3.14 The Seafront is the principal tourist attraction of the town. The establishment of a genteel seaside resort was the main reason for the nineteenth century development of Eastbourne by the Duke of Devonshire. Today tourism remains an important economic driver and the Seafront's promenades, gardens, pier and bandstand overlooked by grand hotels such as the Cavendish and Burlington attract a significant number of visitors. In addition the town's theatres and Towner Art Gallery contribute to the overall mix of attractions.

3.15 Given the nineteenth century development of the town there is a strong variety of traditional architectural forms with many generously proportioned, tree lined streets fronted by buildings of a high quality. A number of distinguished landmarks including the Town Hall, Holy Trinity Church, St Saviour's and St Peter's Church, All Soul's Church, the bandstand and fine Victorian pier add richness and identity to different locations in the town centre, along with the Burlington and Claremont Hotels located along the Grand Parade which are both Grade II* listed buildings.

3.16 Key streets of particular distinction include Devonshire Place, Cornfield Road, Grove Road, the western end of South Street and Trinity Trees. Here the width of the streets and the quality of buildings fronting them establishes a particular character that contributes significantly to the town centre.

3.17 Finally, open spaces at Devonshire Park, Hyde Gardens and Wilmington Square play an important role within the town centre and are important assets.

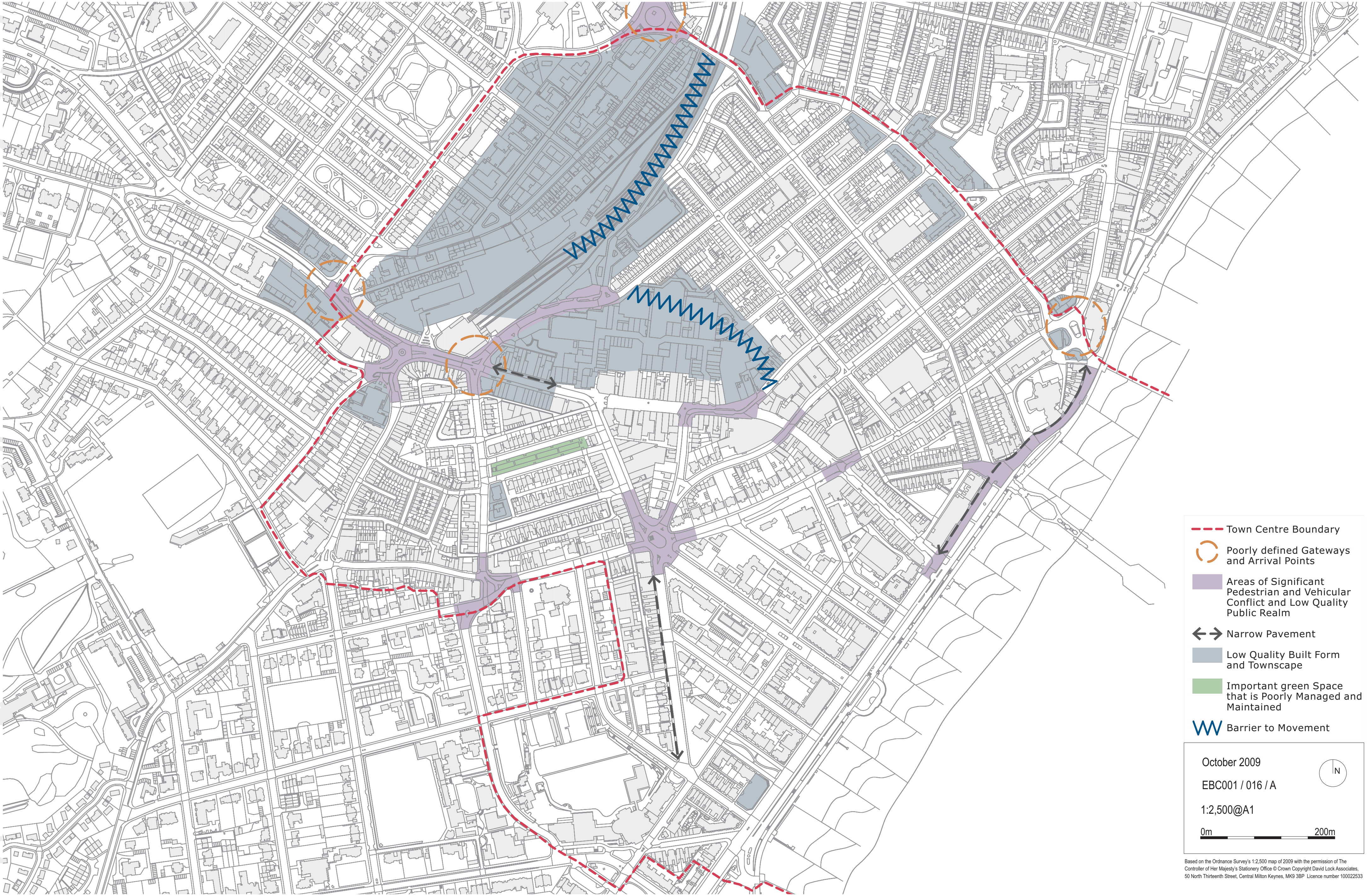
Weaknesses

3.18 Although the town centre has many significant attributes and attractions it lacks a strong and cohesive overall identity. There are obvious attractions - Grove Road, the Seafront, the Arndale Centre, the 'Cultural Quarter' – but the areas in between and the connections through the town centre are weaker.

