

Hailsham Town Centre Regeneration

Hailsham Aspires: Masterplan Options Consultation Summary Report 2021



If you, or somebody you know, would like the information contained in this document in large print, Braille; or in another language please contact Wealden District Council on 01323 443322 or info@wealden.gov.uk

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Introduction

Hailsham Aspires was created by Wealden District Council to bring forward plans that enhance and regenerate Hailsham Town Centre to support local communities now and into the future. This is a great opportunity to build sensitively and thoughtfully for the future of Hailsham, and to address the challenges currently faced by the town centre.

After many months of collating information from local people, businesses, stakeholders, and Council officers alongside the consultation feedback provided in 2019 and initial stakeholder workshops in October 2020, the project design team created and consulted on three separate masterplan options. This document provides a summary of the feedback received during this public consultation.

Guiding Design Principles

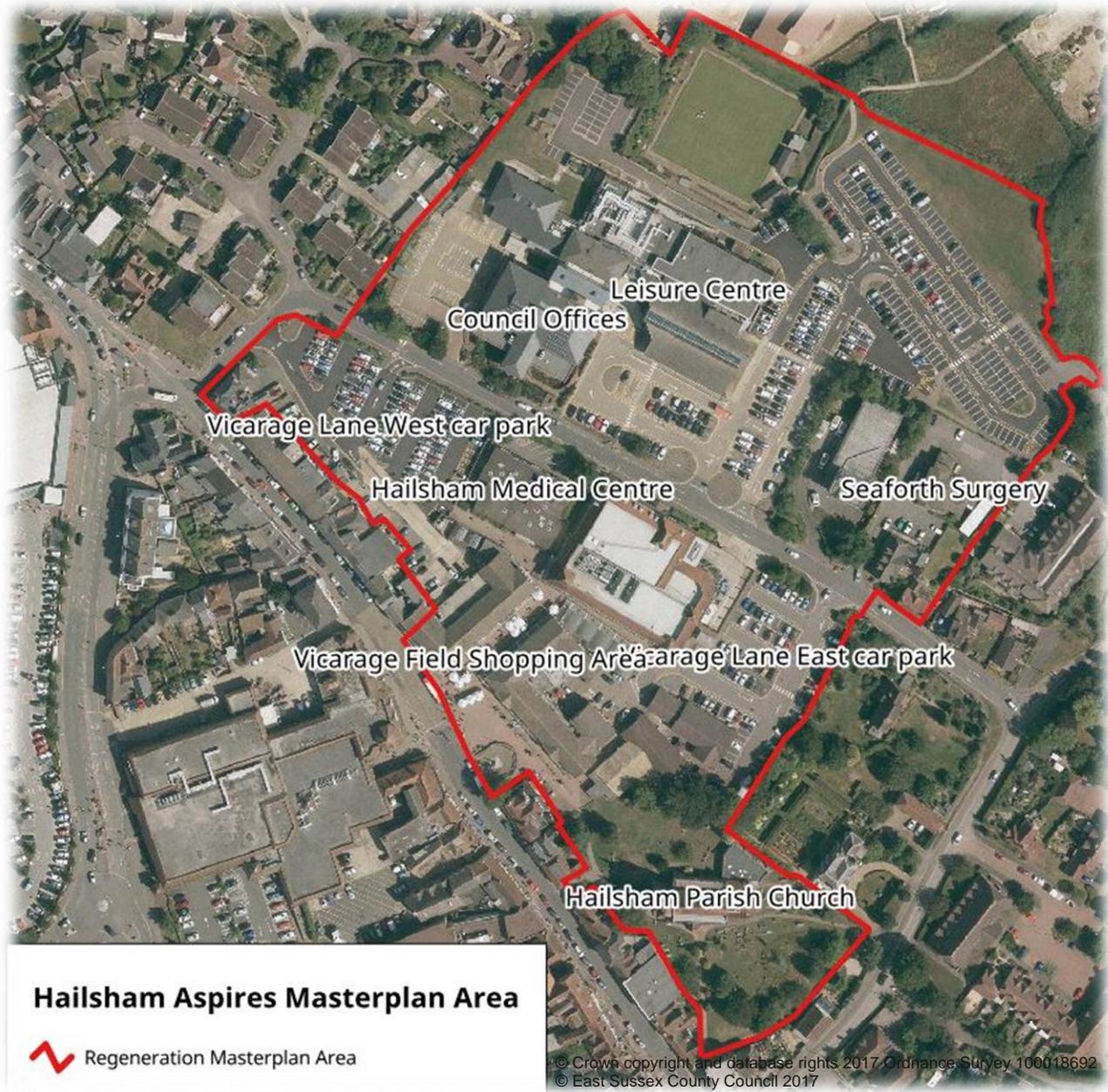
The main aspirations of Hailsham Aspires are to deliver a revitalised town centre and offer Hailsham a bright future as the key growth town in East Sussex. In order to achieve this seven key design principles were created to guide the masterplan.

- Re-energised Town Centre
- Enhanced Connectivity, Legibility and Wayfinding
- Sustainable Design and Future Planning
- Healthy and Active Community
- Public Open Space
- Town Centre Living
- Unique Heritage, Culture and Identity



