A Typologies, the Old Town would be classified as a "local centre" albeit one with a significant tourism role. Local centres are defined as follows:

"Local centres include a range of small shops of a local nature serving a small catchment. Typically, local centres might include, amongst other shops, a small supermarket, a newsagent, a sub-post office and a pharmacy. Other facilities could include a hot-food takeaway and launderette. In rural areas, large villages may perform the role of a local centre".

Table 2: Floorspace Composition - Old Town

Use Class	Number Of Units	Percentage of Units
A1	91	47.2%
A2	5	2.6%
A3	27	14%
A4	14	7.3%
A5	6	3.1%
B1	1	0.5%
C1	2	1%
C3	19	9.8%
D1	6	3.1%
D2	1	0.5%
Sui Generis	6	3.1%
Vacant	15	7.8%
Total	193	100%

Source: HBC/KF

Strengths of Old Town

- 3.3 Its central position in hosting public and civic events such as the Old Town Week etc.
- 3.4 A vibrant nightlife attracting people from both Hastings and the surrounding area strengthened by the variety and quality of restaurants and traditional public houses.
- 3.5 The existence of a large number of independent traders and family businesses which enable private businesses to respond to market shifts faster than the national multiples.
- 3.6 A relatively low level of vacant units with the most sought after units being located within George Street and the lower part of the High Street.
- 3.7 A good concentration of antique shops, second-hand book shops, galleries and museums where shoppers are able to find a good range of gifts at varying prices.
- 3.8 Old Town enjoys a high degree of customer loyalty and return visits.
- 3.9 Tourist attractions such as the crazy golf, the museum, Seaworld and the Flamingo Amusements draw people to the Old Town

Weaknesses of Old Town

- 3.10 An over concentration of restaurants and gift shops should be avoided.
- 3.11 Access to the Old Town is currently poor especially at weekends and the future provision of additional signage to direct people from the railway station would improve people's awareness of the area.
- 3.12 There is relatively poor signage throughout the area, a problem which is especially prevalent towards the High Street.
- 3.13 Old Town is neither pedestrian nor disabled friendly due to the narrow cobbled streets and pavements.
- 3.14 Many retail units specifically located in the northern part of High Street have converted to residential use which is diminishing the retail potential of this part of the High Street.

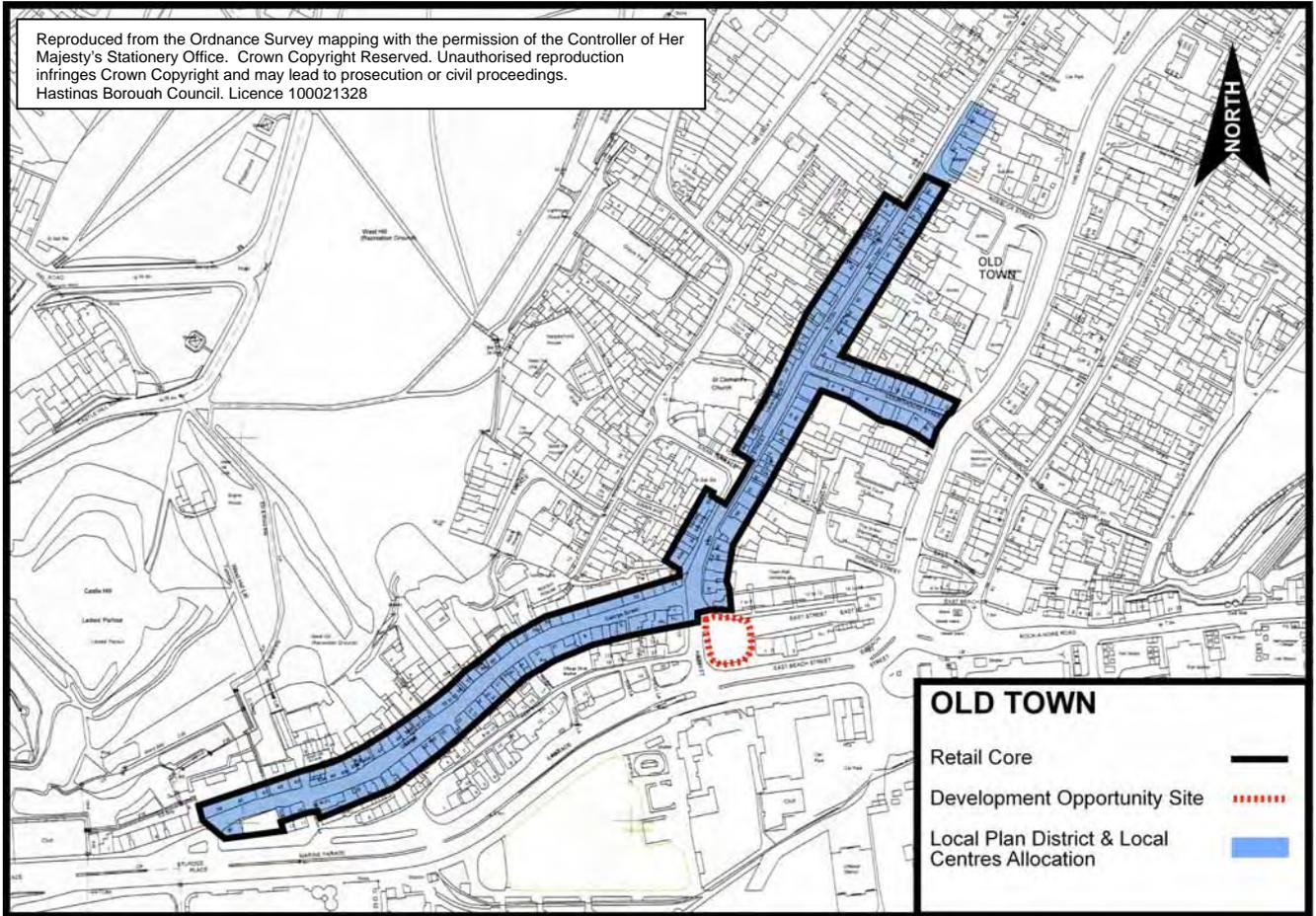
Where are the Primary Retail Frontages?