3.19 The legibility of the centre (the degree to which it can be instinctively 'read' and understood by users, promoted by a logical structure and a range of visual cues to guide individuals to where they want to be or to get the most out of a visit to the centre) is lacking in many parts. This stems from a number of weaknesses:

- In some locations it is a simple matter of poor signage.
- There are number of locations where pedestrians are diverted from natural desire lines, which is frustrating and confusing. In a town centre priority of movement should nearly always be afforded to pedestrians.
- A hierarchy of primary, secondary and tertiary routes is not reinforced through the character of the public realm, paving, street furniture, lighting or priority at junctions.
- A mix of uses across a centre is a great strength, but the co-location of complementary activities in key locations is important in creating legibility and in commercial terms; for example bars and restaurants will benefit if they are clustered, similarly retailing, and professional services.
- In Eastbourne the very considerable spread of secondary/tertiary retailing along numerous streets and in dispersed pockets is a particular issue. It gives a lack of critical mass and disperses footfall, undermining vitality and legibility in many places. It encourages 'one-stop' shopping by car as well as discouraging browsing and true 'comparison' shopping. The principal function of some streets and their position in the hierarchy, notably Seaside Road, has become confused by efforts to sustain a secondary retail function where national and local market forces suggest it is no longer sustainable.

FIGURE 3.4: URBAN DESIGN WEAKNESSES



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3.20 The role of Terminus Road as the principal pedestrian route, perpendicular to the Seafront, the backbone of the centre, is not reflected or reinforced by the nature of the pedestrian journey along it: this is a fundamental weakness and a significant opportunity.

3.21 The 'branding' of Little Chelsea has helped give identity and some sense of cohesion to one part of the centre, providing a good example of reinforcing a character area, as one important structuring element within a legible centre. Much more could be done to develop the legibility of the centre as a whole.

3.22 The sense of arriving into the town centre is also relatively weak. By rail the station is an attractive, light filled space that has recently been restored to a high quality. However, pedestrian routes from the railway station to other parts of the town are poorly signposted and difficult to navigate. This is mainly due to the priority given to vehicular movement in the vicinity of the station which limits crossing points and restricts pedestrian movement through the use of pedestrian barriers.

3.23 Bus users benefit from a key interchange being located in Terminus Road close to the station and the Arndale Centre. However the environmental quality of the area is poor with bus layover generating diesel fumes and footways being narrow and cramped given the number of people accessing the town centre. The concentration of 'standing' buses creates both a visual and physical barrier – the connection between one side of the street and the other is broken; pedestrians can't see and are discouraged from crossing; this particularly weakens the footfall on the western side.

3.24 Motorists approaching the town centre via key routes from the north and east along Upperton Road and Seaside Road quickly become routed around the town centre ring road. Although this limits the penetration of the town centre by vehicles there is a poor sense of arrival into the town centre as a result and the sections of one way traffic can be disorientating. Signposting to car parks distinguishing between short and long stay options is also relatively limited.

3.25 In terms of the public realm the quality of streets and spaces is extremely variable. A mix of paving materials, different styles of street furniture and a number of pedestrian barriers at key locations, particularly around the station, South Street and the junction of Devonshire Place, Trinity Trees and Cornfield Road, contribute to a cluttered and uncoordinated appearance. Hyde Gardens is poorly managed and maintained, particularly given its importance as one of the few open spaces within the town centre.

3.26 Pedestrian crossing points in a number of key locations are indirect and inconvenient and contribute to the impression that the town centre is difficult to move around. Particularly poor examples exist along Terminus Road at the junctions of Ashford Road and Gildridge Road, Grove Road, and also Grand Parade. In addition the crossings at the junctions of South Street and Gildridge Road, and also South Street and Cornfield Road are difficult to negotiate.

Architectural detail, Sussex Gardens.

'Little Chelsea', quality secondary retail.

Eastbourne Station is light and spacious

Grand quality along the Seafront.

Arndale Centre – a popular destination

Robust character, Seaside Road

Poor pedestrian environment.

Key crossing adjoining the station.

'Diesel Alley', Terminus Road

3.27 Although the general quality of built form in the town centre is high there are a number of locations where redevelopment proposals have broken the fine grained street pattern, most notably around the Arndale Centre and Ashford Road. In addition the area around St Leonard's Road has been subject to significant redevelopment which in places is beginning to look tired and rather dated. Maintenance of existing buildings, in particular some shop frontages at the eastern end of Terminus Road and along Seaside Road, contribute little to the overall appearance of the town centre.

3.28 Finally, although there is a good mix of uses across the town the evening and night time economy lacks diversity in certain locations and there is limited activity in the evening. The more limited numbers of people who actually live in some parts of the town centre means that passive surveillance, 'eyes on the street', is lacking leading to a sense of unease for some visitors. Exploring new opportunities for people living in the town centre will be important.

3.29 In addition although there is a strong higher education function within Eastbourne, the University of Brighton campus for example, there is a more limited impact on the town centre. 'Student culture' could bring an added vitality and diversity to the town centre.

The photo opposite shows the recently opened Towner Art Gallery – a significant strength within the town centre.

4.0 MOVEMENT AND ACCESS

Local Transport Plan

4.1 To assist in the delivery of the government's ten year plan for transport and to achieve the County Council's vision for transport in the county, the Local Transport Plan (LTP2), 2006-2011 (East Sussex County Council) contains the following key objectives.

- Improve access to services by providing greater travel choices and influencing land use decisions:
- Manage demand and reduce the need to travel by private car
- Improve road safety and reduce fear of crime in communities
- Reduce congestion and improve the efficiency of the transport network
- Protect, promote and enhance the environment
- Improve maintenance and management of the transport network

4.2 The AAP must recognise the importance of these objectives and any evolution beyond the current LTP process. **Figure 4.1** opposite shows key movements networks across the town centre.

4.3 In terms of funding streams, LTP2 outlines several possibilities that could be explored to support town centre projects, namely: South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) Funding for specific regeneration projects and Transport Innovation Funding (TIF) towards improving cycling / pedestrian infrastructure and overall improvements to accessibility. In addition, and interestingly, LTP2 includes a mechanism to direct surplus revenue, generated by on-street parking towards improvements in public transport infrastructure, which in part has already been implemented in Eastbourne with the advent of Real Time Information on bus stops on Terminus Road, but could also extend to public realm improvements in the town centre.

Pedestrian and cycle accessibility

4.4 Terminus Road, forms the spine through the central retail area within the town centre and offers pedestrians a direct link between the main public transport interchange and the Seafront.