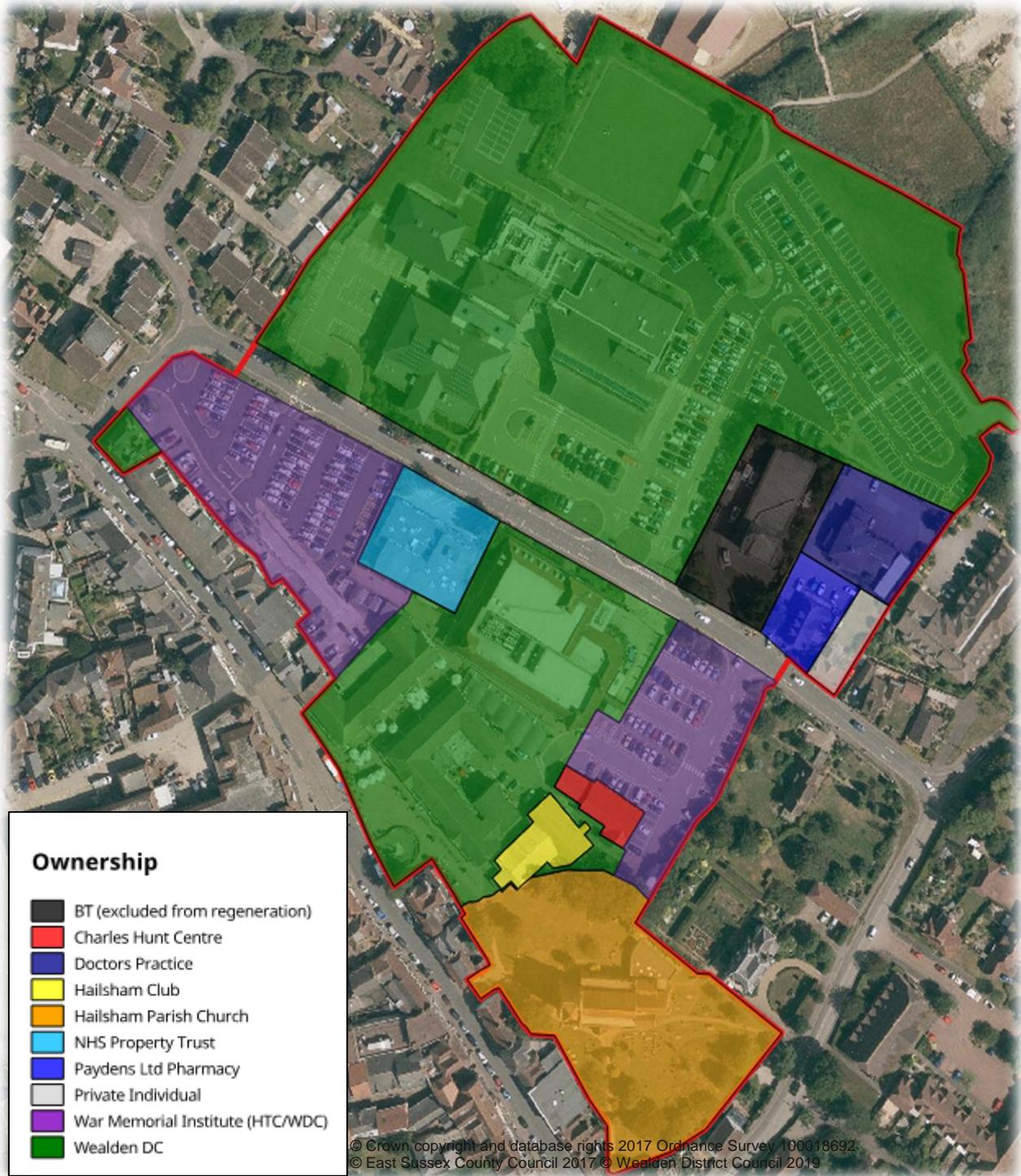
Outline Map of Area

The following map shows the extent of the area being considered for regeneration.



Partnership Working

The following map shows the land ownership amongst the different organisations¹ who are working together to explore the options for regeneration.



¹ The land owned by BT is excluded from the regeneration area.

Overview of Consultation

The Hailsham Aspires project team put together three masterplan options, that were presented in an 8-week public consultation between 18th January and 14th March 2021. The focus of the engagement was to ask local people, businesses, and stakeholder groups what masterplan they would prefer to see realised for Hailsham Town Centre, alongside the opportunity to comment more broadly on what residents thought would improve Hailsham.

Promotion and Raising Awareness



Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the Government imposed national lockdown to protect public health, public consultation on the masterplan options was required to take place virtually. Measures were taken to ensure that the predominantly virtual consultation did not exclude members of the community who had limited or no access to the internet and that all of those that wanted to could take part without the fear of digital exclusion. All of the consultation materials were available via post, at request, and a Freephone consultation telephone line was available.

The consultation survey was also promoted through a wide variety of channels.

Stakeholder Meetings

We wrote to all key stakeholders to invite them to take part in virtual meetings with the design team in October 2020 and February 2021. The project team held 24 meetings with key stakeholders and local organisations, including Hailsham Town Council, Hailsham Forward, Chamber of Commerce, Community groups, Landowners, Medical stakeholders such as the

Hailsham Medical Centre, Vicarage Field tenants and Freedom Leisure. Approximately 110 individuals attended these meetings.

We also wrote to more than 300 key stakeholders and organisations to invite them to take part in the public consultation.

Dedicated Website and Email Sign-Up

The dedicated Hailsham Aspires website allowed people to view and download all available information regarding the regeneration. The website included access to all relevant further policy documents and a function for people to submit their email address to receive updates on the project. Since launching the email sign-up function in August 2019, over 200 people have registered to receive updates as the project progresses. The website and the sign-up facility remain available throughout the duration of the project.

Leaflets and Press

A Hailsham Aspires leaflet was delivered to 14,500 local residents and businesses within Hailsham and the surrounding area promoting the consultation and informing them how they can take part or contact the project team for further information.

Posters advertising the public consultation were displayed throughout Hailsham and a dedicated window display at a vacant premise in Vicarage Field was installed.

A press release was issued to local news outlets, which featured in the Wealden Eye, Sussex Express and Eastbourne Herald community pages.

Social Media

We ran a dedicated social media campaign throughout the duration of the consultation. These contained regular posts to the Hailsham Aspires dedicated Facebook page and were shared via the Wealden District Council Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn feeds. These posts publicised the consultation, detailed how people could take part and included a link to the Hailsham Aspires website where further information and FAQ's were available.

Many of our posts on social media were also shared by key Hailsham stakeholders, community groups and organisations. This helped us to reach a much wider audience from those that follow the council pages.

My Alerts

The Masterplan Options consultation was included in the Council's email subscription service "My Alerts" twice during the consultation. Once at the launch of the public consultation and a further time towards the end to remind people to complete the survey before it closed.

How people responded

Approximately 600 people took part in the consultation through a variety of methods, with 420 responders completing the survey available either through the website or in hard copy form:

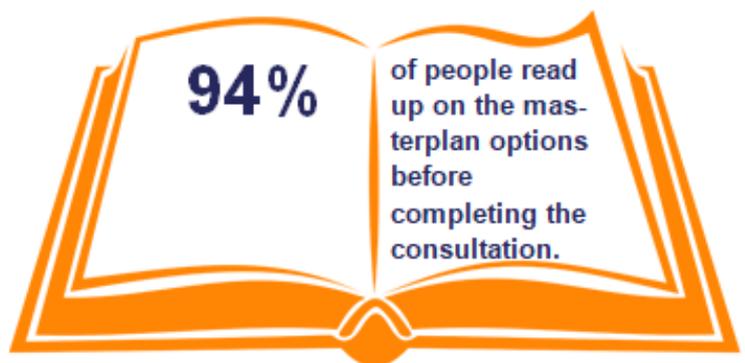
Method	Amount
Electronic Survey Responses	399
<i>Of which completed by Web (Computer)</i>	<i>313</i>
<i>Of which completed by Tablet</i>	<i>37</i>
<i>Of which completed by Mobile phone</i>	<i>49</i>
Survey Responses received by email	2
Survey Responses received by post	17
Comments by Email	38
Comments by Post	4
Comments by Phone	20
Attendees at stakeholder events in Oct 20 and Feb 21	Approx. 110
Total	590

Analysis

The feedback received from the consultation was balanced and gave some helpful indicators as to what the community would like to see arising from the development of the town centre.