- 3.15 The core retail area is concentrated on three streets; George St, High St, and Courthouse St. The extent of the retail function of High St should stop at Roebuck St. This has the benefit of concentrating the retail uses and separating them from the residential uses which make up the vast majority of properties to the north of Roebuck Street

Development Opportunity Sites

- 3.16 The Old Town Conservation Area was designated in 1968. It contains over 100 listed properties which represent a significant constraint in terms of identifying development opportunities.
- 3.17 The pedestrianisation of the High Street up to Courthouse Street would help consolidate retail activity in that part of the town centre.
- 3.18 An opportunity could exist on the Blue Dolphin car park area at the end of George Street/High Street.

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4.0 Bohemia

Physical Core

- 4.1 The physical core of the centre incorporates the central part of Bohemia Road and stretches approximately 350m in both directions to St. Paul's Road and North Road. The ground floors of these properties are mainly commercial with storage or residential at upper floors (up to a maximum of 2 or 3). There are also a number of residential properties interspersed at the peripheral points of this defined area.

Range of Shops

- 4.2 There are 116 units within the wider centre with a mixture of A1, A2, A3, A4 and A5 uses, in addition to a number of others. The range of retailers is broad and comprises primarily independent retailers (e.g. Gordon Busbridge Furniture, Eversfield Food and Gifts, Bookman Halt Books, newsagents and bakers), in addition to limited national retailers (e.g. Vantage Pharmacy and Alldays). There is no longer a Post Office, although there are branches of high street banks and building societies, a range of other professional services (e.g. estate agents, solicitors etc) and numerous takeaways and public houses. It should be noted that although there is a Lidl located in close proximity to Bohemia it is not included within the data as it lies outside the defined shopping boundary as illustrated in the adopted 2004 Hastings Local Plan. In the PPS6 Annex A Typologies, Bohemia would be classified as a "local centre", the definition for which is set out in para 2.2 above.

Table 3: Floorspace Composition - Bohemia

Use Class	Number Of Units	Percentage of Units
A1	50	43.1%
A2	5	4.3%
A3	6	5.2%
A4	2	1.7%
A5	4	3.4%
B1	6	5.2%
C1	0	0%
C3	15	12.9%
D1	0	0%
D2	0	0%
Sui Generis	6	5.2%
Vacant	22	18.9%
Total	116	100%

Source: HBC/KF

Strengths of Bohemia

- 4.3 Bohemia contains a diverse range of shops and a mix of retailers who meet the daily needs of the community in addition to the existence of more specialist retailers.
- 4.4 Bohemia has developed into a vibrant community where people feel attached to the centre and as such want to see it develop and improve.
- 4.5 There is a strong sense of community in Bohemia due to the shopping and trading facilities.
- 4.6 A large Lidl store within walking distance of the centre.
- 4.7 An active interest from groups such as the Credit Union to operate currently underprovided financial services to the community has been noted.