4.5 Whilst the town centre offers a high degree of pedestrian permeability, the alignment of the Town Centre Ring Road does present a barrier to movement between the town centre and the rail station, in addition to the seafront. Further, the function of the Ring Road further compounds localised severance into both Little Chelsea and the Seaside areas of the town centre.

4.6 In terms of cycle accessibility it is noted that Eastbourne Town Centre already offers cycle parking, positioned at various locations within the town centre. However, bespoke cycle access into the town centre area is limited, and consideration within the context of the AAP should be given, for example, of extending the existing Sustrans Cycle Route 21 from Eastbourne Sailing Club into the town centre.

FIGURE 4.1: ACCESS

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Public Transport

4.7 Currently, Terminus Road provides the main interchange area for public transport, with the rail station located on the north side of Ashford Road. Terminus Road provides the focal point for bus services in the town centre, and offers a total of 10 bus bays, with five bays positioned on each side of the road, and based in a parallel alignment to the kerb line. Each bus stop offers, in terms of infrastructure, a sheltered waiting area, timetable information, and real time information on current services.

4.8 Discussions with both East Sussex County Council (ESCC), and Eastbourne Borough Council (EBC) has revealed that exploratory work has been undertaken to develop the proposals associated with relocation of the existing bus interchange to a new location in the town centre.

4.9 Nevertheless, it should be noted that Terminus Road provides direct and accessible connectivity for bus users into and from the retail area of Eastbourne Town Centre. This should be viewed as a key pre-requisite for any interchange option. In addition, Terminus Road provides an area of natural surveillance, due to the existing pedestrian footfall on Terminus Road; this is an important consideration as it results in generating a degree of personal security, especially to vulnerable users.

4.10 Running in tandem with any proposals to relocate bus services within town centre, the AAP should recognise the importance of the proposed Quality Bus Corridor initiative being promoted by East Sussex County Council. This initiative will see the introduction of three corridors, which will include specific bus priority and information measures, each serving the town centre along A22, A2021 (King's Drive) and A259 (Seaside).

4.11 In addition to the Ring Road and the bus services, Eastbourne benefits from the railway station in the heart of the Town Centre which plays an important role in connecting Eastbourne to other local towns, and also provides a regular train service into London. The location of Eastbourne Railway Station is pivotal to the vitality of the Town Centre as it brings people directly into the Town Centre, and also provides a means for commuters into and out of Eastbourne on a daily basis.

Vehicular accessibility

4.12 Central to vehicular accessibility within Eastbourne Town Centre is the role of the Ring Road. The Ring Road not only provides a strategic route around the town centre, but also provides access into the town centre at numerous locations by local access roads. The Ring Road operates in one-way (clockwise) orientation and its cross-section consists of two lanes measuring approximately 7.3 metres in total. Management of intersections is operated by either simple priority junctions, or traffic signal control. The relocation of the Ring Road would bring significant benefits practically in terms of pedestrian access and movement around the railway station.

4.13 It is acknowledged that ESCC has undertaken a historical study (circa 2003) on relocation of the current Ring Road, from Ashford Road, and realigning along The Avenue and Cavendish Place. This realignment was further analysed in 2006 using the Eastbourne (Saturn) Traffic Model, which demonstrated the realignment of the Ring Road is feasible. However, further work, both in design and assessment is required at key junctions to demonstrate suitability, with the most notable example being the junction of Upperton Road and The Avenue, located to the north of the railway station.

4.14 The cost of relocating the Ring Road has been estimated at approximately £400,000; however, this cost does not include revised traffic management measures, improved/revised pedestrian connections, all of which would be required to deliver the scheme. The cost is likely to be prohibitive unless promoted alongside major town centre development which can deliver significant section 106 contributions, for which there would be a number of competing demands in any case.

Parking

4.15 Parking within Eastbourne Town Centre is centred upon on-street short-stay parking and long stay parking focused around the three multi-storey car parks. Revised on-street car parking charges were introduced during 2008, and cover the town centre area, with the maximum stay of 2 hours and costs £2. Running in tandem with the town centre car parking scheme has been the Access Users Group, and the subsequent regulation of Blue Badge Parking in the town centre.

4.16 This regulation has seen implementation of dedicated Blue Badge Car Parking Areas, which allow a maximum stay of 3 hours (thus ensuring a healthy turn-over of spaces), but also extended to allow Blue Badge Holders unrestricted use of the short stay parking areas.

4.17 The town centre parking scheme has seen the introduction of dedicated Delivery drop off spaces, which has formalised arrangements for the loading and unloading of delivery vehicles within the town centre.

4.18 In addition to on-street parking, Eastbourne Town Centre offers three multi-storey car parks, and these are located at the Arndale Centre, Junction Road and Trinity Place. Due to the poor state of repair and issues surrounding personal security at both the Junction Road and Trinity Place Car Parks users tend to head straight to the Arndale Centre or in peak times circulate around the town centre looking for an on-street space. This further compounds localised congestion, and increases noise and air pollution. Discussions with ESCC and EBC revealed that there is no current data regarding car parking supply and demand.

5.0 PROPERTY MARKET OVERVIEW

5.1 Eastbourne is to an extent geographically isolated and this isolation has until recent improvements to the A27 been enforced by comparatively poor road connections (its nearest competitor towns are Hastings 13 miles, Brighton 25 miles and Tunbridge Wells 26 miles). Eastbourne effectively serves its own catchment. Isolation whilst protecting the town from wider competition has also meant that major development would be unlikely to significantly increase the town's catchment and this has resulted in a relatively stable town centre, which has not changed significantly over many years.

5.2 Experian places Eastbourne 85th in its ranking of retail centres, based on its size and retail offer. Experian predict that the town's ranking will fall to 90th by 2018, largely through the growth of other centres and the recognition of new centres such as Blue Water which currently as yet do not feature on the rankings. In effect Experian predict a relatively static phase for the town which emulates its past history.

Prospects for Growth

5.3 Experian place Eastbourne 126th in town rental rankings. This means that it is 41 places below its retail ranking. This is a strong indicator that rental growth has not kept pace with the town's growth. This disparity suggests that significant rental growth is achievable with the right investment.