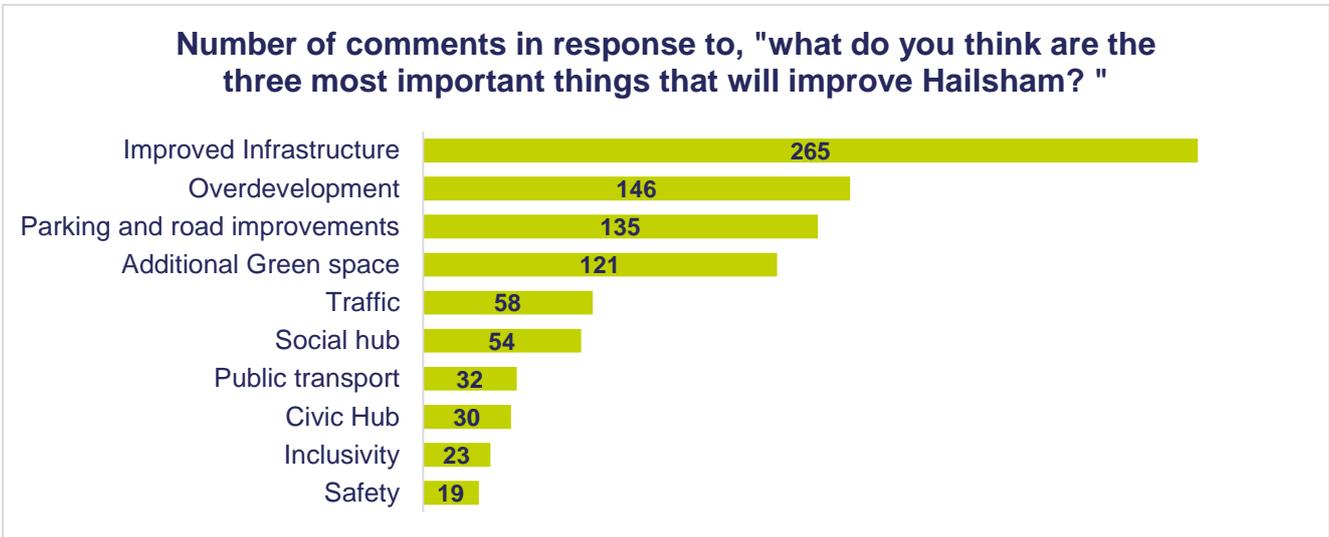
Awareness of Project and previous consultation

From the results of the survey, we can see that half of respondents (49%) could remember having engaged with the previous consultation in 2019, but encouragingly the vast majority of respondents (93.8%) were well-informed about the masterplan options, and said that they had read up on the masterplan options ahead of completing the survey.



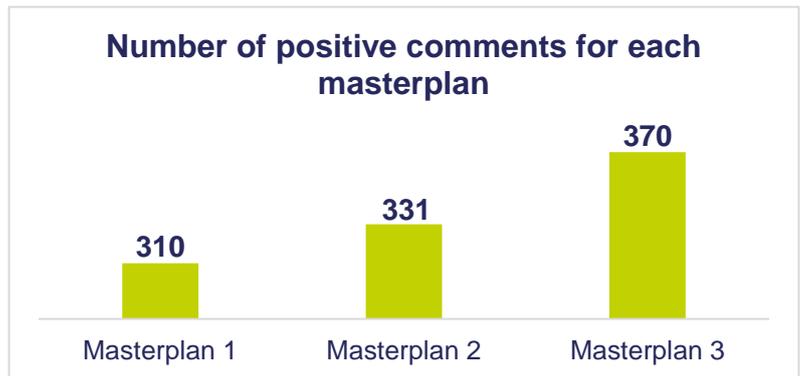
What do you think will improve Hailsham?

In response to the free text question ‘What do you think are the three most important things that will improve Hailsham’ we have divided the comments by themes. This shows us that the highest number of comments received related to the need to improve the town’s infrastructure, for example health and education facilities.



Masterplan Options

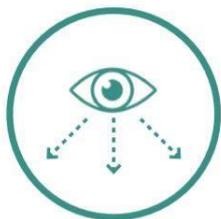
The quantitative data shows that in response to ‘which masterplan option do you prefer’ the most popular response of those that selected a preference was Masterplan three, followed by a ‘blend’ of all three options.



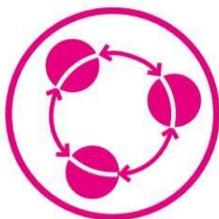
The free text comments allowed us to look further into what aspects of each of the three masterplan options respondents preferred or disliked. This illustrated that there were different aspects of each plan that were favoured or preferred.



VISTAS & VIEWS



CONNECTIVITY



CIVIC SPACES



GREEN LINK



NEIGHBOURLINESS



Civic and Community Space

Respondents preferred Masterplan Three's design for a town square and central avenue to act as a social hub in the centre of town.

Masterplan Three was also the preferred option of respondents regarding the leisure centre and Council building location due to the Leisure Centre's proximity to the centre of the town. However, there were concerns about redeveloping or relocating the Leisure Centre and Wealden District Council buildings, particularly the cost of doing this.



Many respondents expressed a need for other key infrastructure to be improved in the town, particularly health care provision.

The need to ensure that the existing community facilities, such as the Hailsham Club, Charles Hunt Centre and Bowls Club, are replaced was also expressed by many respondents.

Green Links, Vistas and Views

The comments received were generally positive regarding the introduction of green space, linkages between the centre of Hailsham, the surrounding countryside and enhancing key views.

Masterplan Two's proposed green space was the most popular option among respondents. They approved of the fact that more land was designated as public space and felt that the town needs high quality green space that feels inclusive and is not an afterthought.

