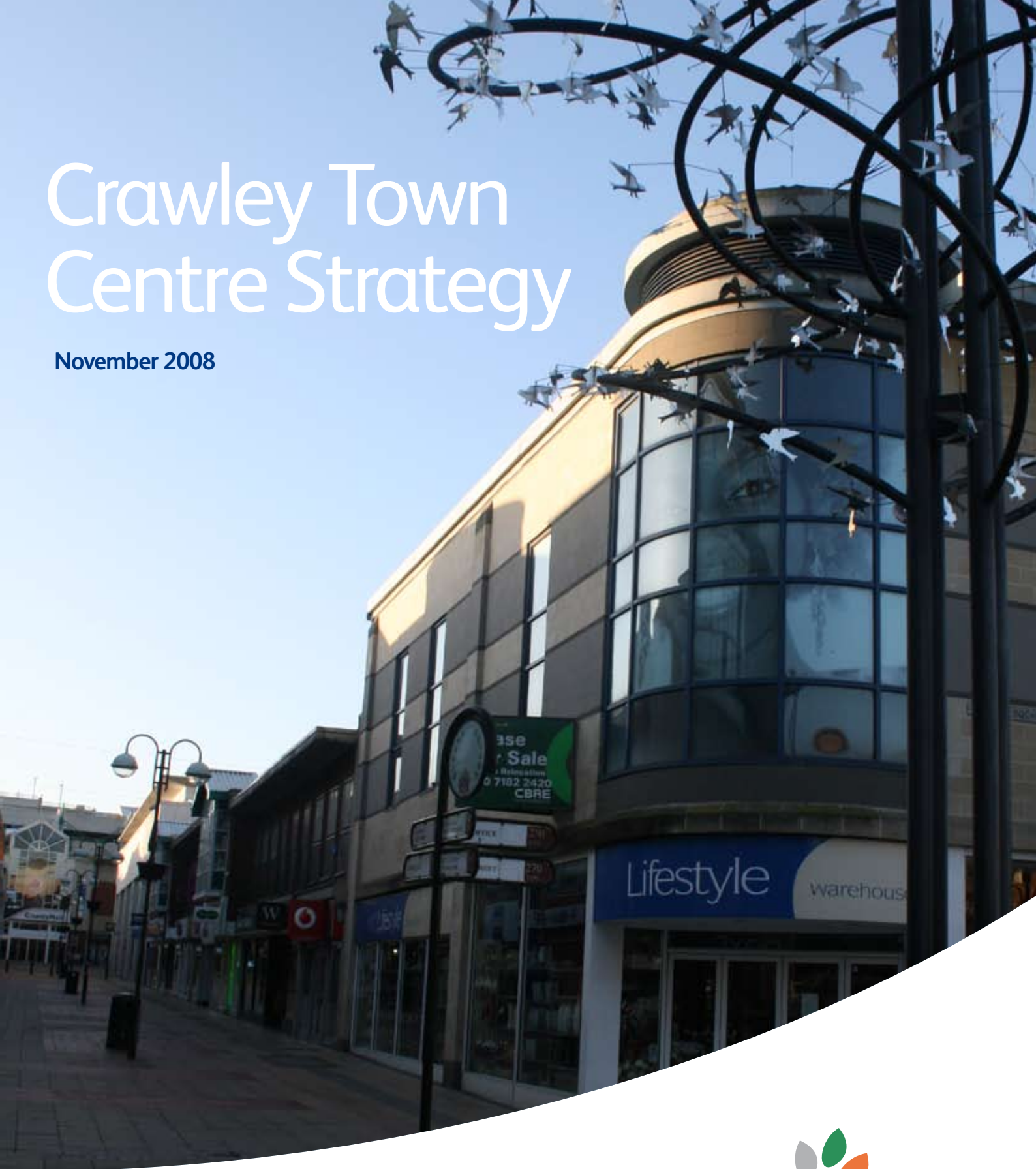


Crawley Town Centre Strategy

November 2008



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Over the next 10-15 years, Crawley town centre is likely to change more than at any time since the 1950s. Those changes have the potential to create a town centre which competes with the best, not just in the south east but in the United Kingdom as a whole.

1.2 This strategy provides the framework against which those changes will be managed to help ensure that our ambitions for the town centre are realised. It is set in the context of major development proposals already planned for Town Centre North (TCN). These will act as a major catalyst for a town centre-wide approach to improvements and regeneration. They present a once in a lifetime opportunity to bring about a transformational change to the town centre environment, facilities and services.

1.3 The strategy seeks to build on the proposals for TCN by promoting and facilitating major new mixed use development in the town centre including the establishment of a residential community and the creation and maintenance of high quality public realm and environmental improvements. Marketing and promotion of the town centre in conjunction with its effective management will ensure that it continues to attract people from an increasingly wide area. Local people will benefit from having more numerous and improved facilities and opportunities, and a new town centre residential community will help support the evening economy across the town centre to retain vitality beyond shopping hours.

1.4 The strategy has been informed by a major vision study undertaken by Deloitte on behalf of the council and Grosvenor, its development partner for TCN. The study focussed on how to promote and facilitate a transformation in the appeal of the town centre for commerce, particularly in its retail offer, and to develop the town centre into a sustainable and attractive landscaped environment.

1.5 The strategy has been produced jointly by Crawley Borough Council and the Town Centre Partnership (TCP). The TCP brings together local government and the private sector around common objectives for the future of the town centre. It is envisaged that the strategy will be adopted and 'owned' by both the TCP and the council and endorsed by other key stakeholders.

1.6 The strategy has been drafted in tandem with a Town Centre-Wide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) produced by the council as the local planning authority. The SPD deals with the planning and development guidelines for the town centre, beyond the TCN site, and provides more detail on the Concept Plan set out in this document.