5.4 Rents tend to rise from a number of factors but primarily from competition. Experian's assessment is based on prime retail Zone A rents of £110 per square foot. We understand that rents within the Arndale Centre have surpassed this level and remain relatively strong despite the economic downturn.

5.5 Most successful and therefore expansion minded national retailers seek to occupy large format stores as this provides the most efficient space from which to maximise sales in relation to costs. Eastbourne is characterised by a large number of small format stores which tend to be more suitable to local and independent retailers who typically pay lower rents as their profitability is often below large format retailers. Strong independent retailers give a distinctive and attractive dimension to the centre.

5.6 The majority of large format space in the town is available in the Arndale Centre and this could account for the higher rental levels it commands. There is strong demand (notably from fashion retailers) for larger floorplates within the Arndale Centre.

5.7 The area of prime retail outside of the Arndale Centre is relatively small in comparison with the large areas of dispersed tertiary retailing. There is potential for the prime pitch to be larger, in terms of retailer demand. This would serve to both raise rents and to make future redevelopment of poorer property more likely.

5.8 In looking to the prospects for growth it is important to look at the town's population forecasts. Growth as has already been suggested will not come from competing with other centres more effectively it will need to come from either a growing population or increased affluence.

Table 5.1: Projected Population, 2006-2026

	2006	2011	2016	2021	2026	Change 2006-26
Eastbourne Borough	94,934	94,047	93,177	92,443	92,242	*(-2.84%)*
Hailsham/Polegate/ Willingdon plus Pevensey/ Westham/ East Dean	44,272	48,187	53,219	56,836	60,742	+37.2%
Eastbourne/Hailsham urban area	**139,206**	**142,234**	**146,396**	**149,279**	**152,984**	**+9.9%**
Outer areas :-						
Heathfield/Waldron/East Hoathly/ Chiddingly/Warbleton	17,936	18,119	17,708	17,227	16,805	*(-6.31%)*
Laughton/Arlington/ Alfriston	3,916	4,073	4,100	4,119	4,155	+6.1%
Herstmonceux/Ninfield	4,530	4,619	4,546	4,465	4,400	*(-2.87%)*
Seaford/Denton/Ringmer	32,241	32,419	32,549	32,771	33,227	+3.06%
Bexhill/Catsfield/Dallington	43,081	43,716	44,198	44,596	45,090	+4.66%
Total – outer areas	**101,704**	**102,946**	**103,101**	**103,178**	**103,677**	**+1.94%**
Total Catchment Area	**240,910**	**245,180**	**249,497**	**252,457**	**256,661**	**+6.54%**

5.9 It can be seen from table 5.1 that the population is set to fall albeit not significantly. Perhaps more significant is that there is growth envisaged outside of the district but within an area forming part of Eastbourne's catchment. This suggests that other more dominant centres such as Brighton are proving more attractive both as a place to live and in terms of inward investment. This is a pattern evident across the South East Region as a whole. It should be noted that Eastbourne benefits significantly from tourism. A report undertaken by Tourism South East presented to the Council in August 2003 identified that some £50m of additional retail expenditure comes from this source. Any assessment of retail capacity needs to recognise this additional source of expenditure. Based on 2006 figures shown below tourism accounts for 6.23% of total expenditure. It is not possible to predict the growth trends which this element of expenditure is subject to, but is likely to be subject to a wider range of influences than core expenditure e.g. cost of foreign holidays, weather predictions etc and is therefore not as reliable as catchment expenditure.

5.10 A report was commissioned in 2004 from DTZ Pieda Consulting by the South East England Regional Assembly entitled “Town Centre Futures, the Need for Retail Development in South East England. Central to the findings of this document were projections of per capita retail spending over the period to 2026. This report concluded that an average per capita retail expenditure growth of 4.4% per annum would be experienced over the period to 2026 compared to an average population growth of 0.52% per annum over the same period. This figure was taken as a midway projection between those made by MapInfo and Experian, both well recognised sources of projection information.

5.11 The following table echoes the report's growth projections.

Table 5.2 – Eastbourne Shopping Catchment Area
Available Comparison Goods Expenditure from residents – 2006-2026

Year	£ per person per ann.	Total available Expenditure £
2006	3,333	802,953,030
(2009)	(3,691)	(898,621,930)
2011	3,871	949,091,780
2016	4,709	1,174,881,370
2021	5,729	1,446,326,150
2026	6,970	1,788,927,170

5.12 It can be seen that by adopting the growth projections it can be seen that per capita expenditure is set to more than double over the period to 2026. DTZ conclude that at this level of growth floorspace should be expected to more than double over the period to 2026.

5.13 Clearly these levels of growth if delivered would have major impacts, however they are only projections and the timescale is such that accurate forecasting is unlikely.

5.14 Experian have produced more recent per capita expenditure growth forecasts to 2018 based on 2008 data which indicates growth in comparison spending of 28% which ties in with the forecasts used by DTZ. However when inflationary growth is stripped from these estimates anticipated net growth fall to 0%, Inflationary growth alone is unlikely to fuel significant changes in floor space therefore considerable caution needs to be exercised in relation to expenditure growth forecasts.

5.15 Should any new retail development take place it would in consequence be seeking to secure a slice of existing retail capacity which would largely come at the expense of existing retailers, in all probability independent tertiary retailers in non-core locations. Major development may therefore result in an overall contraction in the physical size of the retail centre in favour of a smaller number of larger, more successful retailers. This would have the effect of focussing retailing activity into a more compact but consequently viable area. This is not to say, that if the scale of new development is controlled, that many independent retailers will not be able to survive these changes. Those retailers that offer good quality and value or a specialist or unique service will always generally survive provided their clientele value their attributes.

5.16 The benefits of new retail investment in the vicinity of the Arndale Centre and the western end of Terminus Road providing a stronger prime could be considerable:

- ***It could help strengthen the gateway into the centre at the western end of Terminus Road; and***
- ***It could help deliver much needed environmental improvements.***

Un-served Retail Capacity

5.17 Experian rank the town in terms of its population's affluence at 116 compared to its retail ranking of 85. Some of the reasons for this are explored below.