Weaknesses of Bohemia

- 4.8 There currently exists a lack of parking which is an important consideration in order for existing businesses to survive.
- 4.9 The bus services within Bohemia are poor and it would be more beneficial for Bohemia if a network of local feeder buses were provided.
- 4.10 A perceived and real threat from traffic to pedestrians exists along parts of Bohemia Road, which does nothing to enhance the retail environment.
- 4.11 There is no longer a Post Office, greengrocer, fresh fish shop or butcher in Bohemia. The nearest Post Office is half a mile away, with one in Silverhill and the other in Springfield Road, though both involve an uphill walk from Bohemia.
- 4.12 The permanent loss of retail units for predominately residential use is not considered to be beneficial for the local retail centre and the shopping needs of the community.
- 4.13 The number of vacant units is a problem, in terms of how the area sells itself as a retail location.
- 4.14 Pressure exists to convert vacant units to residential.
- 4.15 There is concern surrounding the impact of fast food outlets and associated amenity issues.

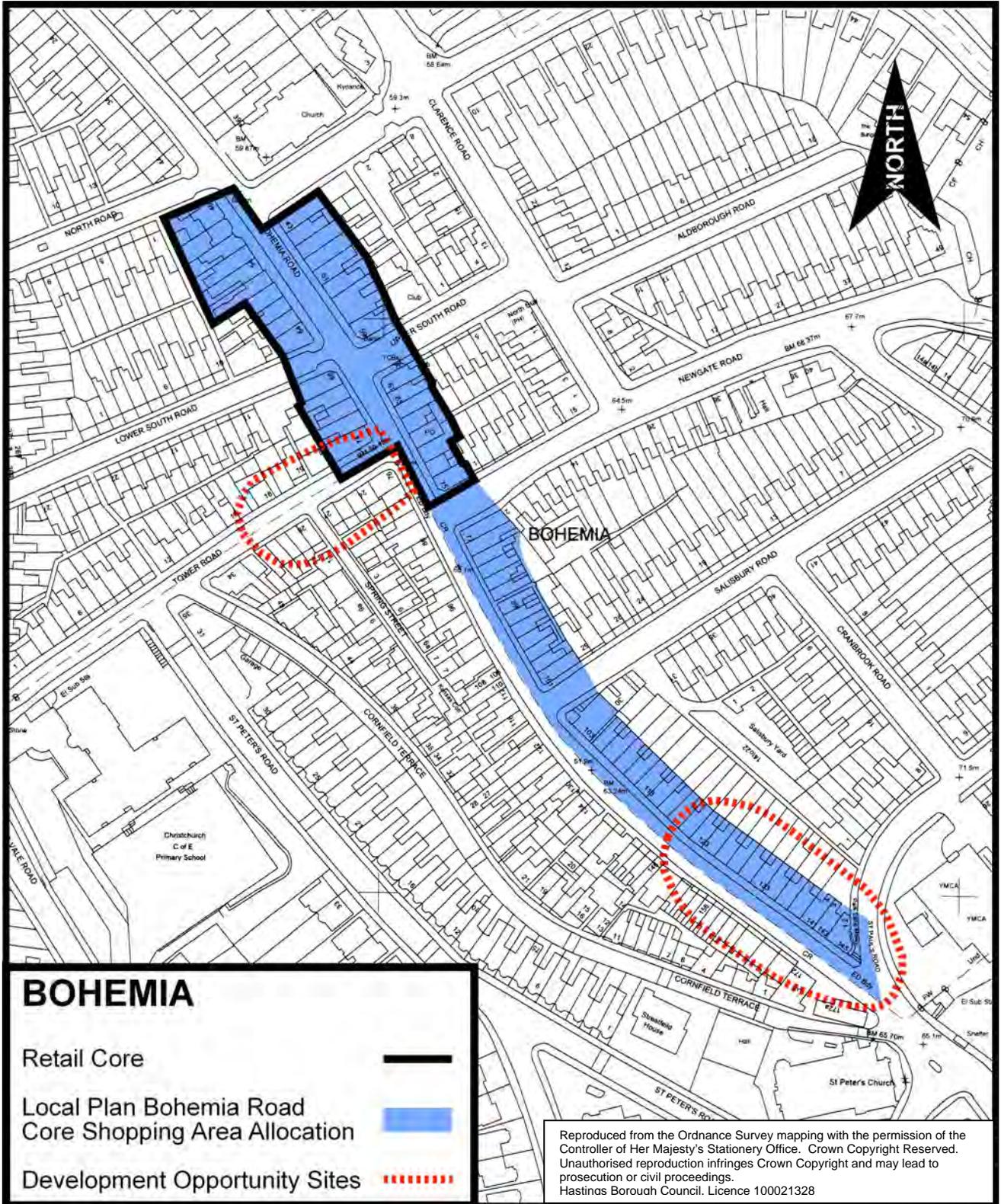
- 4.16 The current lack of shoes and clothing shops is considered to be a weakness.
- 4.17 The lack of financial services is a concern with no on-street ATM machines located within Bohemia.
- 4.18 Locally, Lidl is not considered to be part of Bohemia district centre and seems to focus its catchment more towards the deprived Central St Leonards' ward.