2. CRAWLEY TOWN CENTRE TODAY

- 2.1 Crawley town centre was designed and constructed with the typical pedestrianised layout and design of a 1950s and 60s new town, latched onto the historic High Street. It was built to serve a local population of 50,000. The pedestrianisation of Queens Square took place in the 1970s, with the High Street pedestrianised in the 1990s. New development has taken place since the 1990s, including County Mall shopping centre, the Kingsgate development, the redevelopment of The Martlets area and the more recent Pavilion building in Queens Square.
- 2.2 Whilst these developments enhanced the status and catchment area of the centre by providing a wider range of larger, predominantly national chain stores, the town centre offer remains predominantly a mid-market retail offer. The need to improve higher order comparison shopping and the capacity for retail growth due to unmet expenditure in Crawley's catchment has been recognised by a number of retail studies (CB Hillier Parker 2000, CBRE in 2005 and GVA Grimley in 2006.) Over the past few years there has been a noticeable decline in Crawley's national retail ranking as other towns or shopping centres in the surrounding region undergo extension and improvement. The West Sussex Structure Plan and the draft South East Plan both identify Crawley as a town centre where significant growth is anticipated. Crawley is included in the draft South East Plan's strategic network of Primary Regional Centres and the plan also recognises that proactive, integrated strategies for town centre development will be particularly important.
- 2.3 A significant impediment to change has been the inability of retail units in certain parts of the town to adapt to modern retail store requirements in terms of operation, facilities and attractiveness. This has been highlighted by the continuing difficulties in certain parts of the town to attract long term investment-based retailers who would be willing to maintain their units and undertake improvements with a view to enhancing their longer term viability.
- 2.4 The limited variety of uses in parts of the town centre where retail dominates is also a major constraint. The town centre is underprovided in the facilities it offers residents, workers and visitors in terms of restaurants, bars and cafés. Evening activity is limited and tends to be concentrated in the High Street area, with some parts of the town centre experiencing very little activity, particularly Queens Square at the centre of the town. This gives rise to a perception of anti-social behaviour. At present, few people have the opportunity to live within the town centre and the resident population is too small to contribute greatly to a sense of vibrancy or to stimulate demand for local shops, restaurants and other leisure and community activities.
- 2.5 There has been relatively little development of modern business space within the town centre and, whilst a number of buildings have been refurbished to higher specifications, much of the space built in the 1950s and 60s is outdated and does not meet modern business requirements. The town centre also lacks a focus for community facilities with many of the existing facilities inadequate for today's needs and others, with the theatre and leisure centre located outside the town centre. However, a new library building and administration centre is being developed at Telford Place which will provide an important contribution to the development of the town centre as a place in which to live.
- 2.6 The council now has an adopted Core Strategy which allocates TCN for a major mixed-use, retail-led development to help Crawley fulfil its role as a primary regional centre. Crawley's town centre is therefore poised for major growth and a step-change in its function. TCN must be supported by a strategy for the remainder of the town centre to ensure its benefits are spread across the centre, and full use is made of the opportunity this major development brings to the town. Crawley needs to diversify its offer, improve its image and provide retail, leisure and hospitality opportunities commensurate with the town's aspirations for the future.



Quality of Environment

2.7 There have been a number of new retail developments in the centre (County Mall, The Martlets and the Pavilion), and, judged against specific measures of environmental quality such as the amount of litter and fly-posting and the condition of public facilities (toilets, telephones and bus stops/shelters), the town centre environment is generally good. Memorial Gardens is a major asset for the town centre and provides a valuable function as an area for relaxation and quiet contemplation in an otherwise busy town centre environment. The High Street Conservation Area provides an important historic context for the town centre. It has recently been upgraded to create a pedestrian friendly environment interspersed with car parking, cycle bays and public open space and has developed as the focus for the evening economy.

2.8 The aspirations for those wanting to live, work or visit town centres are increasing year on year and new developments have not always been matched by improvements across the centre. There has been a deterioration in some buildings and their surroundings, particularly those built in the 1950s and 1960s, leading to a poor quality of the natural and physical environment and a failure to meet the aspirations and requirements of businesses and customers in Crawley. Some key town centre facilities, such as Crawley Station and Central Sussex College, are segregated from the rest of the town centre by major roads, and links are not always clear. Wayfaring signage across the centre is limited and many of the existing signs do not provide the necessary direction to the main places of public interest. Whilst there are a number of buildings of townscape merit and historic value, there have been limited opportunities for the enhancement of their surroundings through quality modern development.

2.9 Particular problem areas include The Broad Walk parade which provides an essential mixed-use pedestrian link between the High Street and Queens Square. Many of the ground floor retail units are no longer fit for purpose in terms of layout and building design. This is most evident within the central section with several vacant units. The fabric of units situated at the southern end of The Broadway, Queens Square and Parkside is similarly poor with little evidence of internal or external maintenance.



Environmental improvements to this area need to consider the relationship between the built and natural environment



2.10 The area from the station north to County Mall is one of the main gateways to the town centre. The quality of buildings and environment in this area is poor and many of the larger buildings do not meet modern office requirements including Overline House and Belgrave House on Station Way. This has led to a marked difference in town centre and out-of-town office rents where rents are significantly higher reflecting the higher quality of accommodation in areas such as Manor Royal and City Place.



2.11 Whilst there have been a number of physical improvements to Queens Square in recent years including public seating and art, the area does not fulfil its potential as the heart of the town centre. Environmental improvements to this area need to consider the relationship between the built and natural environment.



3. PURPOSE OF THE STRATEGY

Access and Movement

2.12 Accessibility is a key strength of the town centre. Situated close to Gatwick Airport, it is exceptionally well located on the strategic road and rail networks. It also has relative ease of parking. Access to the centre from most neighbourhoods and beyond is generally good for pedestrians, cyclists, bus and car users and those with disability needs. The introduction of the Fastway guided bus system has improved connectivity to and from the town from some of the neighbourhoods although longer distance bus services from the major towns of East Grinstead, Horsham and Haywards Heath are more limited, particularly at evenings and weekends. Facilities for cyclists to access the town centre have also been improved through dedicated cycle lanes and improved cycle stand provision. However, cycle links across town are limited to the High Street and The Broadway with no east or westbound link.

2.13 The town centre benefits from a pedestrianised central area (Queens Square) which makes it relatively easy for pedestrians to move around. Pedestrian routes link the main retail areas of the town centre. However, some of the pedestrian connections with the wider town are poor with physical barriers to pedestrian movement created by a number of roads including Station Way, Pegler Way, Southgate Avenue and College Road. As a result, the main pedestrian connections between the centre, main gateways and key uses such as the college and the new library are unclear. The segregation of key town centre uses (office, retail and residential) by roads and the dominance of cars makes them unwelcoming for those not travelling by car.

2.14 The rail station and bus station are located in close proximity to County Mall. The two stations do not present a welcoming gateway to the town centre with car dominated environments and poor linkages to the rest of the town centre. The main land uses to the north of the train station are separated by a dual carriageway (Station Way) and the layout and pattern of land uses in this vicinity does not help to articulate the area as one of the key entrances to the town centre or provide the necessary ease of access.

2.15 In order for the town to expand and enhance its role, both stations will need to play an important role in catering for the increased access requirements arising from future growth. Improvement will therefore be necessary to ensure maximum use is made of these areas and to ensure maximum connectivity with the rest of the town centre.



3.1 The purpose of the Strategy is:

- To establish a common vision and aspiration to focus all the interests committed to improving Crawley town centre
- To enable proper engagement in the regeneration processes
- To ensure maximum use of all available resources through clear identification of priorities and opportunities
- To prevent piecemeal approach to improvement and development and facilitate successful development
- To provide a co-ordinated framework for effective and efficient management of the town centre.

3.2 To accompany the strategy, the council has produced a Town Centre-Wide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). This forms part of the council's Local Development Framework (LDF) and provides detailed guidance to support the objectives and policies for the town centre set out in the council's Core Strategy. Landowners and developers within the town would be expected to accord with this SPD when bringing forward new development. The SPD sets out the development principles arising from the vision and objectives set out in this strategy.

4. THE VISION AND OBJECTIVES

4.1 The proposed redevelopment in the north of the town centre has generated a huge opportunity for Crawley to enhance and consolidate its position within the region. Crawley is in a highly accessible location within the sub-region. TCN will have a significant positive impact but it will not on its own solve all the issues facing the town centre. As a result, it is considered that the levels of investment generated by TCN will need to be complemented by investment in other parts of the town centre if its full potential is to be realised. Otherwise there could be a risk that parts of the town centre outside the new development will suffer and dilute the benefits of investment.