Respondents also stressed the importance of preserving and enhancing key views of heritage assets within the town, for example St Mary's Church and the surrounding countryside.



Transport and Parking

The favoured transport layout from the options presented was Masterplan one. Positive comments on the transport infrastructure in Masterplan One centred on the location of the car park, set back on the slope and hidden from the main road. In contrast, positive comments on Masterplan Three preferred its central location, with residents not having to cross a busy road to access retail provision. There is a split amongst respondents about which approach is best.

The majority of the comments captured under the Transport theme centre around parking. There were worries about a potential loss of parking spaces and the location of the proposed multi-storey car park. Some respondents stated that a multi-storey would be “ugly” and “ruin the character of the town”. However, a significant number of respondents also concluded that the provision of the multi-storey car park would be necessary to increase the amount of parking in the town centre.

There were also traffic concerns, with many respondents worried that already congested roads will get busier.

Housing

Masterplan three received the most positive comments in relation to housing in the town centre. There were reservations about the inclusion of any new homes within the town centre, with concerns centring on overdevelopment and stretched infrastructure. However, these homes remain vital to the masterplan, as they help resolve the area’s housing shortage and provide valuable new business opportunities. A design team has been working to balance the housing requirements and constraints across the site, with the intention of ensuring the proposals do not have a negative impact on the current infrastructure situation and instead, they will aim to improve that position.

Retail

Masterplan One has the most popular retail provision. Respondents liked the fact that an anchor store be located at the centre of the other retail and felt that it would give a boost to the smaller, independent stores nearby. Respondents showed a clear preference for a defined retail area and a desire for existing retailers in the town centre to be supported through the proposals to ensure that any retail improvements will also benefit them.



Summary

The key themes arising from the consultation were:

- Positive comments regarding the introducing more green space and linkages between the centre of Hailsham and the surrounding countryside.
- Concerns about plans to redevelop or move the Leisure Centre and Wealden District Council building, particularly the cost of doing this.
- Worries about loss of parking and the location of the proposed multi-storey car park.
- A need for other key infrastructure to be improved, e.g. schools and health care provision.
- Traffic concerns, many respondents are worried already congested roads will get busier.
- The desire for a defined retail area and existing retailers in the town centre to be supported through the proposals and the hope that any retail improvements will also benefit them.
- The need for existing community facilities to be retained in some capacity, e.g. the Charles Hunt Centre, Bowls Club, etc.
- The desire for a large town square to act as a social hub.

What Next?

These views will help to inform and be incorporated by the design team in their work to bring forward a revised masterplan that both reflects the local community's views and the potential impact on the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy, as we enter the recovery phase of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Further opportunities to be involved will be available in due course as the project progresses.



Appendices

Appendix 1 – Copy of the Public Survey Questionnaire from January-March 2021

Hailsham Town Centre Regeneration - Masterplan Options Consultation

After collating information from local people, businesses, stakeholders, and Council officers, the Hailsham Aspires project team have put together three separate masterplan options to revitalise Hailsham town centre, and we would like to hear your thoughts on these.

Please look at the options below and read through the supporting information to understand the background behind the three masterplan options. Once you have done this, let us know which option you prefer and your reasons for this.

Q1 Have you had time to read the information about the three masterplan options before beginning this survey?

Please note the masterplan options will also be displayed within this survey

- Yes
 No

Q2 Did you take part in the previous public consultation in 2019 on the aspirations of Hailsham town centre?

- Yes
 No
 Can't remember

Q3 How did you hear about this consultation?

Please tick all that apply

- Leaflet
 Poster
 Social Media
 Word of mouth
 Community Group
 Wealden District Council communications
 Other

Please describe

Q4 What is your relationship to Hailsham?

Please tick all that apply

- Local resident
- Work in the area
- Shop in the town
- Leisure Centre user
- Health provision user (e.g. Doctors, Dentist)
- Go to school/college in the town
- Attend a Community Group/Club
- Visit the Council offices
- Other