Where are the Primary Retail Frontages?

- 4.19 The heart of Bohemia used to be the Post Office opposite Tower Road, but since its closure, the core has focused on the Vantage Pharmacy at the northern end of Bohemia Road. The middle to northern end of Bohemia Road has traditionally been the primary retail focus although where the physical centre of Bohemia lies is also strongly influenced by both the area's topography and road junctions.
- 4.20 The primary shopping frontages are however readily identifiable and should be confirmed as running the length of Bohemia Road, from Newgate Road in the south of the settlement to Upper Park Road in the north.

Development Opportunity Sites

- 4.21 There are no large development opportunity sites available in the central Bohemia area. There is however opportunity to address the vacant units and the peripheral areas of residential development along the main road. Equally the linkage along Tower Road, where a number of commercial businesses operate is worthy of further investigation.
- 4.22 Parking solutions and environmental improvements are seen as key opportunities to support and bolster the retail offer and consolidate and ensure the retention of the existing retail units. The possibility of using the Christchurch Primary School and/or the YMCA car parks as joint facilities to encourage shoppers to use the centre are possibilities that are worthy of further investigation.
- 4.23 The area is being considered for decriminalised parking which may free up space in adjacent side streets.



5.0 Ore Village

Physical Core

- 5.1 The physical core runs the western length of Old London Road from the Nat West Bank at the southern end of Old London Road up to the Jade Inn Restaurant at the northern end. It is important to note however that Christ Church and Church Hall do not fall within the designated District Centre. On the eastern side of Old London Road the physical centre runs from Ridgeway Autos at the southern end of Old London Road up to the Oddfellows public house.

Range of Shops

- 5.2 There are 61 units located within the centre which provide a range of uses to satisfy the daily requirements of the local population with a mixture of A1, A2, A3, A4 and A5 uses. The range of retailers is broad and comprises primarily independent retailers (e.g. R Winchester and Sons, Laycock Chemist, RN French TV and Video, newsagents, greengrocers and bakers) in addition to limited national retailers (e.g. Co-op, Threshers). There is also a Post Office, branches of high street banks and building societies, a range of other professional services (e.g. The Mortgage Ladder) and numerous takeaways and public houses. In the PPS6 Annex A Typologies, Ore Village falls between the "district centre" and "local centre" definitions. On balance its range of non-retail services lifts it above the definition of local centres and it can be classified as a district centre (see para 1.2 for definition).

Table 4: Floorspace Composition - Ore Village

Use Class	Number Of Units	Percentage of Units
A1	27	44.2%
A2	4	6.6%
A3	3	4.9%
A4	2	3.3%
A5	3	4.9%
B1	0	0%
C1	0	0%
C3	11	18%
D1	5	8.2%
D2	0	0%
Sui Generis	2	3.3%
Vacant	4	6.6%
Total	61	100%