4.2 Our vision is that:

'By 2020 the town centre will have grown significantly to provide a vibrant heart at the centre of the town – competing effectively within the region and acting as a new town centre neighbourhood. It will be:

.... a pioneering and aspirational town centre at the heart of a growing, cosmopolitan and forward-thinking town which adapts to climate change and has a global reach

....a vibrant, friendly and safe town centre that welcomes people of all ages, incomes and interests

....a town centre where attractive, technologically advanced buildings combine with well proportioned streets, open spaces and landscaping to create distinctive and sustainable high density design

....an accessible town centre where best use is made of existing infrastructure and public transport services but where major investment in new sustainable access initiatives has helped to meet the future aspirations of those living, working and visiting

....a sustainable town centre where energy supply, environmental performance, access and design combine to address at a local level issues of climate change.'



4.3 Underpinning this vision is a series of objectives set out in the council's Core Planning Strategy:

- To promote a thriving town centre with a rich mix of uses – jobs, shops, housing, leisure, community and civic facilities to enhance the vitality of the town centre during the day and into the evening
- To secure the growth of the town centre so it can fulfil its role in meeting the needs of the Gatwick Sub-Region, and can compete effectively within the region providing a greater range and quality of shops together with employment, cultural and leisure facilities
- To increase residential development in the town centre and create a new “town centre neighbourhood” with associated community facilities
- To create a strong retail circuit across the whole of the town centre and east to west/north to south balance in retailing
- To promote the evening economy within the town centre, retaining vitality in the centre beyond shopping hours and supporting local residents, whilst protecting amenity and controlling anti-social behaviour

- To enhance the town centre's role as a major public transport interchange serving the sub-region and improve the quality of existing facilities
- To provide and manage high quality public realm within the town centre
- To improve community safety and reduce town centre crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour.

4.4 Change will not take place all at one time although the development of TCN will radically change how the town centre feels and functions. Section 8 sets out what differences people should notice in the town centre by 2013 and 2018 respectively.



5. TOWN CENTRE STRATEGY THEMES

5.1 The strategy has to deal with many complex issues which need careful consideration and management to ensure the vision and objectives are being met to keep the town centre economically buoyant and attractive. The nine strategy themes are:

- A strong heart for the town in the region
- Vibrancy, diversity, liveability
- Building quality and design
- Public realm, community safety and security
- Access and movement
- Infrastructure provision and services
- Sustainability – efficient use of resources
- Image and marketing
- Raising aspirations and skills

This strategy identifies the key elements of each theme and some of the broad areas for action. The adopted strategy will, as necessary, be supported by action plans setting out time frames, funding sources and responsibility for dealing with specific tasks and programmes.

THEME 1 – A STRONG HEART FOR THE TOWN IN THE REGION

5.2 The Panel Report into the SE Plan identifies Crawley as a regional hub and refers to it as one of the town centres where significant future growth is anticipated. This is reflected in the Regional Economic Strategy and the Gatwick Diamond Initiative. The strategy is therefore aimed at meeting these regional aspirations both in terms of meeting Crawley’s needs and those of the wider regional hinterland given its key location between Croydon to the north and Brighton to the south.

5.3 The recently adopted LDF Core Strategy allocates TCN for major retail-led, mixed-use development which is being progressed by the council and its development partner, Grosvenor. The Core Strategy also provides supporting policies aimed at providing other town centre opportunities for quality mixed-use development and investment including housing, leisure and commercial floorspace as well as small scale retail provision. The accompanying SPD sets out the planning principles for these areas and other opportunity areas.

5.4 Key elements of the strategy:

- *Growing the town’s role as a regional shopping destination, adding to the quality and quantity of the retail offer and creating an environment which makes Crawley town centre the shopping destination of choice*
- *Bringing forward the development of TCN*
- *Widening opportunities for civic, leisure, cultural and employment activity within the town centre to serve a local and sub regional market*
- *Strengthening the range of commercial opportunities, through high quality office development in selected locations*
- *Supporting and facilitating the development of higher and further education within the town centre.*



THEME 2 – VIBRANCY, DIVERSITY, LIVEABILITY

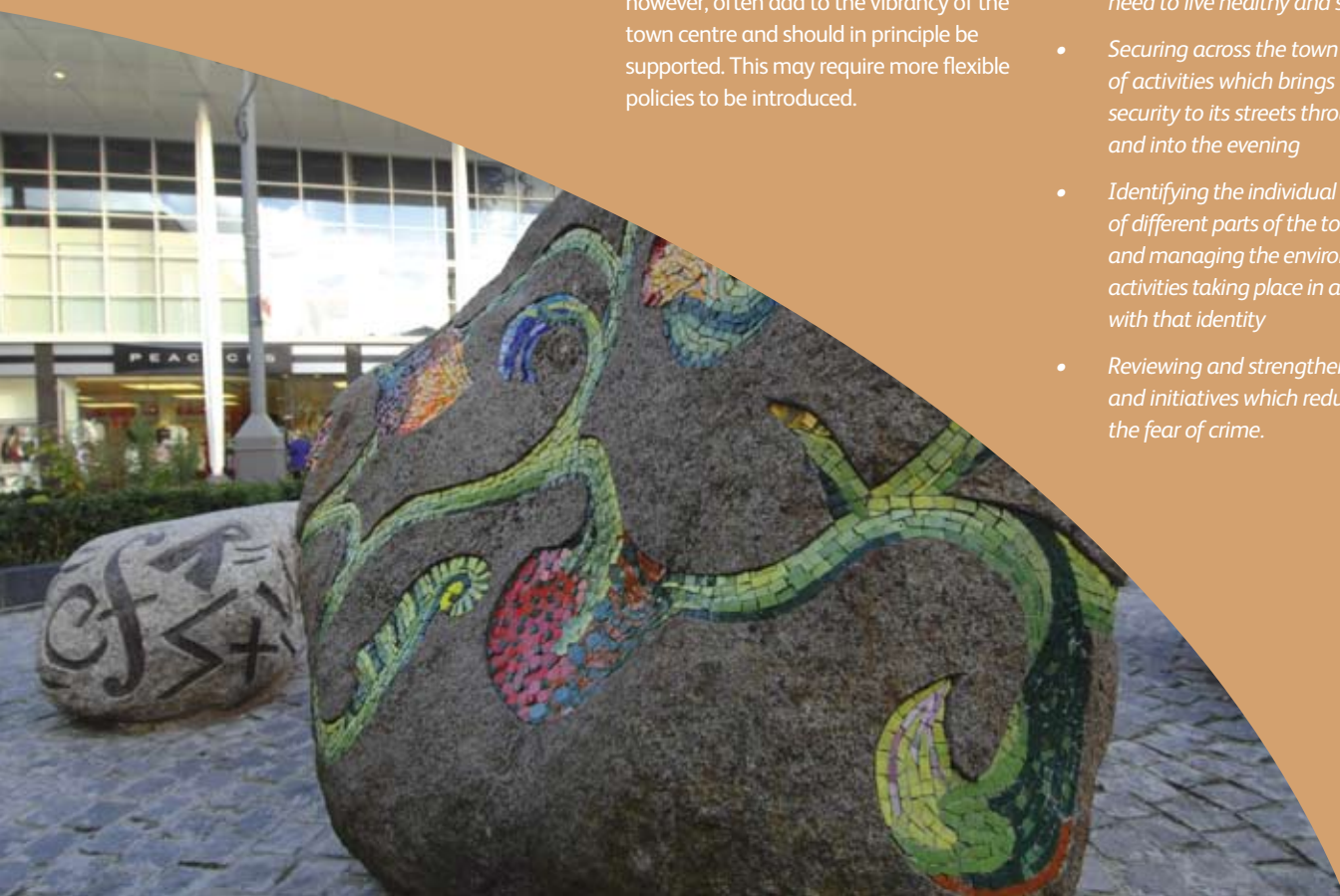
5.5 Retail uses on their own, whilst generating considerable activity during the day, close down in the early evening and leave a town centre predominantly empty and unattractive. The strategy's vision is of a town centre which is alive and attractive outside as well as during the normal working day. There is potential for new residential development in the town centre to bring vibrancy to the area, creating potential for new activity whilst adding to security and surveillance out of shopping hours. To succeed, people must feel comfortable walking around the town centre, and must have local facilities to access such as convenience shops and leisure facilities. The Town Centre-Wide SPD identifies a number of opportunities for residential development and community facilities.