5.18 The following table identifies Eastbourne as having comparatively higher unemployment and a lower economic activity rate than either East Sussex or the South East.

Table 5.3: Economic Activity in 2008

Economic activity/inactivity category Economic activity/inactivity category Geography Geography	Economic activity rate	Employment rate	Percent employees	Percent self-employed	Unemployment rate
Great Britain	78.7	74.5	64.7	9.4	5.3
South East	82	78.5	67.2	11	4.2
East Sussex	81	77.6	61.8	15.6	4.1
Eastbourne	80.4	75.8	65.3	10.5	5.7

Source: ONS. Note: Figures relate to period April 2007-March 2008. Data described as a percentage of the working age population with the exception of the unemployment rate which expresses the number of unemployed as a proportion of the economically active population. Modelled estimates of unemployment are also available.

5.19 Eastbourne is recognised as a retirement destination and the impact of this factor on economic activity needs to be considered in the context of reduced levels of economic activity.

Table 5.4: Population in 2008

Age group Age group Geography Geography	All ages	Percent - age 0-14	Percent - age 15-29	Percent - age 30-44	Percent - age 45-64	Percent - age 65-74	Percent - age 75-84	Percent - age 85+
Great Britain	59,629,694	17.4	20	21.2	25.2	8.4	5.6	2.2
South East	8,357,215	17.7	18.9	21.1	25.7	8.4	5.8	2.5
East Sussex	514,767	16.5	15.4	17.8	27.7	10.8	8.1	3.8
Eastbourne	97,691	15.8	18.1	18.4	24.7	10.1	8.6	4.3

Source: CACI, 2008

5.20 In relation to over 75's Eastbourne has a higher proportion of its population in this category compared to East Sussex or the South East. However as a percentage of total population this is relatively low, totalling 12.9%. In the age category 45 to 74 Eastbourne is below the average for the county with 34.8% compared to 38.5% but marginally ahead of the South East which is 34.1%.

5.21 From this it is possible to conclude that the town's population is not massively skewed towards the elderly and that lower rates of economic activity perhaps stem from other causes such as reduced employment opportunities and perhaps more seasonal working.

5.22 In terms of household income it can be seen from the table below that Eastbourne is behind the county and significantly behind the South East as whole and Great Britain. This is significant from two perspectives.

Table 5.5: Average household income in 2008

Average Average Geography Geography	Mean income	Median income
Great Britain	34,417	28,698
South East	38,637	32,685
East Sussex	33,532	28,334
Eastbourne	31,588	26,802

Source: CACI

5.23 Firstly lower income households generally have a higher propensity to spend, which means in times of economic downturn, expenditure is less prone to sudden reductions. Expenditure is sustained because it is driven by necessity. This in turn suggests that convenience and value retailers are likely to predominate, with luxury goods retailers less likely to be attracted to or sustained by a lower household income economy.

5.24 Secondly lower income households have less capacity to be able to significantly increase their level of expenditure if more choice and variety of retailers were available; they can simply re-direct their current levels of expenditure. This suggests that any new development would need to carefully consider the potential occupiers and the town's capacity to provide sufficient trade to ensure their viability. Investment would need to be underpinned by detailed market and economic research.

5.25 In essence there is likely to be a limit to the numbers and type of larger format retailers who would trade successfully in Eastbourne. For any future development to be viable it must not provide space to exceed this demand otherwise there would be significant voids and no upward pressure on current rent levels. For this reason very large developments would appear unlikely and undesirable from the perspective of long term sustainability. This view has been reinforced by discussions with the owners of the Arndale Centre who remain confident about the potential for major investment in additional floorspace but only of a scale that maintains healthy competition for space and does not risk any downward pressure on rental levels.

5.26 In conclusion there would appear to be a marginal case for arguing that there is significant un-served capacity, both because there has been no effective constraint on the town centre's retail expansion, but also in terms of the economic profile of the town's residents. This suggests high end fashion and other retail development is unlikely to find a ready market as the more affluent sections of the town may not be sufficiently large to merit significant investment in this area.

5.27 The more affluent consumer is also generally the more mobile. For this reason Eastbourne will never effectively compete for this market with centre's such Brighton and Tunbridge Wells, which have an established concentration of upper end retailers, therefore there is little benefit in seeking to create capacity for retailers who would largely recognise the lack of critical mass and stay away.

Creating the Climate for Investment

5.28 All development projects use the same basic formula to assess viability, this is set out below:

Value of the proposed development when completed = £X

<u>Less</u> Development Costs which include:

1. Demolition costs
2. Construction costs
3. Developers profit
4. Finance costs = £Y

Total residual value = Value less costs £Z

5.29 "Z" must equal or exceed the cost of acquiring the development site including existing buildings and in some instances the businesses that occupy them.

5.30 In redevelopment situations where a new development replaces an old development, "Z" will only be sufficiently large enough where either there is a significant increase in site density (the new scheme is much larger than the old) or there is a large uplift in rental values and investment yields consequent upon the development. In effect the new scheme is worth significantly more rent than the old.

5.31 It is self evident that replacing existing space with new space is likely to be marginal.

5.32 The only exception to this equation is where the development confers additional benefit on an adjoining land holding which is held by the developer. This additional benefit can be "added" to "Z" created by the new development. A good illustration of this point would be a significant extension to a shopping centre which serves to raise overall rental levels both in the extension but also within the remainder of the centre.

5.33 To maximise the prospects of redevelopment occurring the challenge is to identify site opportunities which deliver the following characteristics or ideally a combination of the following:

- Low value properties
- Low development density
- No residential occupation or long leases evident
- Good location in or close to prime retailing area
- Potential special purchaser or major adjoining landowner who could benefit from the development

The Role of Local Authorities

5.34 Development can be summarised as a process of managing risks. In general developers will pursue low risk options in preference to higher risk options. The level of potential profit is a factor developers use to select schemes but this is often secondary to the perception of risk involved in the scheme which is usually of prime concern.

5.35 To maximise the prospects of development occurring risk needs to be minimised. The two largest development risks are site assembly and securing a valuable planning consent.