Please describe

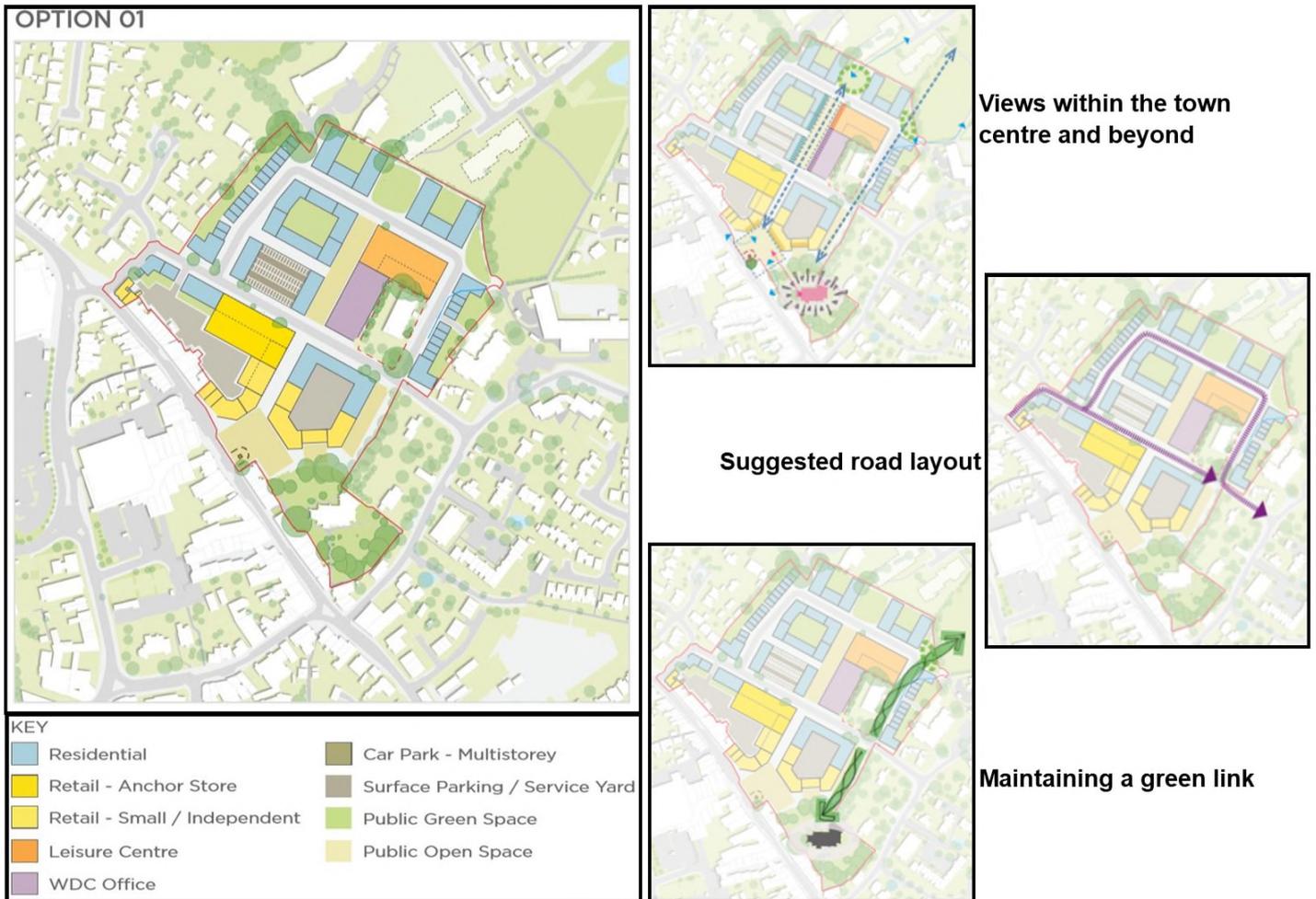
Masterplan options

As part of the design process, five different 'character areas' are being established to provide a distinct personality to each of the key parts of the town centre.

Inspiration for these areas is drawn from Hailsham and the surrounding area to ensure that the proposals would enhance the existing town centre, whilst providing improved facilities, shops, and public spaces.

These 'character areas' are:

- Market Square
- Retail lane
- Green Link
- Civic Heart
- Residential Neighbourhood



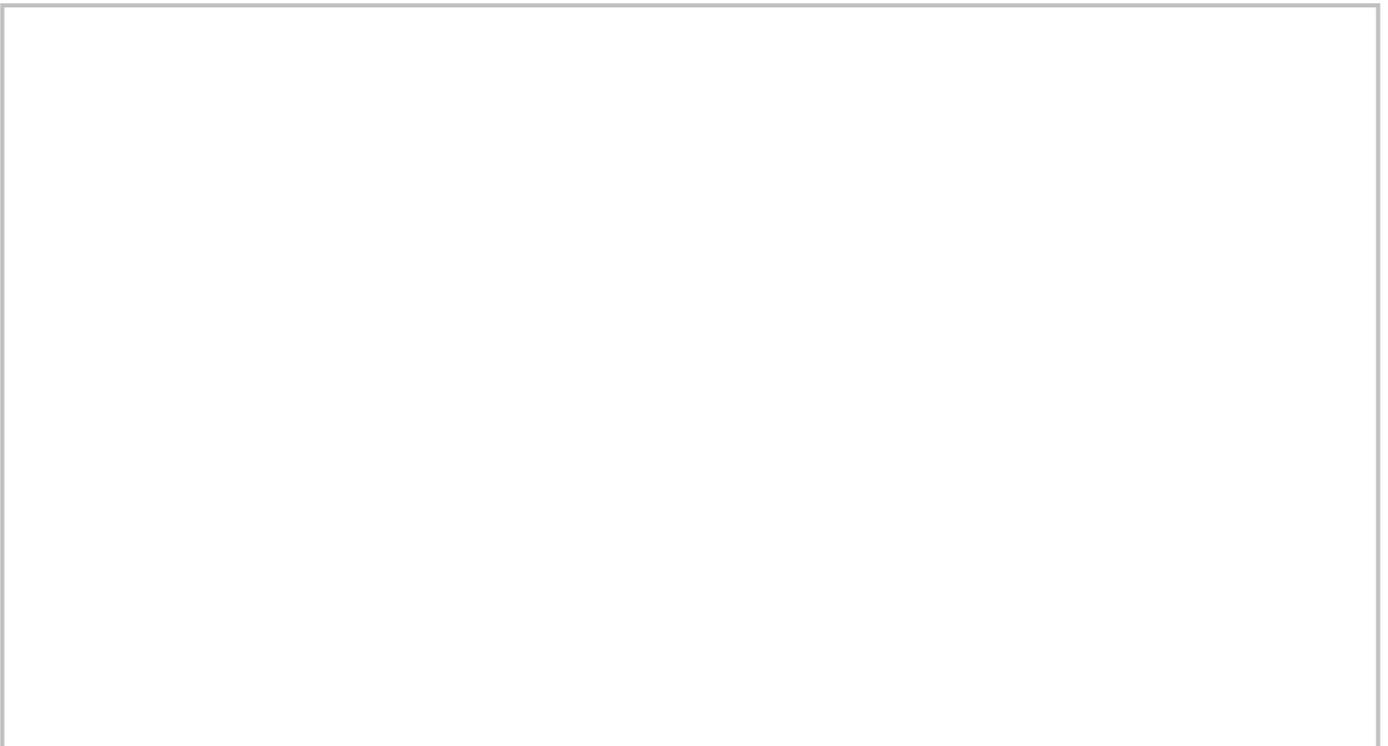
Masterplan option 01 - main features

- Wealden District Council offices in central location adjacent to new Leisure Facility
- Public green space to the north of the site
- 'Anchor Store' to the south, in close proximity to other retail offer
- New multistorey car park in the centre of the site

Q5 When looking at masterplan option 01, what do you like about this option?



Q6 When looking at masterplan option 01, what do you like less about this option?