5.6 There are already many leisure facilities in the town centre, including pubs, restaurants and night clubs, and the cinema and bowling alley within Crawley Leisure Park. These uses bring activity into the town centre, principally the High Street, and are important to the economy of the town. However, the dominance of drinking related activities can be perceived as being associated with problems of anti-social behaviour, a problem which could be exacerbated when there are more residents in the town centre in terms of late-night noise and disruption. There is, therefore, an important role for this strategy to coordinate measures to control the impact of leisure activities particularly anti-social behaviour, such as initiatives like 'Business Watch'. Leisure uses, however, often add to the vibrancy of the town centre and should in principle be supported. This may require more flexible policies to be introduced.

5.7 There is a recognised need for cultural events to be developed in the town centre as a means of supporting vibrancy and diversity. This could include live arts, gallery space and conference facilities through the provision of flexible venue-based space. The use of public art also needs to be considered not simply as a means of improving the quality of the environment but as a way of strengthening the cultural identity of the town.

5.8 Key elements of the strategy:

- *Developing a high quality town centre living environment which is home for more than 1,500 people and providing them with all the facilities they would need to live healthy and successful lives*
- *Securing across the town centre a range of activities which brings life, vitality and security to its streets throughout the day and into the evening*
- *Identifying the individual identity of different parts of the town centre and managing the environment and activities taking place in accordance with that identity*
- *Reviewing and strengthening policies and initiatives which reduce crime and the fear of crime.*



THEME 3 – BUILDING QUALITY AND DESIGN

5.9 Many of the buildings in the town centre were purpose built for retailing and other commercial uses when Crawley was designated as a New Town more than 50 years ago. Some buildings have been well maintained or had their appearance modernised, whilst others have fallen into a state of disrepair. These premises detract from the modern, vibrant and attractive image of the town centre. Good maintenance practice will be promoted and refurbishment and redevelopment will be encouraged where appropriate in order to improve the quality of the built environment in the town centre. This could be through a Property Maintenance Guide for example or a competition for building refurbishment or grant award. It will also be important to ensure the areas surrounding buildings, whether public or private, are developed and maintained to a high standard.

5.10 There are a number of new developments either with planning permission or under construction in the town centre. It is considered that these will make a significant contribution to the modernisation and improvement of the design quality of the town centre, as recognised by the Town Centre-Wide SPD, which requires all new development to be of high quality.

5.11 The TCN development provides further opportunities to continue to enhance overall quality given the potential for catalytic investment likely to arise in the town centre. The provision of small, independent retail units is one example of the way in which the overall quality of the town centre could be improved by providing complementary retail provision.

This is an important consideration given the number of small retail units to be displaced by TCN.

5.12 Key elements of the strategy:

- *Ensuring new buildings are of high quality design and relate well with their surroundings*
- *Providing early guidance to prospective developers on the design of new buildings*
- *Developing measures designed to help upgrade the maintenance of existing buildings.*



THEME 4 – PUBLIC REALM, COMMUNITY SAFETY AND SECURITY

5.13 High quality, attractive and well maintained streets and public open spaces are an essential element of public enjoyment of the town centre and vital to promoting a good image of the centre. Co-ordination of the work of all those involved in managing and maintaining public spaces is important and a Public Realm Strategy will need to be developed, identifying where public realm improvements are required. These may be funded by associated development schemes, or through environmental improvement projects, and should reinforce a modern identity and image for the town centre through the design treatment of public areas. When development briefs are produced for new development sites they will make reference to expected public realm improvements.

5.14 Landmarks, gateways, focal points and objects help people to find their way and these should be protected, enhanced and supplemented where appropriate. Improvements to vehicular and pedestrian signage across the town centre are required. It may be that signs have a local design, which respects the character of a specific area (such as the High Street), rather than being uniform throughout the town centre. These signs should be of high quality and situated at nodal points to improve legibility for pedestrians, thereby allowing unnecessary signs to be removed.

5.15 Street furniture makes a significant contribution to the overall appearance and function of an area and can take a number of forms including seats, fences/railings, signposts, bins, closed circuit television (CCTV) and bollards. Good

lighting is essential in public areas to create environments that are welcoming and safe. New or replacement street furniture should be of high quality and its design co-ordinated with existing features and respect the character of the area. Additionally, all public areas should be well designed and accessible to all members of society, including those with disabilities. Ease of dispersal is a key aspect of community safety, particularly in relation to evening and night-time uses. The movement of people away from an area needs careful consideration in order that people can disperse quickly and with relative ease. This in turn requires consideration of pedestrian and vehicular access to and from the town centre, in particular public transport and taxi provision.

5.16 Appropriate soft landscaping should be used to complement hard landscaping, such as brick walls, wooden fencing, metal railings and extensive block paving. Any proposals should be designed as to not obstruct signs, street lamps or create hiding places. Landscaping can also be used to improve security, where barriers to access are required. Native mixes of plants should be used to improve their chances of survival as should plants that occur together naturally will provide

mutual benefits such as shade and wind protection. Urban trees are particularly important and will be promoted. They act as carbon sinks and contribute to surface water drainage as well as being important wildlife havens.

5.17 Key elements of the strategy:

- *Securing major improvements and transformation of the town centre's public realm through new development and environmental improvement schemes*
- *Establishing key landmark features and removing unnecessary street furniture clutter within the public areas*
- *Co-ordinating high quality street furniture and promoting soft landscaping*
- *Using good design of the public realm to improve community safety.*



THEME 5 – ACCESS AND MOVEMENT

5.18 The town centre is the focus of networks for most of the transport modes in the town such as public transport, the road network, cycling and walking. This is a key element of the town centre's attraction as a location for retailing, services, housing and employment and provides a firm basis for establishing a sustainable approach to access and movement. The development potential identified for the town centre provides an opportunity to secure a step change to improve and add to the town centre's transport facilities and systems. Of particular importance is the need to further enhance and extend the Fastway system to neighbourhoods in Crawley not currently served and to other towns such as East Grinstead.

