

Chapter 11

Hadleigh Town

Introduction

- 11.1 Hadleigh is the second largest settlement in the Babergh District, with a population of 7,000. It fulfils an important role as an employment and local service centre for a considerably larger area. The town centre itself provides a wide variety of shopping, employment, social and recreational opportunities, all set in an historic environment.
- 11.2 As in Sudbury, the major planning challenge is to protect and enhance the environmental quality, while ensuring that there is a planning policy framework to allow retail and other commercial activity to flourish.
- 11.3 Considerable public sector investment has gone into the town centre in recent years, and further environmental improvement is envisaged. The District Council is aware that Hadleigh town centre is particularly vulnerable to competition from out-of-town superstores in Ipswich and Colchester. This limits the shopping catchment area of Hadleigh to the town and immediate outlying villages.
- 11.4 Economic, social and environmental trends and factors are now closely monitored in Sudbury and Hadleigh through an annual Town Centre Health Check Report. Conclusions reached in that report will help influence and adjust planning policy for this important area.
- 11.5 Tourism in Hadleigh is another growing and influential factor and will contribute to economic stability and growth in the town, if stimulated. Chapter 8: Recreation & Tourism, provides planning policies for tourism in general.
- 11.6 The trend in recent years has been towards the development of professional offices, consultancies and specialist shops. The shopping function, however, still remains one of the most important.
- 11.7 The construction of the Hadleigh Bypass has relieved the town centre of much of its through traffic, but the High Street still carries some through traffic, mainly to and from the A12.
- 11.8 A balance is therefore needed between policies for environmental protection and those that seek to foster a viable and vital commercial centre.

Objectives

1. To protect and enhance Hadleigh's role as a local shopping centre.
2. To actively seek solutions to alleviate traffic problems in the town.
3. To preserve and enhance the town centre's exceptional built environment for residents, shoppers and visitors.
4. To retain and extend accessible public car parking provision, and to ensure easy and safe access for pedestrians into High Street and other central areas.

Policy Context

- 11.9 Government advice in the following Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs) and subsequent Planning Policy Statements (PPSs) is of particular relevance to Hadleigh town centre:
- PPG12: Development Plans;
 - PPS12: Local Development Frameworks;
 - PPG3: Housing;
 - PPS6: Planning for Town Centres;
 - PPG13: Transport; and
 - PPG15: Planning and the Historic Environment
- 11.10 Regional Planning Guidance for East Anglia (RPG6) recognises the growing awareness of the need to conserve and enhance the environment, by achieving sustainable growth and respecting the character of towns.
- 11.11 The Suffolk Structure Plan 2001 outlines a number of broad aims and policies concerned with protecting and enhancing the built environment. It refers particularly to conservation areas, listed buildings and archaeology.

Shopping

- 11.12 It is the Government's policy to sustain and enhance the vitality and viability of town centres, which provide a focus for retail development (PPS6).
- 11.13 Flexibility exists in the town centre to accommodate a modest level of demand for additional food and non-food floorspace. This can be achieved through redevelopment, change of use or extensions to existing shops and stores.
- 11.14 In accordance with PPS6, concentrating food retailing in the town centre will contribute to the economic strength of the town centre as a whole. In contrast, an out of town centre food store would have the effect of drawing trade away from the town centre. This would undermine the vitality and viability of the town centre.

- 11.15 In addition, concentrating new retail development in the town centre will help to discourage car movements and complement the Plan's sustainable development strategy. The reason is that the town centre is accessible to all sectors of the local community, it could contribute to linked shopping trips and is well served by public transport.
- 11.16 During the end of 2001, two competing planning applications for a food supermarket in Hadleigh were placed before the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions for his determination. On 24 September 2001 the Secretary of State reported and although both these applications were refused, the need for a food store in Hadleigh was acknowledged.
- 11.17 In September 2002, the Council's Retail Capacity Study was completed confirming a need for the provision of a food supermarket in Hadleigh to serve the town and its shopping catchment area. This work identified a qualitative and quantitative need, by 2006, for a store of approximately 2,500 sq. metres in addition to accommodating a 500 sq. metre extension to the Hadleigh Co-operative store. The quantitative need will rise to 2,700 sq. metres in 2011 and 2900 sq. metres in 2016.
- 11.18 To ensure the best location for a new food store in Hadleigh various sites were investigated on a sequential basis. It was considered that no sites within the town centre were of sufficient size. Edge of centre and then out of centre options were examined in line with government and structure plan guidance. Not providing a site would encourage unsustainable journeys to Ipswich and Sudbury for food shopping. Set against this is the potential for adverse effects on the town centre if a site is developed which does not enable shoppers to link their trips.
- 11.19 The District Council has changed its position on this issue. In the 1st Deposit Draft version of this Plan no specific allocation was made. In the 2nd Deposit Draft version an allocation adjacent to the existing Buyright store on Aldham Mill Hill was shown. However, following consideration of representations made on the 2nd Deposit Draft Pan, the Council resolved to allocate the Brett Works site between Pound Lane and Bridge Street instead.
- 11.20 Locating this proposal on the Brett Works site provides a very close relationship with the town centre to facilitate linked shopping trips. The site of the actual store development and car parking lies partially outside the conservation area and the Brett Works itself is characterised by run down industrial buildings.