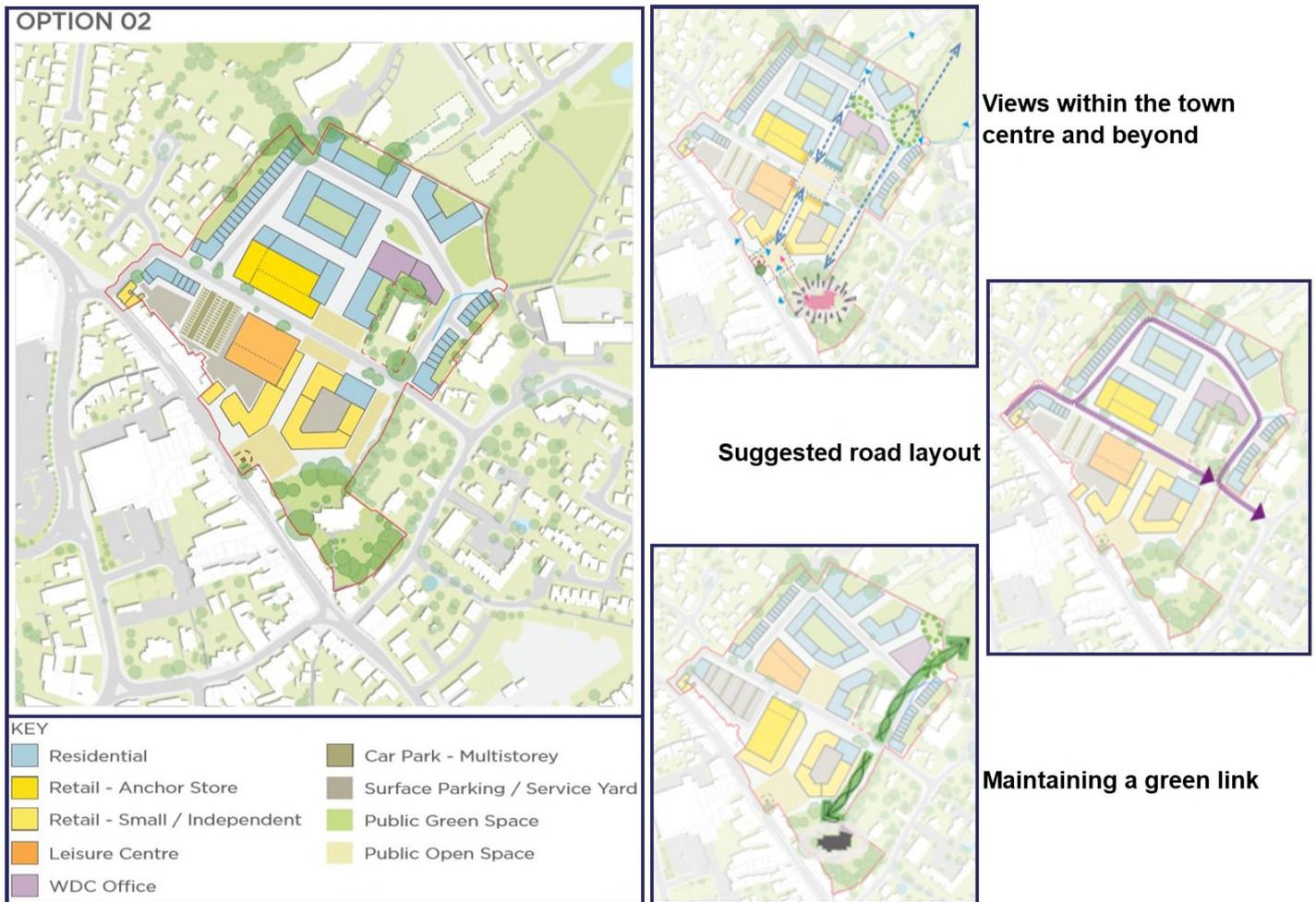
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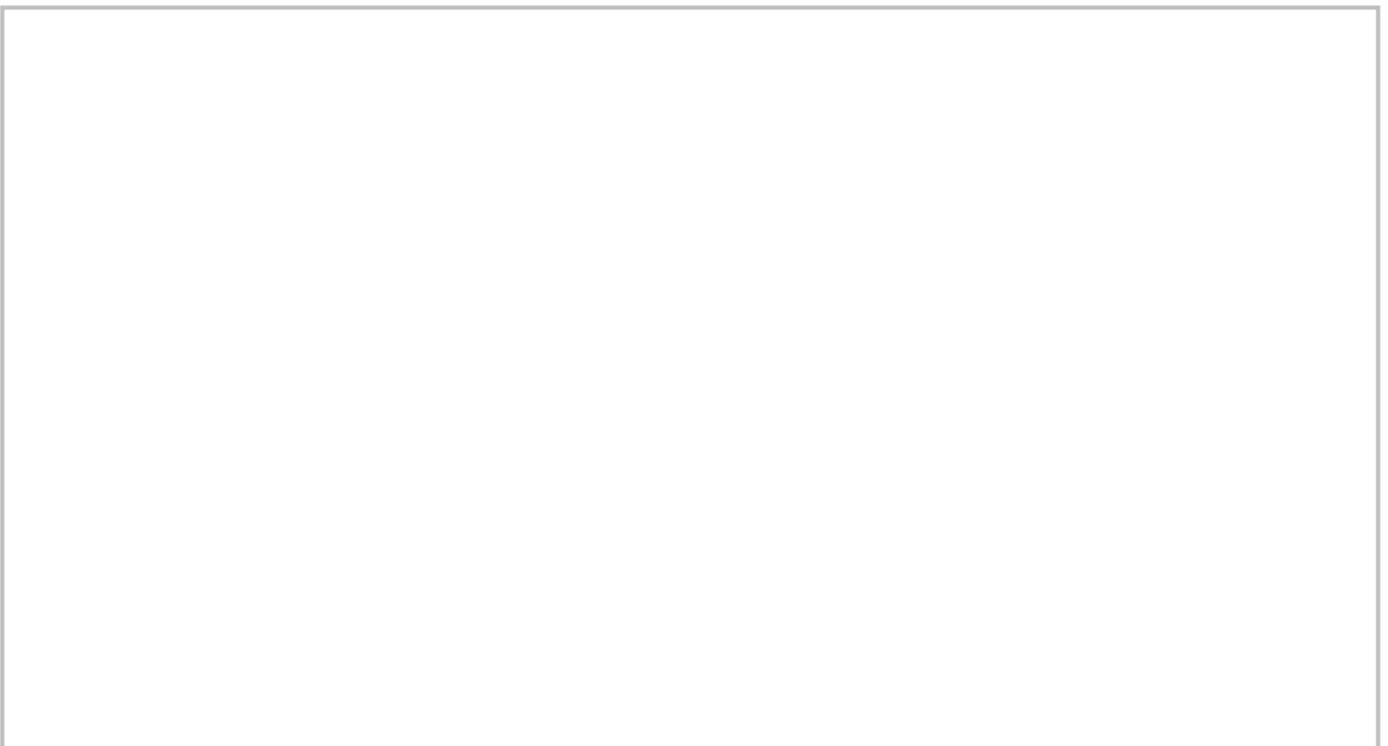
Masterplan option 02 - main features

- Public green space to the north east, with views of the wider countryside
- New car park located close to facilities, e.g. 'Anchor Store' and Leisure Facility
- Large public space around war memorial and St Mary's Church
- Wealden District Council offices to the rear of the site

Q7 When looking at masterplan option 02, what do you like about this option?