5.19 New development will be required to contribute to the development of the town centre's transport facilities in order to ensure that its own additional transport demands are sustainably met and do not significantly create or add to the problems for existing development and uses. Travel Plans will be expected to accompany planning applications. In this strategy, significant expansion of the town centre is proposed and additional visitors to the town centre are expected as a result. Additional short stay car parking will need to be provided in the town centre, although some parking needs may be met by park and ride, and contributions to public transport provision will be expected to reduce the modal share of access by car.

5.20 Crawley Borough Council and West Sussex County Council (WSCC) are currently reviewing existing transport strategies and programmes for the town centre to take into account the development proposals likely to come forward over the next ten years. **The strategy aims to provide for an adequate level of parking provision to accompany new development and will assess the need and potential for park and ride as a means of reducing car journeys to the town centre.** WSCC has produced a full transport model to assess the impacts and need for change arising from developments. Developers will also be expected to use the model to fully demonstrate how they are going to achieve a sustainable approach to meeting their access needs without

significantly adversely impacting on the surrounding transport network.

5.21 Additionally, the town centre is the hub of the town's transport system and the main public transport nodes are important gateways to the town centre. Their design and appearance is very important in creating a safe, secure and welcoming atmosphere and a positive first impression of Crawley for visitors, commuters and shoppers. Crawley Station and Friary Way Bus Station are located adjacent to each other, just beyond the main shopping area. This offers the potential to create a major integrated public transport interchange with improved links between the rail and bus stations immediately adjacent to the shopping area. The development potential of areas in close proximity to the stations provides an opportunity over time to secure major improvements to the integration and environment of the stations.

5.22 Any sustainable and integrated transport approach for the town centre will need to ensure that the facilities for cyclists and pedestrians are maximised. It will be necessary to improve the condition, connectivity and safety of pedestrian and cycle routes into, and through, the town centre.



5.23 Key elements of the strategy:

- *Enhancing the quality of public transport links to the Crawley neighbourhoods*
- *Establishing a greater network of high quality public transport links to the wider sub-region*
- *Ensuring that the access and parking needs of those visiting the town centre are sustainably met*
- *Enhancing significantly the attractiveness and function of the Friary Way bus and rail interchange*
- *Improving the condition, connectivity and safety of pedestrian and cycle routes within and to the town centre, and reducing the severance effect of major roads.*





5.24 It is recognised that there will be a high turnover of motorists using the facilities in the town centre, but those who travel at peak times and stay in the town centre for long periods will be discouraged in order to reduce congestion and promote the use of alternatives to the car. Therefore, car parking will still be provided in the town centre with the emphasis on providing short stay parking spaces and discouraging long stay parking. Town centre car park pricing regimes will need to reflect this aim. New car parking will need to be provided as part of new developments in the town centre.

However, in line with requirements in PPG13, the ratio between car parking spaces and retail/office floorspace will be lower than at present.

5.25 The access needs for those working in the town centre will still need to be met and the potential for park and ride is being investigated. Commuter parking on residential streets also causes a particular problem in the inner neighbourhoods of Crawley, adjacent to the town centre. A Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) scheme has been implemented in many areas and has discouraged prolonged periods of parking. The scheme will be reviewed to ensure that it is covering the right areas and to identify whether it needs to be extended.

5.26 Key elements of the strategy:

- *Shifting further the balance of car parking in the town centre from long stay to short stay parking*
- *Ensuring that the access and parking needs of those visiting the town centre are sustainably met*
- *Increasing the overall number of parking spaces as new developments are built, but at a lower ratio to the amount of commercial floorspace than in the past*
- *Extending measures to protect residential parking capacity within the surrounding neighbourhoods.*



THEME 6 – INFRASTRUCTURE PROVISION AND SERVICES

5.27 Much of the town centre’s public realm has been subject to environmental improvements over the past 10 to 15 years. However, with the development proposals likely to come forward within the life span of this strategy, particularly TCN, there will be a need for further physical improvement and a need to review what wider infrastructure may be needed to support the growth of the town centre as a whole. This will include public realm improvements, open space and landscaping, educational contributions, affordable housing, sustainable energy supply initiatives, CCTV, Shopmobility, health service infrastructure, highway and transportation improvements etc.

5.28 It is anticipated that much of the improvement will be delivered through the development process and therefore to a large extent through the private sector. The next section of this strategy outlines several development opportunities for the town centre and the associated SPD provides further detail on what is expected from each development. Crawley Borough Council as local planning authority is responsible for securing development contributions to wider infrastructure and facilities. Such improvements would need to directly relate to the developments coming forward and cannot be required to meet existing infrastructure deficiencies. The council has recently adopted a Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document which provides guidance to developers on the likely contributions expected from them.

5.29 However, it will be important to consider wider infrastructural improvements which may require some form of public subsidy and to identify areas of the town centre which would not benefit from development-led improvement and therefore expose a difference in quality and consequential impact on the vitality and viability of such areas. The TCP and the council will be working with other key agencies with a view to securing further infrastructure improvement, including the Government, SEEDA, WSCC as highway authority and other public service providers such as the Primary Care Trust. All agencies will need to consider what resources they can secure to provide a holistic approach to environmental, infrastructure and service improvements. It will be important to ensure such provision is co-ordinated with the overall development of the town centre during the strategy’s lifetime.

5.30 *Key elements of the strategy:*

- *Ensuring that new development provides the infrastructure required to meet the needs generated by such development*
- *Identifying current deficiencies in infrastructure and understanding any funding gap and seeking to secure mechanisms to overcome the deficiencies.*



THEME 7 – SUSTAINABILITY – EFFICIENT USE OF RESOURCES

5.31 Inherent in the vision for the town centre is the opportunity to demonstrate a leading approach to new and well established methods of sustainable development and design. **The need for improvements to the natural and built environment is central to this vision, particularly in relation to the opportunity areas identified in the Town Centre-Wide SPD.**

5.32 On behalf of the council, a study has been undertaken to consider best practice for the town to take a leading role on climate change issues. It has identified that the major developments taking place in the town centre could provide the opportunity for a decentralised energy system or networks. Developers, working with the council, will therefore be expected to evaluate the feasibility and opportunities for such a scheme. The council also intends to publish a Corporate Climate Change Strategy which will identify sustainable options and approaches for new development, including those in the town centre. This will include information on sustainable technologies and improving environmental performance.