- 11.21 The provision of a well designed and landscaped store will improve the setting of the conservation area. A food retail store was previously rejected on this site on the grounds of its design and its access to the High Street. It is considered that an access to Bridge Street overcomes these difficulties and the details of the design would be dealt with at planning application stage. The site currently provides accommodation for small businesses and the loss of these should be compensated. There are a variety of other matters that should be provided for directly or through a legal agreement.

HD01 A site of 3.7 hectares between Pound Lane and Bridge Street, is proposed for a food supermarket of up to 2,500 sq metres, subject to:

- provision of a well designed scheme which will enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area and the sensitive riverside environment;
- provision of a well designed landscape scheme to be managed in accordance with a Landscape Management Arrangement;
- provision of a safe access to Bridge Street which minimises the impact on residential property and residential amenity;
- provision of measures to mitigate any loss of residential amenity;
- the store including only food and ancillary retail sales, excluding a pharmacy and any other form of service outlet which might undermine the vitality and viability of the High Street;
- the environmental improvement of pedestrian links to the High Street, including the improvement and provision of public access to the area north of the churchyard and west of Church Walk;
- provision of public open space shall be an integral part of the layout of the development;
- replacement of any loss arising from access provision to the district council offices car parking, storage facilities and the public allotments;
- provision of a commuted sum for the improvement of public transport to serve the development;
- agreement that the car park be available for use by any member of the public and be managed with the same regime as other public car parks in the town;
- a Flood Risk Assessment being undertaken;
- provision of a sustainable drainage system to deal with surface water; and

- provision of information boards at the supermarket site showing the pedestrian and cycle links and promoting the shopping, car parking and tourism opportunities within the town centre.

If a negotiated agreement cannot be reached to secure the necessary means of access for the proposed supermarket, the Council will consider the use of Compulsory Purchase Order powers.

11.22 In the early nineteen-nineties, a conservation and traffic study was carried out for Hadleigh. From that study a strategy has been agreed by the District and County Councils. More recently (1997), the Hadleigh Traffic and Environmental Working Party was established to consider and help implement traffic and environmental improvements in and around the town centre. Both these studies aim to provide measures to:

- improve the capacity of Aldham Mill Hill and Calais Street as a major route into the town. These improvements were a requirement of the housing proposal on the Ministry of Defence site at Aldham Mill Hill;
- provide measures to improve traffic flow and parking in Benton Street;
- improve enforcement of existing waiting restrictions;
- provide adequate off-street parking facilities in the town;
- revise on-street parking facilities;
- provide measures to improve public transport services;
- provide traffic management to control delivery vehicles in the town centre, provide traffic calming and improve facilities for pedestrians (including in particular elderly and disabled people); and
- provide a safe route to and from schools under the Suffolk County Council Safety Routes to School programme.

11.23 There are several methods of resolving the problems caused by traffic and the servicing of shops in Hadleigh High Street:

- restricting delivery times so as not to coincide with peak shopping or journey to work times;
- encouraging the use of Magdalen Road for rear servicing to shops on the east side;
- reducing on-street parking at the “pinch points”; and
- providing a one-way traffic system.

Traffic

Hadleigh High Street Servicing

- 11.24 The District Council, in conjunction with Suffolk County Council and other interested parties, will investigate the implementation of suitable measures, including traffic calming. This will reduce conflicts in Hadleigh High Street, Magdalen Road and parts of Station Road and Angel Street caused by service vehicles, parked cars and through traffic as well as improve the environment and safety, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists.

HD02 Traffic calming is proposed for High Street, Magdalen Road and parts of Station Road and Angel Street.

Non-Retail Uses

- 11.25 In addition to its shopping function, Hadleigh is developing an increasingly important service function. This is reflected in the number of restaurants, hairdressers, building societies, estate agents, professional services and consultancies, some of which have been in the town for many years, or have become established in recent years, thus expanding the range of facilities in Hadleigh. Fortunately, these non-retail uses have tended to locate outside the prime shopping area.
- 11.26 However, shopping remains the essential function of the town centre and increasing numbers of non-shopping uses on prime shopping sites can lead to a deterioration in the overall standard of shopping facilities and disruption of shopping frontages.
- 11.27 The introduction of such non-retail uses on prime shopping sites should, therefore be resisted.

HD03 At ground floor level in the protected shopping frontages in Hadleigh High Street, the introduction of, or change of use to, shops, will be permitted. The introduction of, or change of use to, non-shopping uses will not be permitted except where:

- it can be demonstrated that a unit has remained vacant for a considerable period of time;
- the unit has proven consistently unattractive to retail interest; and
- documentary evidence is submitted in support of the application to confirm the above conditions.

