

FORMATIVE LISKEARD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN TOWN CENTRE STRATEGY

1. INTRODUCTION

This report sets out the findings of the Liskeard Neighbourhood Plan Town Centre Working Group, along with recommendations to the NP Steering group about appropriate objectives and comments on policies for Liskeard Town Centre.

The Working Group membership is as follows:

Name	Status
Rachel Brooks	Town Councillor (Chair of Group)
Sally Hawken	Cornwall Councillor and Town Councillor
John Hesketh	Town Centre Coordinator
Funmi Johnson	Community volunteer
Denise Lerner	Trader/Community volunteer
Wendy Lindesay	Community volunteer
Ray Meadows	Trader/Community volunteer
Sue Shand	Community volunteer

2. PROCESS

Creation of this report involved a period of evidence gathering on a range of issues that might influence the town centre strategy of the NP. A series of meetings were held to process the evidence and define the outline of a strategy, using various basic strategy building techniques. [\[Info on any stakeholder involvement/consultation\]](#) Site tours were also made to identify opportunity sites in the town centre and possible buildings for local listing.

3. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

LOCAL PLANNING POLICIES

The group looked at the CRCC Planning Policy assessment and identified the following town centre specific issues:

Emerging Cornwall Local Plan

24 Local listing of buildings – the group looked at a map showing the large number of buildings currently listed and carried out a walk with local historians to consider whether any others should be locally listed as part of the NP.

27 Transport and accessibility – in areas of high on-street parking new development coming forward considered to impact upon that area could be required to demonstrate how they will not exacerbate this problem.

PP15 Liskeard and Looe Community Network Area – the following extracts are particularly relevant to Liskeard town centre:

Objective 3 – Liskeard as a Service Centre

Strengthen Liskeard's role as a service centre and improve town centre viability through regeneration schemes including the redevelopment of the cattle market and improved traffic flow in the town and access from the A38 Moorswater junction.

Retail

It is estimated that there is capacity for the provision of an additional 1,485sqm of convenience and 2,536sqm of comparison A1 net sales floorspace in the centre, edge-of-centre and out-of-centre locations of the town up to 2030. This data will be updated on a regular basis to ensure it provides an up to date reflection of market conditions and the health of individual centres.

[We need to set out proposals for additional retail floorspace in the town centre. Zoe's map will help here]

Policy PP15: Liskeard and Looe CNA

1. Development will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that the following priorities for Liskeard can be satisfied:

a) The protection of the vitality and viability of Liskeard town centre through the promotion of retail, office and leisure uses. Proposals for change of use or redevelopment will only be permitted within the Primary Shopping Area if the proposal adds to the attractiveness of the centre and does not reduce the predominance of A1 retail use;

Caradon Local Plan First Alteration

LISK5 – "A phased scheme to improve the appearance and reduce the current confusion on the road system will be implemented in the Bay Tree Hill area; including closing sections of road and providing paved areas with seats and trees".

[Do we want to follow this up?]

DEFINING AREAS OF TOWN CENTRE AND USE OF LAND

The Town WG agreed town centre, primary retail area and primary retail frontages boundary lines as viewed on Town Centre Notation - Liskeard plan (see map at appendix x).

CONSERVATION AND HERITAGE

The group looked at the document *Liskeard Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan December 2012*. The group broadly supported the Recommendations and Guidance by Location in this document. There are some detailed comments on this which need to be written up. Appendix x.

DISABILITY ACCESS

The group is talking to local people with disabilities and their organisations about conducting a disability access audit of the town centre. Initial discussions confirm that there are significant issues, some of which could realistically be addressed. Part of the aim of this is to generate some design standards or specific recommendations to improve town centre accessibility.

COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN (CSP)

The group looked at the town centre vision and other relevant extracts relating to the Town Centre from the CSP.

Opportunity sites

The group has developed a pro forma for each opportunity site, including key information. Owners have been contacted to understand their intentions and discuss possible development. **The sites also need to be marked up on a map. Appendix x.**

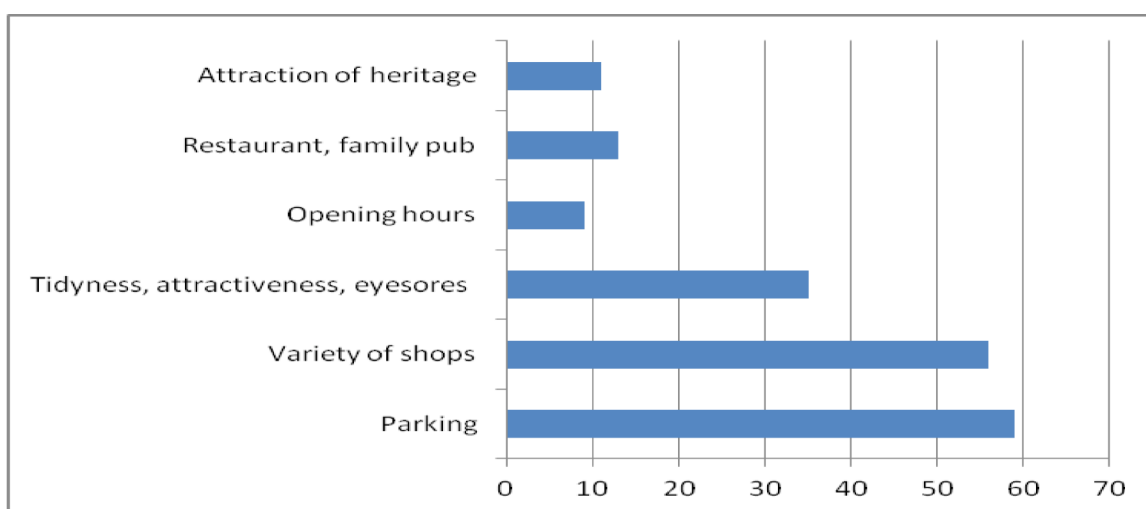
4. KEY POINTS FROM COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FEEDBACK