5.36 Local Authorities have a potential role to play in both these factors. The AAP effectively sets the policy environment within which planning applications will be determined. If this clearly identifies opportunity areas and attempts to address the viability factors by encouraging increased density and larger format developments it will considerably reduce planning risk.

5.37 Similarly the Local Authority can assist the site assembly process for key developments by signalling willingness to use its statutory powers to acquire property. For example, although many authorities shy away from CPO's, with an adequate cost indemnity from a preferred developer, the threat alone can be highly effective in helping a developer assemble a site.

5.38 A complication always arises in the form of procurement. Until comparatively recently many Local Authorities believed that development of non-public buildings was excluded from the OJEU procurement process. Following the ruling in what is commonly known as the Roanne case all procurement is now expected to go through an Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) process. The Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) is planning to release guidance later this year with a view to defining precisely what procurement is covered and what is not. It is widely believed that traditional town centre development will be once again excluded from OJEU requirements.

6.0 KEY ISSUES

Shaping Opportunities

6.1 The following section draws out a number of key issues from the analysis and from discussions held with key stakeholders. The key issues will be taken forward for consideration as part of the generation of suitable policy themes and spatial options.

Familiarity breeds contempt – reinvigorate Eastbourne's town centre image.

6.2 It is easy to overlook the qualities of the town centre and focus on the perceived and actual problems. It will be important to remind stakeholders and users of the town centre that although there is considerable scope for improvement it is essentially strong, vibrant and attractive.

Improve the experience of arriving in Eastbourne town centre.

6.3 At present the experience for many people arriving into the town centre is either ambivalent or poor. Approaches and gateways are not well defined and the onward journey from point of arrival does not always portray a positive message about the town centre. As first impressions often inform people's perceptions it will be important to enhance this experience for users arriving by all modes of transport. Most importantly, there is need to focus on the fact that all visitors, however they arrive will end up as pedestrians; the quality for the pedestrian experience is the main priority.

A stronger, cohesive town centre identity is required.

6.4 Although the town centre has a number of key attractions, destinations and emerging quarters the overall identity is weak making it difficult for visitors and users to find their way around. A clearer overall identity should therefore be promoted to enhance and strengthen key locations and improve overall 'legibility'. There is considerable opportunity to define and strengthen character areas and pedestrian connectivity, thinking about logical and legible 'circuits' and linkages between points of arrival, footfall generators and main attractions.

Ensure a diverse mix of uses in the town centre.

6.5 Given the role of the centre within its own catchment and the accessibility of the town centre it must continue to support a broad mix of uses including retail, residential, employment, and leisure. It will be important to promote a more inclusive evening and night time economy offer and consider how the perception of safety within the town centre can be improved, particularly through increasing the number of people who choose to live in the town centre. The role that further education might play including the University of Brighton should also be considered.

Balance multiples and secondary offer to improve overall retail provision.

6.6 There is a good range of retailers present within the town centre and there is evidence to suggest that demand exists from a number of national multiple retailers who wish to locate to Eastbourne. Occupancy rates within the primary zone A part of the town centre, focused on the Arndale Centre and Sussex Gardens, are good. There is potential for strengthening the primary retail offer. The challenge is to deliver new development that in both scale, form and the nature of occupiers is sustainable in the long term; helps to strengthen the linkage between primary and secondary retail areas; does not lead to significant over capacity; and does not undermine the more vibrant and viable independent retail sector.

Focus secondary retail offer.

6.7 Despite the diversity of the secondary retail offer and independent traders in the town centre it is relatively dispersed along a number of streets – Grove Road, South Street, Cornfield Road, Seaside Road to name just a few. In order to strengthen the identity of the secondary offer it needs a clear focus ensuring that there is a strong relationship between primary and secondary retail areas. This is evident in places that compete with Eastbourne. For example the relationship between the Churchill Square in Brighton and The Lanes, and the Victoria Centre in Royal Tunbridge Wells and The Pantiles. A similar relationship should be reinforced between the Arndale Centre and 'Little Chelsea'. It must be recognised that planning policy does not provide a mechanism to fundamentally reconfigure the independent retail offer, but it is possible by giving strong policy protection, proactive support (though town centre management initiatives) and adopting a more relaxed approach to the change of use in more marginal locations to encourage critical mass and start to concentrate footfall to the benefit of the independent retail sector.

Support tourism as a strong economic driver.

6.8 The role of tourism will continue to play a key part in the overall economic success and identity of Eastbourne, including the town centre. Clearly the tourism offer and accommodation must be supported and protected. However the relationship between different parts of the town centre must also be improved; the town centre could become a more explicit and better connected element of the attraction to Eastbourne.

6.9 At the moment the interface between the 'seaside' and 'holiday' parts of the town centre, and retail and day-to-day working locations is relatively weak. The key link between the two, Terminus Road, needs enhancing, particularly at its eastern end and at the junction with Seaside Road. In addition the role of other links between the Seafront and the heart of the town centre needs to be explored, particularly Devonshire Place and Cornfield Terrace. Both these streets could give easy and convenient access up to the Arndale Centre and Sussex Gardens from Grand Parade but are relatively underused in comparison to Terminus Road.

Identify and explore selective infill and redevelopment opportunities.

6.10 In order to improve the overall mix of uses within the town centre opportunities for new development must be identified and promoted. There are clearly opportunities to be explored at the western end of Terminus Road adjoining the Arndale Centre as well as around the railway station. The viability of opportunity sites and means of site assembly will need to be carefully considered.

Enhance the quality of the town centre's public realm.

6.11 The public realm is the 'glue' that holds different parts of the town centre together. At present too many places in the town centre have a poor quality public realm that has seen little investment in recent years. In addition the town centre has limited areas of open space other than Hyde Gardens and Devonshire Park, although the Seafront is an important asset.

6.12 A clear programme of enhancements is therefore required in order to ensure that the overall quality of the public realm is improved and the spaces that do exist are fully utilised. This must include a coordinated approach to the provision of new paving and street furniture and the removal of unnecessary street clutter. Long term maintenance and management will also need to be part of the overall approach to delivering, and maintaining, a public realm of the highest quality.