5.33 *Key elements of the strategy:*

- *Ensuring all new developments within the town centre demonstrate best practice in terms of sustainable environmental performance including green roofing and SUDS*
- *Proactively supporting the introduction of a town-wide sustainable energy supply*
- *Promoting the town centre as an exemplar of sustainability.*

THEME 8 – IMAGE AND MARKETING

5.34 The branding and marketing of the town centre will be an important component for delivering the qualitative improvement and perception of the town centre by:

- Maintaining vitality and encouraging customers to the town centre
- Promoting the increasing range of facilities available and broadening the town centre's attraction within its enlarged catchment
- Co-ordinating a clear message and identity that it is promoting
- Aligning 'the vision' with the interests of key stakeholders including existing businesses
- Reflecting the private sector's view on what will bring customers into the town centre
- Being realistic and patient.

5.35 A strategy will need to be developed between the key stakeholders to bring forward a co-ordinated short to long term approach to marketing and branding. The short term emphasis will need to deal with the approach to marketing during a time of transition and disruption. The challenge will be in seeking to manage the process and reduce the impact of such dramatic change on customer numbers during a period where they will experience a reduction in the quality of the environment and potentially the retail offer. This will involve highlighting the longer term gains from the changes occurring and keeping potential customers aware of progress and new

facilities opening. This is particularly important for smaller independent businesses who are likely to be most affected during the transition and disruption of the town centre.

5.36 In the longer term, when TCN and other developments are completed or nearing completion, the marketing and branding will need to increasingly focus on what makes Crawley special and to challenge or overcome any negative perceptions that may exist. Particular emphasis will likely include reference to the quality of the public realm and built environment, bringing forward of events/street attractions and the quantitative and qualitative improvement of the town centre offer as a place to visit, work and live. Additionally, in order to promote a significantly improved 'longer stay' offer, particularly in relation to the evening economy.

5.37 *Key elements of the strategy:*

- *Promoting the town centre as an area of major transformational change whilst ensuring the short term trading conditions of the town centre are managed to a satisfactory high standard with minimal disruption*
- *Ensuring effective communication with businesses and customers during periods of major change*
- *Bringing about a long term rebranding of a transformed town centre offer and environment.*



THEME 9 – RAISING SKILLS AND ASPIRATIONS

5.38 As a major centre in the South East Region, the success of the town centre will reflect both the quality and range of the services which are provided and the skills and abilities of the people working here. Expansion of the town centre will provide new job opportunities requiring a broad range of different skills to help sustain and diversify the town centre. An improved and expanded town centre offer will place more demands on the skills and abilities of the people that work there.

5.39 With the development of TCN, as well as the opportunities at Gatwick Airport, particularly but not exclusively in retail and hospitality, it is important that an adequate supply of people with the right skills are available across the whole town so that the commercial viability and visitor experience is not compromised by development elsewhere.

5.40 Existing educational establishments, including Central Sussex College, are already well positioned to support the development of the local skills base to help meet this need by offering advanced courses in retail skills and other relevant vocational courses. There are also opportunities to work with organisations such as the Education Business Partnership and Careers Service to promote the expanded opportunities in the town. Also important in this is helping raise aspiration levels among residents so that they can satisfy the skills and qualification requirements of town centre businesses so that they can compete for better paid, higher level jobs and careers. This is a recognised priority of the Local Economy Action Group and the Gatwick Diamond Initiative.

5.41 Key elements of the strategy:

- *Facilitating the renewal of facilities at Central Sussex College*
- *Promoting the development of a university presence within the town centre or elsewhere in the town*
- *Securing a range of training and courses which meet the diversified needs of an expanded town centre*
- *Ensuring that any new higher education opportunities in the area are developed taking account of the needs of town centre employers and businesses*
- *Promoting and facilitating the development of a strong culture of customer care which strengthens the experience of those shopping in or visiting the town centre*
- *Working through appropriate organisations and agencies, e.g. West Sussex County Council, the Learning and Skills Council, learning providers and the Gatwick Diamond Initiative to ensure skills gaps and needs are addressed e.g. that workplace entrants acquire the appropriate qualifications and skills.*

6. THE CONCEPT PLAN

6.1 As a result of this strategy there will be significant changes in the structure of the town centre, the role that different parts of the town centre perform and the activities that are located there. These changes are illustrated on the Concept Plan below.



Revitalised mixed use quarter, cultural use, offices, independent retail, intensification



The High Street as a focus of the evening economy



Revitalised Queen Square - anchored by landmark building



Landmark office/residential building and multimodal transport interchange





'Grid-iron' layout with movement routes reflecting new pattern of development



Town Centre North - Major new retail, leisure, residential and new Town Hall



Memorial Gardens protected and enhanced. Opportunity to 'green' the Town Centre through landscaping



College redevelopment including reduction of road dominance and landscaping



Potential remodelling/extension of County Mall





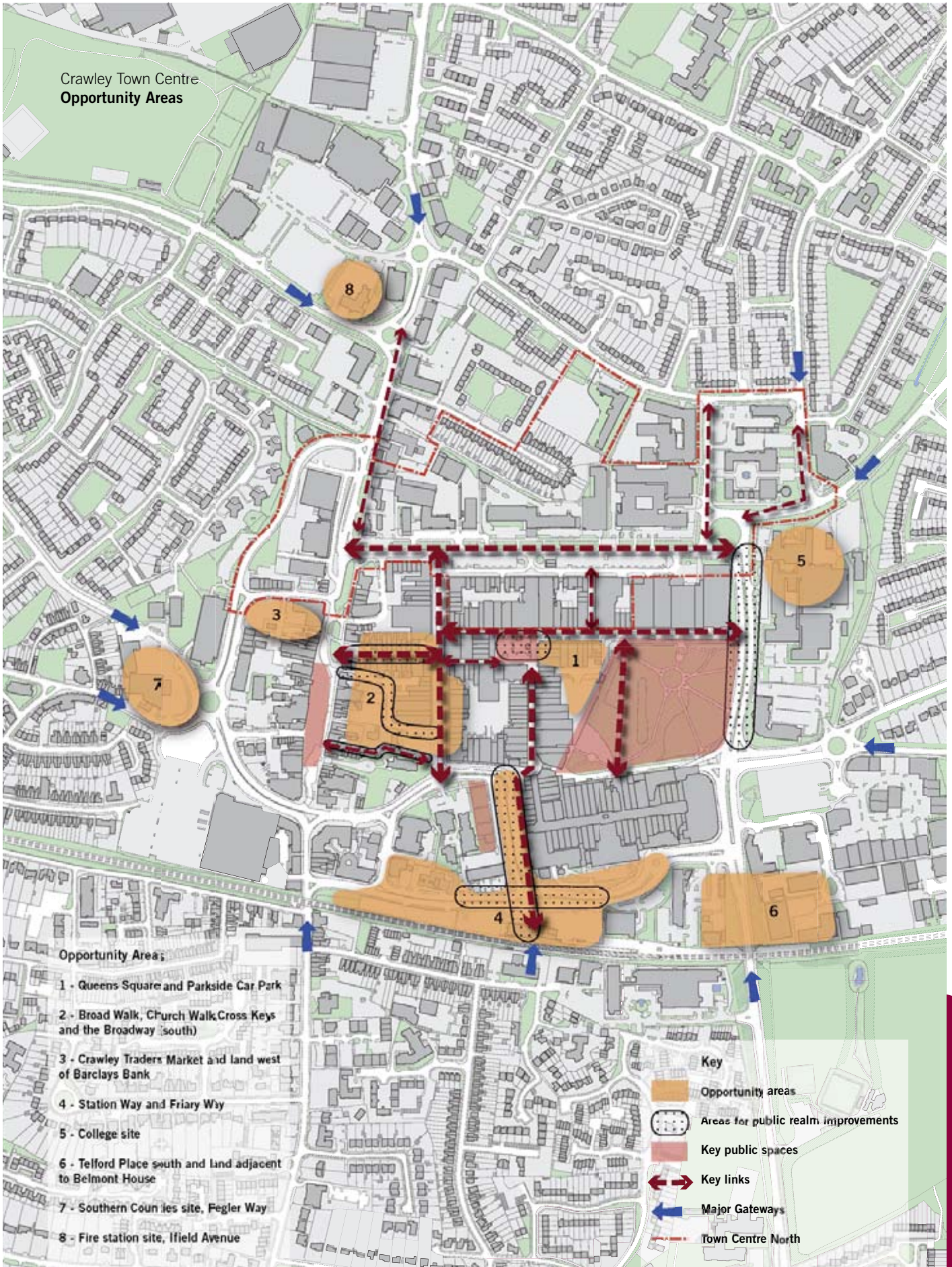
The principal elements of that structure are:

- *A balanced town centre ensuring that the TCN development acts as a catalyst for investment in all areas of the town centre*
 - *A reinforced 'grid-iron' layout of the town centre with movement routes reflecting new patterns of development*
 - *A revitalised Queens Square anchored by a new/refurbished enhanced landmark building*
 - *Redevelopment of the college with the aim of ensuring better integration with Memorial Gardens and the rest of the town centre*
 - *An extended County Mall and a new bus station with better integration with a new rail station and The Martlets area*
 - *Greening of the town centre by making best use of existing assets such as Memorial Gardens and the two listed churches in the town centre and ensuring new development and environmental improvements maximise opportunities for structured and attractive landscaping*
 - *Opportunities for major redevelopment/refurbishment at the southern end of The Broadway for mixed-use development*
- *The High Street as a focus for evening activity, further enhanced through the development of cafés/restaurants and other family-based uses and, where possible, independent retail development*
 - *Opportunities for new or refurbished office floorspace to Grade A standard, particularly at key gateways into the town centre, including the railway station*
 - *Residential development within or close to the town centre to provide a new residential neighbourhood community with more than 1,500 homes.*
- *Queens Square and Parkside Car Park*
 - *Broad Walk, Church Walk, Cross Keys and The Broadway (south)*
 - *Crawley Market and land west of Barclays Bank*
 - *Station Way/Friary Way*
 - *College Site*
 - *Telford Place (south) and land adjacent to Belmont House*
 - *Southern Counties site, Pegler Way*
 - *Fire Station site, Ifield Avenue.*

6.2 There are a number of development opportunity areas within the town centre (outside the TCN boundary). A vision has been developed for each area supported by key planning and design principles. The identified opportunity areas are listed below and illustrated on the Opportunity Areas plan (see right). However, this does not preclude development coming forward in other town centre locations:



Crawley Town Centre
Opportunity Areas



Opportunity Areas

- 1 - Queens Square and Parkside Car Park
- 2 - Broad Walk, Church Walk, Cross Keys and the Broadway (south)
- 3 - Crawley Traders Market and land west of Barclays Bank
- 4 - Station Way and Friary Way
- 5 - College site
- 6 - Telford Place south and land adjacent to Belmont House
- 7 - Southern Councils site, Fegler Way
- 8 - Fire station site, Ifield Avenue

Key

-  Opportunity areas
-  Areas for public realm improvements
-  Key public spaces
-  Key links
-  Major Gateways
-  Town Centre North

The delivery of this Town Centre Strategy, including the development of opportunity areas, will extend over at least ten years.



7. DELIVERY OF THE STRATEGY

7.1 The delivery of this Town Centre Strategy, including the development of opportunity areas, will extend over at least ten years. There are two main areas of work; the management and maintenance of the town centre, and secondly, the delivery of the development proposals. Both of these require new or enhanced delivery mechanisms which will involve changes to current partnerships, arrangements and roles of agencies involved in the town centre, in particular the TCP. Significant new funding will need to be secured. Key partners are likely to include WSCC, English Partnerships, SEEDA, Grosvenor, the owners of County Mall, other key landowners, local businesses and residents' representatives.

Securing high quality and efficient town centre management

7.2 The TCP has taken the lead in promoting a co-ordinated approach to the management and on-going maintenance of the town centre. However, there will be a need for an increasingly more sophisticated approach to manage development and the disruption and uncertainty arising from the development of TCN and implementation of the strategy itself. The scale and location of some of the proposed developments means that careful phasing will be necessary to limit the impact of construction on the operation and attractiveness of the town centre, particularly in relation to accessibility. It is also important to ensure that maintenance standards across the whole centre are maintained or enhanced as its offer improves. This will be required to ensure maximum benefit is derived from the redevelopment sought.

Establishing an appropriate delivery mechanism to promote high quality town centre development

7.3 The Town Centre-Wide SPD identifies how it is anticipated the development sites will be brought forward. It is expected that the private sector will deliver many of the sites, and the council's role will be as the local planning authority in ensuring the objectives for the sites are met, and appropriate contributions to wider town centre

management, public realm and other improvements are secured. For other sites, however, the council and other partners, although not major landowners in the town centre, will need to take a more proactive approach in order to progress delivery of the sites.

7.4 A delivery mechanism is therefore required to help bring these sites forward for delivery. This will have to address issues such as land ownership, viability, phasing and implementation. It is envisaged that this delivery vehicle will also be responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Town Centre Strategy. The key roles of this delivery mechanism are to:

- Provide strong leadership
- Assess viability and ensure sites are attractive to the market
- Assist land assembly
- Provide confidence to developers – possibly through securing public sector stakes in key projects
- Align internal and external stakeholder interests, policy objectives, budget priorities and investment decisions
- Leverage external sources of funding and secure public commitment to investment, including English Partnerships, WSCC
- Coordinate public and private involvement and that of the community/voluntary sector
- Provide the basis for local authority investment or use of powers such as CPO powers.





The Delivery Mechanism:

7.5 With these objectives in mind, the council has decided to establish a Town Centre Regeneration Board. The key aims of the board are set out below:

1. Develop a programme and bring Opportunity Sites forward for delivery
2. Co-ordinate and oversee implementation of the Town Centre Strategy
3. Where appropriate, assist with land assembly issues and provide the basis for local authority investment or use of powers such as CPO powers
4. Ensure effective communications with key stakeholders as the delivery of the strategy progresses
5. Provide confidence to developers working to address issues, such as land ownership, viability, phasing and implementation
6. In its co-ordinating role, receive reports and updates on major development e.g. TCN to ensure effective delivery of the strategy
7. Advise Crawley Borough Council's Cabinet and Full Council on policy objectives, budget priorities and investment decisions

8. Work closely with the TCP in securing high quality and efficient town centre management
9. Ensure that developments have been properly proofed for sustainability and provide expertise and advice as appropriate
10. Oversee the delivery of the Town Centre Strategy.