- 11.28 “Shops” are as defined in Class A1 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 as amended.

Car Parking

- 11.29 Several additional parking spaces have been provided in the town centre, largely as a result of the extra public car park built on the site of the old post office in the High Street. However, a shift in national policy over the past few years means that local authorities need to manage existing car parking spaces better for the benefit of the town, rather than simply providing more car parks.
- 11.30 The High Street, Toppesfield Hall and part of the Magdalen Road car parks have become short stay (three hours). The District Council will continue to look for ways to better manage its public car parks in the town centre. Sites for extra car parking are not available, and the District Council will seek to encourage and promote alternative modes of transport such as walking, cycling and bus rather than the private car for commuter trips in particular.
- 11.31 The District Council will seek the effective use of car parking provision in Hadleigh through management measures in conjunction with considering the need for any new provision.
- 11.32 In addition, the District Council offices car park creates problems due to lack of capacity. This is mainly because of the volume of daily visitors and the size of the workforce. Lack of parking space contributes to on-street parking and traffic congestion in the vicinity.
- 11.33 The District Council will first try to meet the parking need by managing the car park to free more spaces. If management of existing facilities cannot meet this need, the District Council will consider extending the existing car park. The extra space could also be used for public parking at weekends.
- 11.34 There are likely to be opportunities for introducing small-scale housing schemes into the town centre. Such developments will be encouraged, particularly where they make provision for small households or the elderly to live in the town centre.

Opportunities for Housing and Other Development

HD04 Residential development will be permitted in Hadleigh town centre, particularly where:

- use is made of vacant or under-used sites;
- where residential development would result in a more appropriate use of land; or
- development will result in subsequent improvements to the conservation area, provided it has no adverse impact on the vitality and viability of the centre.

Environmental Improvement Schemes

11.35 Environmental improvement schemes are particularly important as they help to enhance the conservation area and therefore make the town centre a more pleasant environment, attracting shoppers and tourists. Schemes will be considered for the town such as improvement to Church Walk and Pound Lane and undergrounding of overhead wires.

Church Walk and Pound Lane

11.36 In recent years, work has been undertaken to enhance Church Walk between Market Place and Queen Street. The aim is to complete the link through to Pound Lane and improve Pound Lane itself.

11.37 Therefore, the District Council proposes, in consultation with interested parties, to improve Pound Lane and Church Walk between Queen Street and Pound Lane through a scheme that does not encourage additional vehicular traffic.

11.38 In addition, the District Council proposes, in consultation with interested parties, to enhance the carriageways within and around the perimeter of St. Mary's Churchyard, Hadleigh. It also proposes to provide improved vehicle access to the Deanery, Hadleigh Guildhall and the church itself.

Undergrounding of Overhead Wires

11.39 The proliferation of overhead wires seriously detracts from the attractiveness of several streets in Hadleigh town centre.

11.40 Recently, the District Council has co-operated with Eastern Electricity and British Telecom in putting wires underground in some parts of the town, notably Angel Street, George Street and the Churchyard. The District Council intend to promote further schemes in the Plan period.

11.41 The District Council will work with utility companies and other interested parties to bring about the undergrounding of overhead wires in sensitive locations in Hadleigh town centre. The key areas identified to date are:

- Benton Street;
- the southern end of High Street;
- Church Walk; and
- Angel Street.

Hadleigh Health Centre

11.42 The Hadleigh Health Centre needs to expand if it is to provide an improved range of services to its patients. There are several ways of achieving this, but the site operators prefer expanding the existing facilities rather than relocating.

- 11.43 The Fire Service has expressed an interest in relocating the Fire Station, which is currently located off the Toppesfield Hall car park and adjacent to the Health Centre. If the existing Fire Station site becomes vacant, then it is considered that it could provide the means for the existing health centre to expand. Should the Fire Station choose not to relocate, alternative public land uses will be considered.

HD05 The Fire Station site, Hadleigh, is proposed for an extension to the adjacent health centre. The design and layout of the site need to reflect the quality of the surrounding buildings, with development fronting onto the existing car park to retain the “courtyard” appearance of the development on all sides of the car park.

- 11.44 The pedestrianised section of George Street, between High Street and Magdalen Road, is an issue of concern in the town. Local residents and businesses are concerned about pedestrian safety, given that many vehicles still use this part of George Street as a short-cut from Magdalen Road to High Street.
- 11.45 There are two ways to resolve this problem. One is to revise the governing order, which would also require effective enforcement. The second is to achieve effective design solutions. The District Council considers the latter to be a more appropriate way.
- 11.46 Working in partnership with Suffolk County Council and Hadleigh Town Council, the District Council will seek to introduce appropriate design solutions to reduce the existing conflict between pedestrians and vehicles in the pedestrianised part of George Street.

Pedestrianised Area at George Street