Respect townscape and heritage.

6.13 Eastbourne's historic environment is an important part of the overall character of the town centre. Protecting the best of the historic environment is therefore an important consideration. It will also be important to ensure that new development contributes positively to the character of the town centre through the quality of the architectural design and use of materials. The Towner Art Gallery for example demonstrates a well considered approach to the design process.

Understanding market demand and development viability.

6.14 In order to respond to the market interest that there is particularly from retailers wishing to have a presence in Eastbourne it will be important to understand and define the profile of the town. This will in part be influenced by demographic profile but also through setting a clear vision for the type of place Eastbourne will be. Marginal development values in the town mean that having a clear understanding of investor requirements and facilitating beneficial change will also be important.

Low wages and low skills.

6.15 Eastbourne has fewer affluent commuters to support the local economy than other locations such as Brighton or Royal Tunbridge Wells. It will therefore be important to consider ways in which opportunities for all parts of the community might be improved through job creation, access to services and education, as well providing a range of retail provision that has a broad appeal.

Pedestrian environment is poor in places.

6.16 Although Eastbourne has a compact and walkable town centre pedestrian connectivity is poor. This is particularly evident between Terminus Road and Little Chelsea for example as well as between the railway station and the Seafront. Improved crossing facilities at key junctions are vital in addition to enhancing the public realm and ensuring that waymarking is clear. Improved pedestrian signage is also key to enhancing the legibility of the area..

Existing interchange provides direct penetration of the retail area but the environment is poor.

6.17 Centrally and conveniently located in close proximity to the railway station and the Arndale Centre, and with real-time travel information available the existing bus interchange should be a model example. However the environment is poor with narrow pavements and a difficult crossing point to the station. The name 'Diesel Alley' neatly summarises the effect that bus layover has on the environment. The interchange would benefit from remodelling and agreement reached with the operators to remove bus layover to another convenient location. The importance of the ESCC Quality Bus Corridor initiative as a means to incentivise public transport access into the town centre should also be emphasised.

Improve cycle provision and accessibility

6.18 More could be done to improve cycle access into the town centre for example by extending the existing Sustrans Cycle Route 21 from Eastbourne Sailing Club into the town centre. In addition to this more could be undertaken to improve the cycle links with the University of Brighton campuses located in Meads. Improved signage should also be considered but in a coordinated way as part of wider enhancements to the public realm.

Ring road functionality.

6.19 The Ring Road functions adequately albeit with junction 'hot-spots' at peak times. Proposals for enhancing the functionality of the road will be closely linked to bringing forward development within the town centre. Enhancements to junctions will need to ensure that needs of motorists are not placed above those of pedestrians and that direct, safe and level crossing points are provided for.

Comprehensive parking strategy is required.

6.20 A balanced approach to parking is required ensuring that the right type of provision is made in the right locations across the town centre. This will include catering for long and short stay parking with active signage directing people to the appropriate facility. Onward movement for pedestrians into the town centre then needs to be safe, direct and environmentally attractive to ensure that the experience of accessing and using the town centre is a positive one.

Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Issues

6.21 The Sustainability Appraisal (SA) process will run in parallel to the preparation of the AAP. There is a close and iterative relationship between the two documents. Objectives, options and proposals set out within the AAP are assessed against a sustainability framework. This highlights the impacts of the AAP against identified sustainability indicators and a process of refinement can therefore take place.

6.22 The initial part of the SA process is the preparation of a Scoping Report where all key information about the town centre is assessed and sustainability issues are identified. These fall into four categories:

- **Social Progress;**
- **Economic Growth; and**
- **Environment.**

6.23 The issues have been identified from a review of planning documentation and baseline information and are summarised on the following pages. Full details of the issues are set out in the Sustainability Scoping Report which should be read in conjunction with this Position Statement.

Social Progress

6.24 There is currently a lack of Affordable housing, care homes and sheltered housing in Eastbourne. In addition, there are a high proportion of houses in multiple-occupation. The AAP should address the need for appropriate and affordable housing to meet the needs of the community. In addition there is a perceived need for additional and enhanced community facilities to serve the residents of the Town Centre.

6.25 A high proportion of the population suffer from a limiting long-term illness or disability, coinciding with the high number of retired residents within the borough. Any new development should ensure that appropriate health facilities are available, and also seek to improve the educational attainment and skill levels of the resident population.

6.26 Devonshire Ward contains the most deprived areas within Eastbourne and Devonshire Ward is within the top 10% in England. Future redevelopment in the town centre will need to address this.

6.27 The area to the north of Terminus Road and around the Railway Station would benefit from an enhanced public realm and improved permeability for pedestrians and cyclists.

6.28 Whilst crime has reduced recently in Eastbourne, the AAP should ensure that crime prevention is considered during the design of new development within the town centre.

6.29 The AAP should seek to improve pedestrian and cycle routes and in particular the link between the station and the seafront. New developments should contribute towards improvements in the streetscape.

Economic

6.30 The existing retail facilities comprise predominantly small, unit sizes, there are a limited number of high street shops. The AAP should ensure that the independent retail sector is protected, whilst also providing units to attract retailers to the high street. Additionally, a clear focus would improve the secondary retail offer. The AAP should address the future role of the Seaside Road area, which is losing its retail focus.

6.31 The AAP should support and encourage investment in the retail led regeneration of the town centre whilst protecting the sustainable elements of the existing retail offer to ensure it delivers maximum economic benefits.

6.32 The AAP should seek to enhance the tourism and leisure offer available within the town centre.

6.33 The economy is currently focused on retail trade as well as health and social work and the AAP should seek to attract a wider range of employment, as well as enhancing the tourism and hotel industries.

6.34 A high proportion of residents within Eastbourne are economically inactive. Additionally, the existing workforce is low skilled and low paid. The AAP should seek to provide employment appropriate to a range of skill levels.

Environmental

6.35 The town centre is partially located in an area at high risk of flooding and therefore the AAP will need to ensure that future development in the area is protected and flood risk to existing development is minimised. New development should utilise Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS).