Source: HBC/KF

Strengths of Ore

- 5.3 Ore is well served by a number of core retailers which adds to its desirability as a retail centre, including a Post Office, Nat West Bank, greengrocer, bakers, pharmacies and Co-op supermarket.
- 5.4 There are a variety of retailers who offer specialist services and goods, such as Geddes Honda Centre, K Apps Cycles, RN French TV and Video, R Winchester and Sons.
- 5.5 Ore contains a healthy mix of restaurants such as the Jade Inn Chinese, in addition to takeaways and cafes.
- 5.6 It is a relatively thriving retail centre with an excellent local shopping mix.
- 5.7 It has a relatively low vacancy rate that currently exists with only four units being noted as vacant, of which at least one was undergoing alteration. It should also be noted that once retail units become vacant they are occupied relatively quickly.
- 5.8 The availability of car parking spaces in Ore is relatively better than in other centres such as Bohemia or Silverhill with a free car park located above the Co-op supermarket.
- 5.9 Ore has a personal and friendly environment with a strong sense of community spirit, retaining its village feel.
- 5.10 A real reduction in levels and perceived fear of crime has also contributed to the attractiveness of Ore as a local retail centre.

Weaknesses of Ore

- 5.11 There exists a common perception that people who work within Ore and park their cars during the day take up spaces which are needed for people who may wish to visit the shops.
- 5.12 Deficiencies in public transport services exist whereby there are currently no short distance local buses serving Ore and its immediate surrounding communities.
- 5.13 Concern has been expressed regarding the number of charity shops, reflecting badly on the general health and retail vitality of Ore.

- 5.14 Gaps in retail provision exist in the clothing sector and specifically in relation to shoes since the closure of Ore's only shoe shop.
- 5.15 The centre operates on the viability margins due to the demographic make-up of the catchment population which includes a high proportion of local people reliant on benefits.

Where are the Primary Retail Frontages?

- 5.16 The current boundary of the Ore District Centre as defined by the Hastings Local Plan Proposals Map 2004 is seen to effectively represent the existing retail centre and contains the majority of the A1 retail uses currently operating within Ore. There is the possibility that the boundary could be redefined by extending the boundary further along Old London Road (towards Hastings town centre), in order to include units currently excluded such as Gedges Honda Centre and Pet Pride Pet Shop.
- 5.17 However, no continuous retail frontage exists and individual retail units are interspersed with residential properties. Consequently to extend the District Centre boundary seems neither appropriate nor desirable especially when taking into consideration the area of open space adjacent to number 430 Old London Road, which acts as a natural barrier to the retail centre. In relation to extending the centre's northern boundary to possibly include B&Q, there is a consensus view that the B&Q is poorly related to the local centre, due to the limited number of people who combine a trip to the store with a general visit to Ore District Centre and is physically detached. There is no incentive to reduce the retail boundary, as such a reduction may act to limit the ability of existing units to expand or new units to relocate. A particular issue with any shrinkage of the defined retail centre would be the ease at which retail units would subsequently be permanently lost to residential use.
- 5.18 The primary shopping frontage is therefore readily identifiable and should be confirmed as running from the Nat West Bank (No 438 Old London Road) to The Jade Inn (No 510 Old London Road and from Oddfellows Arms Public House (No 397 Old London Road) to Ridgeway Autos (Nos 381/389 Old London Road). Additionally the primary retail frontage should include the Co-op and the Doctor's surgery at Nos 4/6 and 2 Fairlight Road.