7.6 Membership of the Town Centre Regeneration Board is likely to include:

- The Leader of the Council
- Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development
- Chair of the Town Centre Partnership
- Borough and County Councillors
- English Partnerships
- SEEDA
- CADIA
- The Local Strategic Partnership.

7.7 Detailed terms of reference and working arrangements will be established and agreed with members of the new board.

8. WHAT DIFFERENCE WILL PEOPLE NOTICE?

2008



by 2013...

- The development of TCN will be well underway and some new units may be open for business
- The college site will be under development for mixed use and integrated into the fabric of the town centre
- As a result, much of the town centre (covering 16ha) stretching from Peglar Way in the West to Woodfield Road in the East and either side of The Boulevard will look and feel very different – but still with the human scale and presence that Crawley people value
- Crawley's new state-of-the-art Town Hall will be under construction, setting the tone for its architectural and technological ambitions
- As and when the footpaths, signs and shop fronts are replaced they will be of a noticeably consistent and higher quality. Small things that change the look and feel of the place for regular visitors and impress new ones
- The early signs of concerted efforts to create a diversified evening economy and independent sector will be noticeable in certain streets and buildings in the town centre
- The council is recognised as the champion for the shift in the town centre, setting high standards, intervening effectively in the market and repositioning the planning framework to help achieve the vision for Crawley town centre.

2013



2018

by 2018...

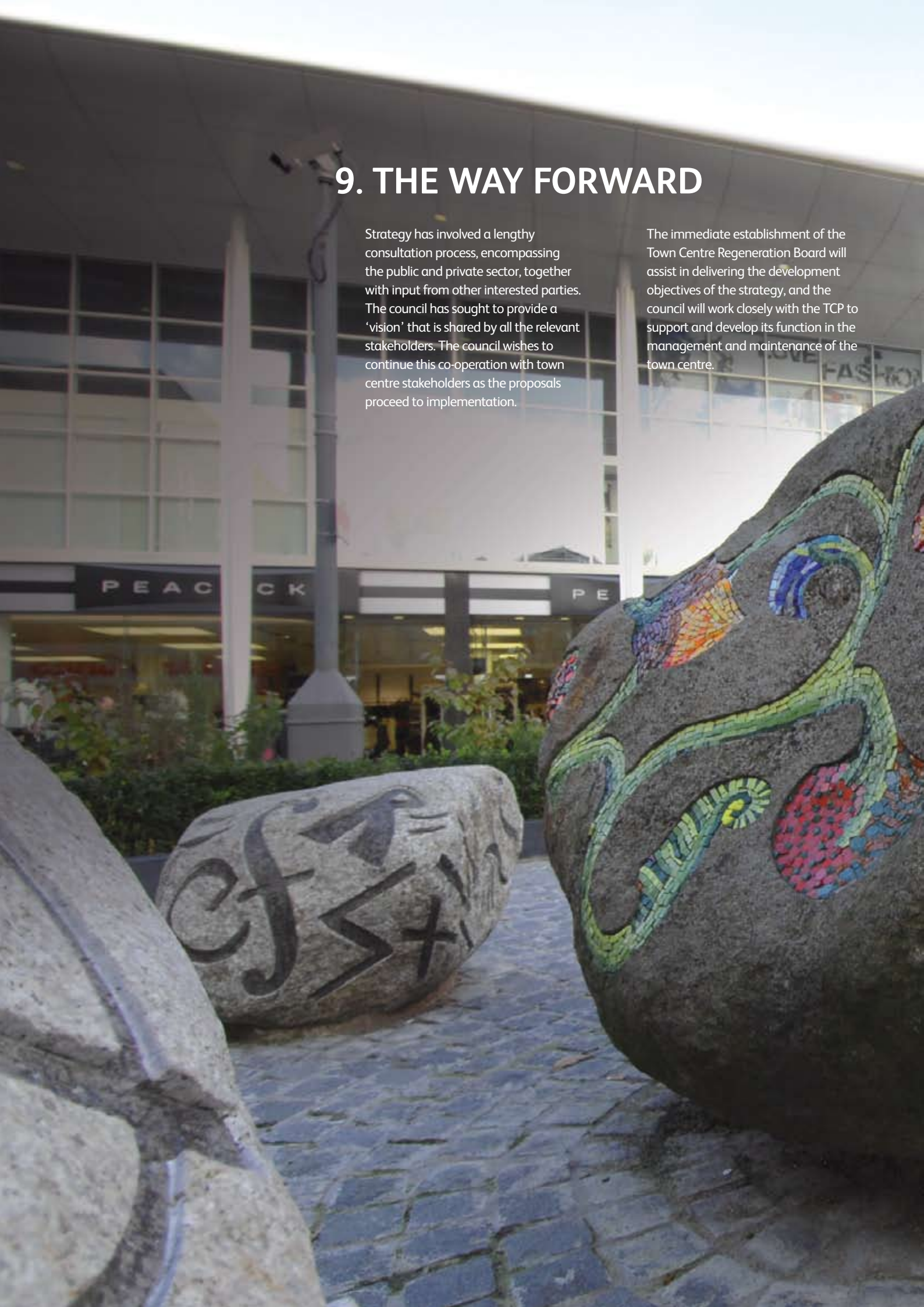
- Crawley will have moved substantially up the ranking of town centre retail and vitality to a strong position within the region. With the opening of TCN, Crawley will have a range of shops attractive to people from across Sussex
- New state-of-the-art office accommodation bringing new institutional investors into Crawley will be located at prominent gateways into the town centre
- A new railway station will be built, integrated with a new bus station and a more attractive highway corridor, transforming the image of this gateway to the town centre
- County Mall will have been subject to redevelopment proposals and have received a facelift, creating active frontage to its southern face
- A high quality new development or imaginative refurbishment/intensification overlooking Queens Square will reinforce its role at the centre of the town centre
- The pioneering New Town spirit will have been revitalised, offering special quality open spaces and public art within a greener and stylish town centre environment
- Investment property values will have risen above comparator town centres in the south east, reflecting that Crawley has enhanced its economic performance and prospects with gear change in the town centre.

Crawley town centre vision – July 3, 2007

9. THE WAY FORWARD

Strategy has involved a lengthy consultation process, encompassing the public and private sector, together with input from other interested parties. The council has sought to provide a 'vision' that is shared by all the relevant stakeholders. The council wishes to continue this co-operation with town centre stakeholders as the proposals proceed to implementation.

The immediate establishment of the Town Centre Regeneration Board will assist in delivering the development objectives of the strategy, and the council will work closely with the TCP to support and develop its function in the management and maintenance of the town centre.



FIND OUT MORE

If you would like to know more about Crawley Borough Council's town centre vision please contact **Ted Beresford-Knox**, Head of Planning Services, on **01293 438521** or email ted.beresford-knox@crawley.gov.uk





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Crawley Borough Council
Town Hall
The Boulevard
Crawley
West Sussex
RH10 1UZ

www.crawley.gov.uk