6.36 The town centre is partially located in the Town Centre and Seafront Conservation Area which contains a number of listed buildings. The AAP will need to ensure new development incorporates high quality design and materials so as to protect the historic built environment, ensuring that the setting of conservation areas and listed buildings are protected and where possible enhanced.

6.37 The town centre currently provides limited open space and therefore the AAP should consider the provision of additional open space (such as useable roof space) and improve accessibility to the seafront.

6.38 The AAP area is not currently in an Air Quality Management Area, and no exceedances of National Air Quality Objectives have been identified. However Eastbourne Borough Council does have an air monitoring station location opposite the Congress theatre, which measures background levels of NO^2 and PM^{10} for the Town Centre's Air Quality Management duties. The AAP should ensure that development does not increase traffic congestion and thus air pollution at busy junctions.

6.39 The AAP should ensure any new development is designed to provide appropriate waste facilities and storage to maximise composting and recycling of waste.

6.40 The AAP should seek to protect and enhance biodiversity through protection of existing features including street trees as well as habitat creation and new tree planting as part of new development or improvements in public realm.

The photo opposite shows Eastbourne Seafront – an attractive environment and strong asset.

7.0 SPATIAL FRAMEWORK AND POLICY THEMES

7.1 The identification of issues is an important stage in the preparation of the town centre AAP. In order to address the issues the AAP will need to set out a range of policies and a spatial expression of those polices.

7.2 In this section a draft spatial framework and initial policy themes are introduced together with a number of emerging options. The purpose of setting them out in this report is to seek agreement with the Council prior to commencing work on Stage 2 of the preparation of the AAP.

Spatial Framework

7.3 An important element of the AAP will be the provision of a comprehensive spatial framework that establishes a clear structure for the town centre and identifies opportunities and priorities. It also provides a spatial expression for the policy themes that will form part of the AAP.

7.4 The spatial framework will:

- Build on key structuring elements within the town centre;
- Define 'Character Areas' to establish a clearer and more legible identity for the town centre;
- Identify approaches and gateways; and
- Prioritise important streets and spaces.

7.5 As part of the consideration of options for the town centre a draft spatial framework has been prepared and is shown as **figure 7.1**. The draft spatial framework takes account of the analysis and issues that have been highlighted. The principal components of the draft spatial framework are described below.

Character Areas

7.6 Eastbourne already benefits from a number of important foci for activity. However the town centre presently lacks a particularly strong image and identity. One way of enhancing the overall character of the town centre, strengthening the range and mix of uses on offer and examining different development opportunities and priorities, is through identifying a number of distinctive quarters, or character areas, that are linked together by a network of attractive streets, promenades and public spaces.

7.7 Eastbourne can already be thought of in terms of a number of different quarters or 'districts', principally defined by land uses and characteristic built form. These include the Seafront, the 'Cultural Quarter' around the Congress Theatre and Towner Gallery, and the main retail area around the Arndale Centre and Sussex gardens for example. Other districts can also be identified with a character based on the pattern of land uses, built form, spaces and streets.

7.8 Seven overlapping character areas have been identified. They are show on **figure 7.1** opposite. The character areas draw on the existing structure of the town as explored through the urban design analysis:

Arts and Cultural Quarter. Focused on the Congress and Devonshire Theatres, the Towner Art Gallery and Devonshire Park. Strong links exist to the Seafront via Wilmington Square and Carlise Road, although pedestrian routes back towards Terminus Road via Cornfield Terrace are less well defined.

FIGURE 7.1: CHARACTER AREAS

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EASTBOURNE TOWN CENTRE

David Lock Associates
Town Planning and Urban Design

Business District. The area around Hyde Gardens, Lushington Road and Gildridge Road is a focus for commercial business premises. It is closely related to the retail core and Little Chelsea and with easy reach of the railway station and bus interchange on Terminus Road.

Retail District. The town's retail heart focused on Terminus Road, Sussex Gardens and the Arndale Centre is a key destination. Part of Terminus Road to the east of Langney Road, Bolton Road and Cornfield Road are also emerging as a focus for the evening economy.

Seafront. The Seafront is a principal location that does much to define the character of the town centre and of Eastbourne as a whole. The Seafront has three discrete secondary character areas: the main promenades, the area of hotels and apartments focused around Compton Street, and the area around the eastern end of Terminus Road and Seaside Road.

Little Chelsea. One of the oldest parts of the town centre Little Chelsea has a strong identity and a vibrant mix of independent retailers and businesses. Links to the main Retail District via Terminus Road must be strengthened in order to enhance the role of this key secondary retail location and enhance the overall offer within the town centre.

Northern Quarter. This is a key opportunity within the town centre focused around the railway station, the Enterprise Centre and the principal approach towards the town centre from Upperton Road. It is a key point of arrival and a main gateway into the town centre. The quarter also encompasses St Leonard's Road.

Urban Village. A distinctive quarter of the town centre focused around a well defined grid of streets. The area has a sizable resident population together with a mix of small businesses and secondary retailers.

7.9 The character areas reflect the prevailing mix of land uses, urban form and structure, and identity that already exists in key locations across the town centre. The purpose of identifying character areas is to make different places across the town centre more distinctive and memorable.

Approaches and Gateways

7.10 Key **approaches** that lead into the town centre must be attractive and convenient for everyone. Crossing the ring road is an important part of this, linking the town centre to adjoining neighbourhoods with safe surface level pedestrian and cycle crossings. There are four key approaches into the town centre:

- **Seaside and Royal Parade**
- **Upperton Road**
- **Upper Avenue**
- **King Edward's Parade**

7.11 There are six key **gateways** into Eastbourne:

- **Junction of King Edward's Parade and Wilmington Square**
- **Junction of Marine Parade, Queen's Garden's and Cavendish Place**
- **Junction of Upperton Road and The Avenue**
- **The Upper Avenue roundabout**
- **The public transport interchange on Terminus Road**
- **Eastbourne Station**

7.12 The Gateways and Approaches are show on **figure 7.2** opposite.