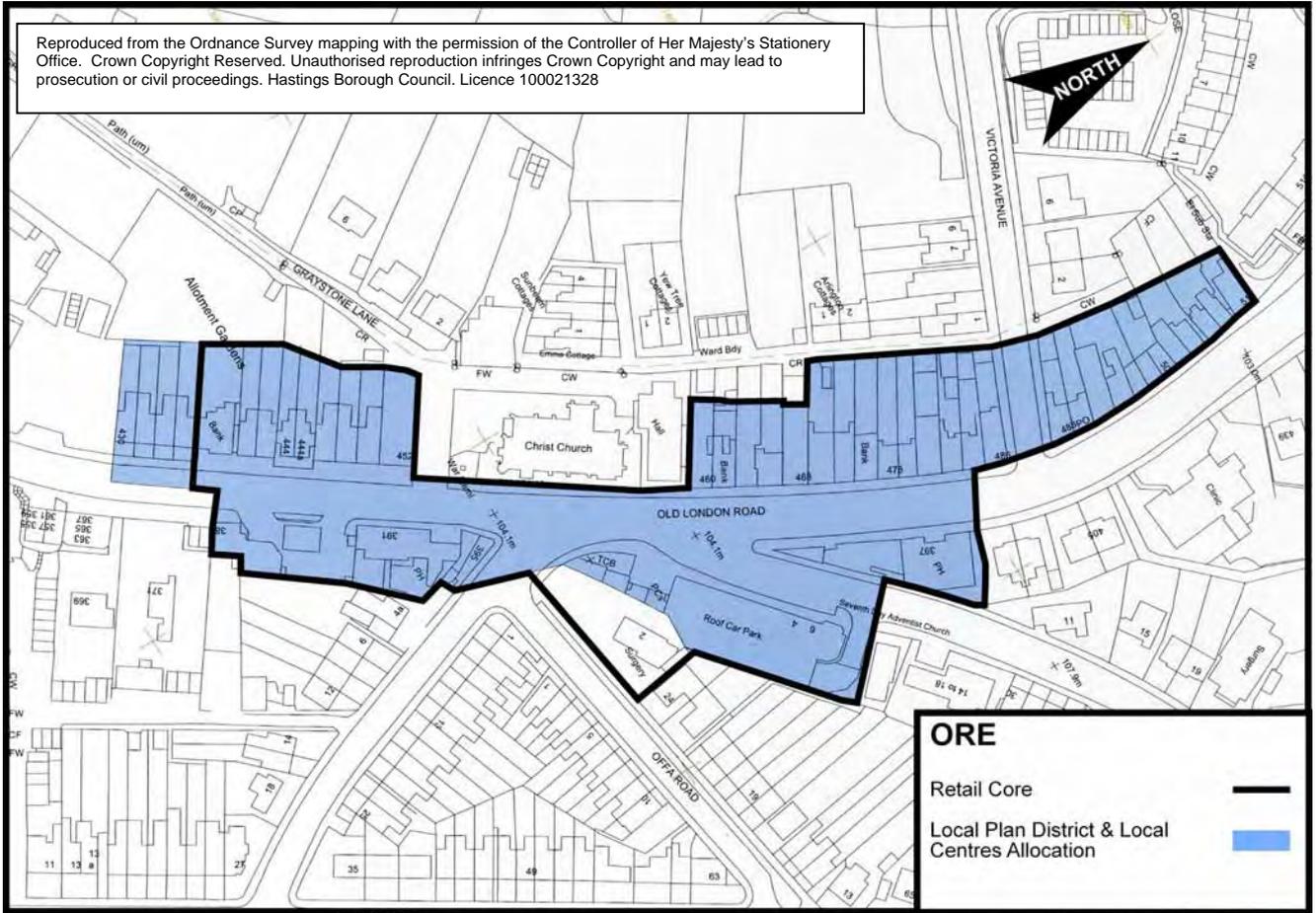
Development Opportunity Sites

- 5.19 There are no immediate development opportunity sites in the Ore central area. The emphasis should be to consolidate the existing retail core and ensure that there is uptake on the existing vacant properties, which is market led. The view is that the retail centre is operating marginally, but the range of retail facilities and the service that is provided to the community is good. The key to sustaining the

retail centre of Ore is to maintain the special feel of the location and continue to undertake measures which will encourage further investment.

- 5.20 Development of nearby allocated residential sites will certainly underpin the retail centre and if employment opportunities on these sites as part of a mixed use could be achieved then this will further bolster the retail core and provide an additional dimension of expenditure within the district centre.

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6.0 Silverhill

Physical Core

- 6.1 The physical core of the centre incorporates the upper part of London Road (on the eastern side), including part of Beaufort Road and beyond to include the eastern side of Sedlescombe Road North up to the junction with Vale Road. The ground floors of these properties are wholly commercial with storage or residential at upper floors (up to a maximum of 2 or 2 1/2).

Range of Shops

- 6.2 There are 64 units within the centre which provide a range of uses to satisfy the daily requirements of the local population with a mixture of A1, A2, A3, A4 and A5 uses. The range of retailers is broad and comprises primarily independent retailers (e.g. Strickland Pet and Garden, Vale Hardware, newsagents, greengrocers and bakers), in addition to limited national retailers (e.g. Co-op, Lloyds Chemist, Victoria Wine). There is also a Post Office, branches of high street banks and building societies, a range of other professional services (e.g. estate agents, solicitors etc) and numerous takeaways and public houses. As indicated above the main retail core focuses on the eastern side of London Road and Sedlescombe Road North. Like Ore Village, Silverhill can be classified as a "district centre" in the PPS6 Annex A Typologies albeit one that is relatively small. On balance it provides a range of retail and non-retail services which lift it above the "local centre" classification.