Q8 When looking at masterplan option 02, what do you like less about this option?



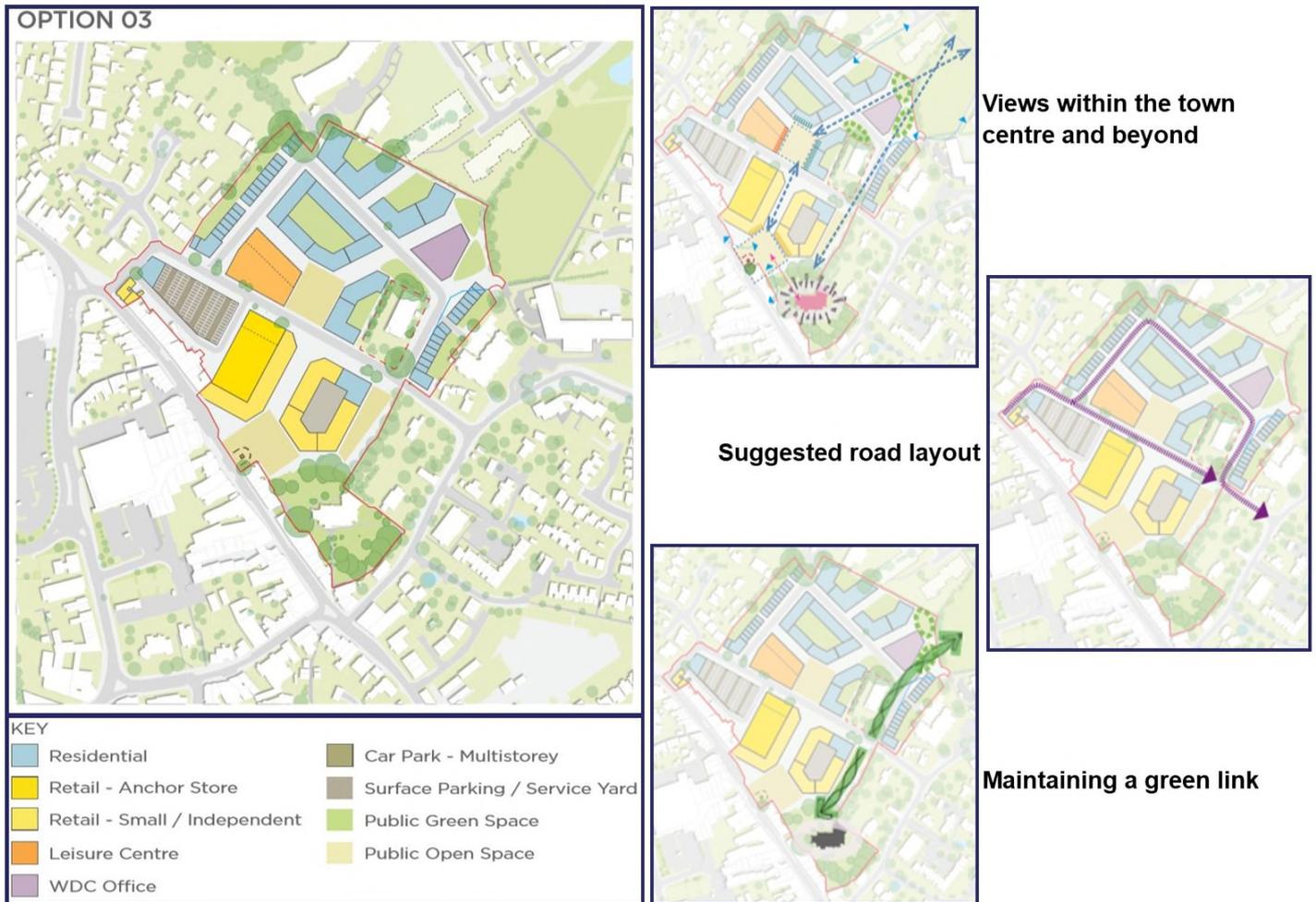
Masterplan options

As part of the design process, five different 'character areas' are being established to provide a distinct personality to each of the key parts of the town centre.

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These 'character areas' are:

- Market Square
- Retail lane
- Green Link
- Civic Heart
- Residential Neighbourhood