The group identified the following themes from the consultation as particularly relevant to town centre planning policy:

- Every effort should be made to use brownfield sites for housing and better use should be made of empty housing and commercial property.
- There are problems of access in Liskeard, particularly for less mobile people.
- It would be useful to designate retail space for a magnet retailer such as a supermarket.
- Empty properties make the town look unattractive, and opportunity sites include the old Taylors Garage site and the Cattle Market.
- The town has a lot to offer in terms of its attractiveness, its architecture, its heritage and its proximity to open countryside, and the addition of chain stores could undermine the essential character of the place.
- Employment could be helped by the availability of small incubator-style units aimed at the ICT sector, and arts and crafts businesses.
- There is currently a lack of facilities for children and young people, including play equipment.
- Transport accessibility could be improved by better buses, better cycling routes and better safety for cyclists and pedestrians, including wider pavements.
- The rich heritage of the town should be preserved and new buildings should blend with the old in scale and materials, using local stone and slate.
- Derelict and empty buildings should be subject to improvement orders.

Comments relating to Liskeard as a place to meet, shop and do business:

Number of comments made



SWOT ANALYSIS

<p style="text-align: center;">STRENGTHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good architecture • Compact • Good transport links <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Bus services ◦ Trains ◦ A38 • Superfast broadband • Independent & specialist shops • Traditional shops with expert advice & good service • Can buy local produce • Historical value – stones • Friendly • Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Banks ◦ Library ◦ Doctors ◦ Solicitors ◦ Post Office 	<p style="text-align: center;">WEAKNESSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hills • Very limited ability to load and unload • Don't see what we have • Shops not visible from Barras Street • No town square or focal point • Entrance to town cluttered and unattractive • No large indoor venue • Few nationals or possible sites • Poor links between outlying estates and town centre
<p style="text-align: center;">OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combine online and town centre businesses • Encouraging more motor home people to park here • Low cost of setting up a business • Development which provides employment (eg artisan workshops) • Rise in leisure shopping • Duelling A38 • Disposal of Cornwall Council assets • Capitalise on Liskeard's history • Premises available • Population is increasing • Demographic is shifting (to younger families) • Wet weather destination for visitors 	<p style="text-align: center;">THREATS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Out of town shopping increasing • Online shopping increasing • Unregulated housing developments in town centre spaces • Cornwall council disposal of assets • Post Office sorting office moving out of town • Bodmin College expansion (taking students from Liskeard School)

5. CONCLUSIONS FROM THE EVIDENCE

There is strong local support for keeping the unique character of the town and celebrating its heritage. Many people see the variety of independent shops and other businesses as key to current and future success. This could be built on by the provision of workshop space for local artisans.

There are differing views about chain stores – some would like to see more and others caution against losing Liskeard's character. In any case, there are real practical limitations on attracting more chains - many national chains have done poorly in recent years and are contracting rather than expanding. Also the size and location of current retail units make most of them unattractive to large chains which need easy access for deliveries.

A new development on an opportunity site in the centre of town including a magnet retailer such as a supermarket could bring in more convenience shoppers without detracting from the character of the existing shops and cafés.

There is a need to balance the preservation of Liskeard's heritage with guidance to maximise accessibility, accepting that the geography of the town will always prove challenging.

Any development of large opportunity sites should look to introduce public space in the centre of town which could be used for outdoor events.

New housing developments out of town should include provision for good pedestrian and cycle links to the centre.

There are already a large number of listed buildings in the town. On the basis of our survey we would like to propose listing of two additional Victorian houses (see appendix x)

It would be useful to add more detailed guidance to support policy PP15 1a in the draft Local Plan, defining “attractiveness of the centre”, including community gain.

6. STRATEGIC OVERVIEW – VISION/AIMS – OBJECTIVES.

[insert vision here]

Table: Linking Vision/Aims, objectives and policies.

Vision/Aims Statement:	
Objectives	Comments
Protection of the town centre retail area both from outlying development and changes of use within the centre which undermine it.	<p>Town WG agreed to recommend a slightly amended version of the Woburn Sands wording on retail development:</p> <p><i>Within the town centre (as defined in the Town Centre Notation - Liskeard Map) developments and changes of use which promote the vitality and viability of the High Street will be supported. Retail development and changes of use outside the town centre which impinge on the health of the High Street will not be permitted.</i></p> <p>[Additional wording on 'attractiveness of the Town Centre' in PP15 1a?]</p>
Support development of a town centre site including a magnet retailer and public open space.	There are several possible sites. The one likely to come up first is the Cattle Market and the group recommends that the NPT holds a specific workshop around options for this site.
Bring unused sites and empty buildings back into retail, employment and housing use.	The opportunity sites map and accompanying proformas set out further information on such sites.
Preserve the rich heritage of the architecture and ensure new buildings meet similarly high design standards and use local materials	<p>See annotated version of recommendations and guidance from <i>Liskeard Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan December 2012</i></p> <p>Way to specify design standards for new build?</p>
Improve access for disabled users and those with pushchairs.	Disability audit and guidance – will need to come later

Improve transport accessibility, including walking and cycling routes	
Gain local listing for a small number of buildings.	Separate document lists possible buildings

7. ISSUES REQUIRING RESOLUTION