Table 5: Floorspace Composition - Silverhill

Use Class	Number Of Units	Percentage of Units
A1	27	42.2%
A2	8	12.5%
A3	1	1.6%
A4	3	4.6%
A5	7	10.9%
B1	2	3.1%
C1	0	0%
C3	6	9.4%
D1	1	1.6%
D2	0	0%
Sui Generis	1	1.6%
Vacant	8	12.5%
Total	64	100%

Source: HBC/KF

Strengths of Silverhill

- 6.3 Silverhill has a good range of shops and mix of retailers providing daily community needs (greengrocers, butcher, baker, newsagents, Co-op supermarket, banking facilities and a Post Office) in addition to the existence of more specialist retailers.
- 6.4 It has developed into a vibrant community where people feel attached to the centre and as such want to see it develop and improve.
- 6.5 There exists a relatively healthy situation in terms of unit occupancy and vacancy levels.
- 6.6 There is no current concern regarding high levels of crime which have continuously fallen over the last 5 years.

Local Centre Weaknesses

- 6.7 The principal arterial road running from Hastings to London, the A21, runs through the core of the Silverhill retail area.
- 6.8 There is a busy major junction at the interchange of Battle Road, London Road and Sedlescombe Road North where the A21 and the B2159 meet used by a high concentration of HGVs, buses and private cars which pass through Silverhill at a relatively high speed
- 6.9 Such vehicle movements have the combined effect of reducing the environmental quality of the retail centre, due to the proximity of the traffic to the pedestrians and the perceptible pollution problems.
- 6.10 Traffic concerns are made worse by the poor location of the pedestrian crossing at the southern end of Sedlescombe Road North which is not seen to adequately or conveniently connect the retail units located within the centre.
- 6.11 A high volume of buses move within Silverhill on a daily basis, due to Hastings' main bus depot being located on Beaufort Road. This results in buses regularly travelling along Strood Road, Sedlescombe Road North, Vale Road and Beaufort Road simultaneously causing congestion, environmental problems and generally reducing the amenity value of both residents and visitors to the Silverhill district centre and community as a whole.
- 6.12 Detrimental parking limitations result in 'would-be' shoppers unable to visit the retail units because of the lack of parking provision.

- 6.13 The acute lack of parking is thought to be further exacerbated by bus drivers, who work at the depot on Beaufort Road, arriving early for work and parking their cars locally for the duration of their shifts, taking up valuable parking spaces which could be used by local shoppers.
- 6.14 There is a perceived lack of funding from bodies such as the Town Centre Management who subsidise retailers in Hastings Town Centre and St Leonards but do not direct funding into smaller retail areas.
- 6.15 Silverhill does not have an identifiable core or centre. Although a number of principal retail units do operate within Silverhill (such as the Post Office or Natwest Bank) they are physically separated from one another. Where there is an uninterrupted parade of retail units on the eastern side of Sedlescombe Road North, such units are relatively small and are not considered to contribute to attracting new retailing opportunities.
- 6.16 There is a lack of clothing outlets and restaurants, in addition to the consensus that Silverhill has limited facilities for attracting tourists and lacks open spaces, further limits the growth of the evening economy.
- 6.17 Relatively poor environmental quality of Sedlescombe Road due to the close proximity of the busy road and the lack of investment into the physical / aesthetic fabric.

Where are the Primary Retail Frontages?

- 6.18 There is a strong consensus that the boundary of the District Centre as defined by the Hastings Local Plan 2004 should be extended to include the units located on the junction of London Road and Battle Road which are currently excluded, namely, Barclays Bank, Upper Cut Hair Salon and Eastern Delights Café. These units are felt to significantly contribute to the District Centre in terms of both footfall and unit mix. The BP garage and its associated shop should also come within the district centre boundary.

Development Opportunity Sites

- 6.19 The currently vacant former supermarket unit located within the centre of Silverhill along Sedlescombe Road North has the ability to be occupied by a relatively large store which may act as both a catalyst for the future growth of Silverhill or may create a sense of focus for the local centre as a whole.
- 6.20 Existing properties, including the BP garage along the west of Sedlescombe Road North, could, if appropriate land assembly prevailed, be redeveloped for new retail space. There is also a site behind Carpetland which may have potential for use as a car park.

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