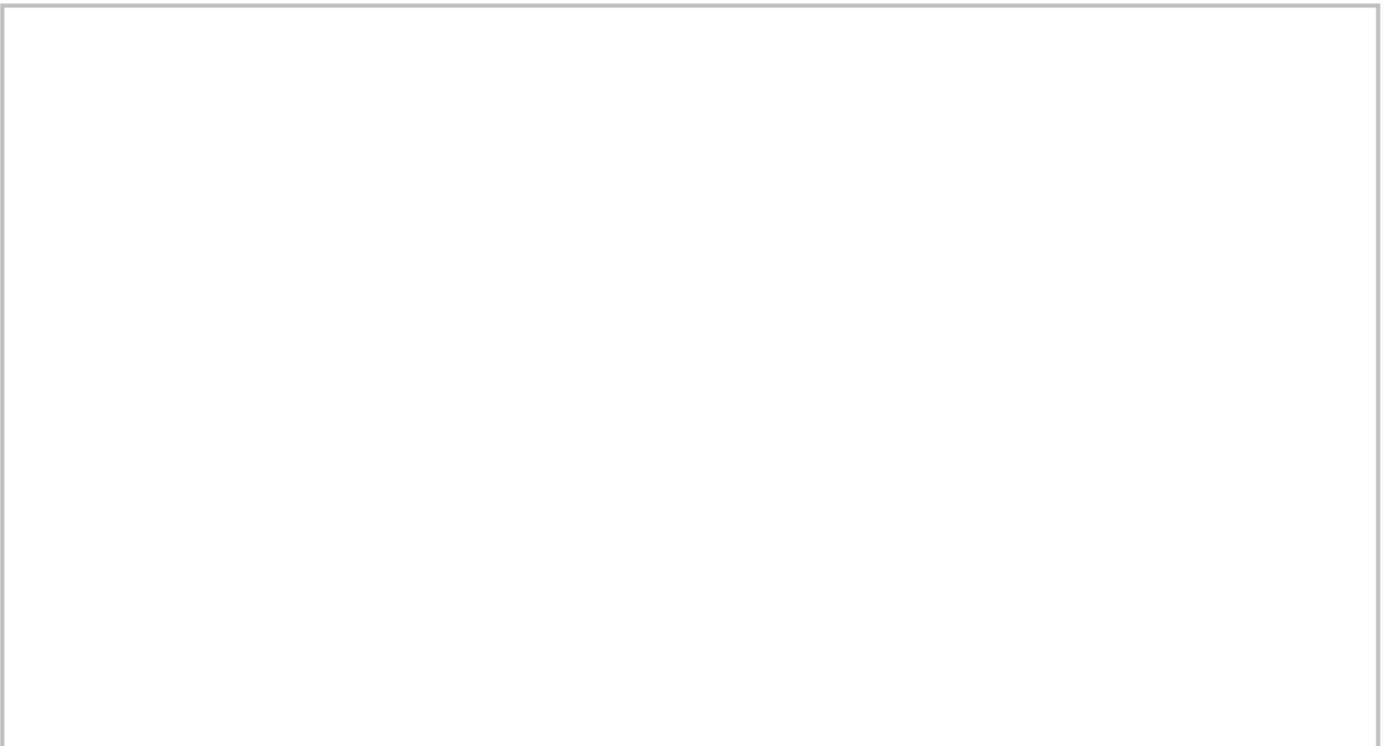
Masterplan option 03 - main features

- Large central public square
- Leisure Facility located adjacent to central square
- New car park in close proximity to the retail zone and Leisure Facility
- Wealden District Council offices to the very rear of the site

Q9 When looking at masterplan option 03, what do you like about this option?



Q10 When looking at masterplan option 03, what do you like less about this option?



Q11 Overall, which masterplan do you prefer?

- Option 01
- Option 02
- Option 03
- A blend of the options
- None

Please give a reason(s) for your answer

All the options are shown again on the next page

OPTION 01



KEY

- Residential
- Retail - Anchor Store
- Retail - Small / Independent
- Leisure Centre
- WDC Office
- Car Park - Multistorey
- Surface Parking / Service Yard
- Public Green Space
- Public Open Space

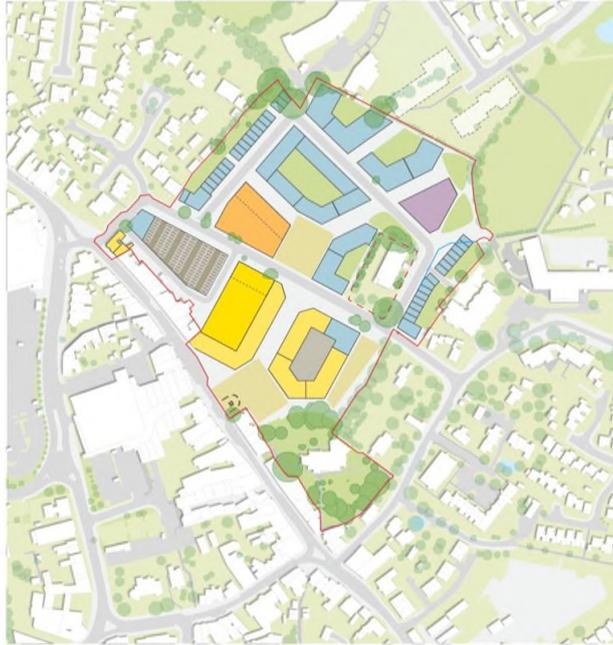
OPTION 02



KEY

- Residential
- Retail - Anchor Store
- Retail - Small / Independent
- Leisure Centre
- WDC Office
- Car Park - Multistorey
- Surface Parking / Service Yard
- Public Green Space
- Public Open Space

OPTION 03



KEY

- Residential
- Retail - Anchor Store
- Retail - Small / Independent
- Leisure Centre
- WDC Office
- Car Park - Multistorey
- Surface Parking / Service Yard
- Public Green Space
- Public Open Space

What do you think are the three most important things that will improve Hailsham?

Q12 One of your most important things here please...

Q13 Another of your most important things here please...

Q14 The third of your most important things here please...

Q15 **Please use this space for any other comments you would like to share about Hailsham town centre**

A bit about you

We want to make sure that everyone who uses our services is treated equally and that our services are provided fairly. The information collected helps us to get a picture of who contacts us, uses or does not access our services and will help us to improve what we provide and reduce the potential barriers to access.

Please answer the questions below by ticking the boxes that you feel most describes you. Some questions may feel personal, but any information that you give will be treated in the strictest confidence and will be used only to help us to improve our services. It will not be linked to you as an individual. You do not have to fill this in but it will help us if you do.

Q16 **What is your postcode?**

Q17 **What is your sex?**

- Male
- Female
- Other
- Prefer not to say

If other, please describe

Q18 **What is your age?**

- 17 and under
- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65-74
- 75-84
- 85 and over
- Prefer not to say

Q19 **Do you consider yourself to be disabled?**

A disability is an impairment that has (or is likely to have) a substantial (more than minor), adverse long-term (more than a year) effect on the ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

Q20 If you have answered 'yes', please tick the box ('s) that best describe your impairment.

- Hearing e.g. profound to mild deafness
- Communication, e.g. speech
- Visual, e.g. blind or partial sighted
- Mobility or physical, e.g. walking, dexterity
- Long-term illness or health condition, e.g. cancer, HIV, diabetes, chronic heart disease, rheumatoid arthritis, chronic asthma
- Learning, e.g. Downs syndrome
- Other (please describe)
- Prefer not to say

If other, please describe

Thank you - by completing this form you are helping us to ensure that our services are fair and open to all.

Wealden District Council is committed to ensuring that your privacy is protected and will only use and store your personal data in line with the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 and the Data Protection Act 2018. We collect and use your personal data in order to provide services you have requested from us or to carry out our legal obligations to you. We will not disclose your personal data to any third parties, unless we need to do so to provide a service to you or we are legally required to do so. We may share your personal data with other Council departments in order to provide the service you have requested and to ensure that the information we hold about you is accurate and up to date. Our Privacy Policy sets out how we collect, use and securely hold your data. If you want more information on how a particular Council service uses your personal data, please view the full policy and Privacy Notices on our website using the following link: Wealden.gov.uk/privacypolicy

Thank you for submitting your response to the consultation on the Hailsham
Town Centre Regeneration Masterplans

Please return your completed survey to: *Hailsham Aspires Project Team,
Council Offices, Vicarage Lane, Hailsham, East Sussex, BN27 2AX*

DRAFT

DRAFT



Let's shape the heart of our town

@ hailshamaspires@wealden.gov.uk

hailshamaspires.co.uk