



Haslemere Healthcheck

Haslemere Today

A review of the issues facing the town and surrounding areas in 2003.



.....And our vision for the future:

Haslemere - a distinctive country town:

- Valuing the past
- Shaping the future by
 - Promoting the social, economic and environmental well being of the community.



Supported by:

Haslemere Town Council * Haslemere Initiative
Waverley Borough Council * Surrey County Council

Disclaimer

This document provides the report on work undertaken during 2003 as part of the 'Haslemere Healthcheck'. Any views, comments, or other information contained herein is provided in good faith and is believed to be correct by the contributors. Neither the contributors nor any other person or organisation associated with the Healthcheck accepts any liability for information (whether presented as fact or conjecture), views or opinions set out herein.

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1 Executive summary

The term 'Healthcheck' has been coined by the Countryside Agency as a useful way of encompassing the elements that jointly describe, define and produce feelings about a community. It has only a limited relationship with 'health' in the medical sense. The Countryside Agency has established the concept of the Healthcheck and applied it to market towns in England. Haslemere – in partnership with Cranleigh and via statutory local government and non-statutory interest and amenity groups – accepted the challenge of applying the Healthcheck process to the town and its surrounding area.

The Healthcheck has three distinct stages:

- **Identifying the current status of the town both in factual terms and in terms of popular perception**
- Agreeing a 'vision' for the future in consultation with the residents, workers and 'users' of Haslemere
- Defining and delivering the projects and plans to achieve the vision

This document reports on **the first stage** of the process.

Haslemere is a good place in which to live and work or to visit. It exhibits much that is admirable and quintessentially English.

- It is a town in its own right with business, social and community facilities
- It is a commuter town serving many who view it as a main line station
- It combines features of town and country

Not all is rosy, though. There are clear problems with housing and with facilities for the young and less prosperous.

The work on which we report here has attempted to document and formalise what is good and what is not in and around Haslemere. We have done this by carrying out research on relevant factual information and by undertaking detailed public consultation. At the launch in January 2003 about 180 people gave their views and during the year the community has been invited to take part in public meetings and encouraged in smaller groups to 'have their say'. In addition 1,118 local residents completed 'in depth' surveys and 1171 school children completed questionnaires. The team members working on the Healthcheck have had some of their preconceptions confirmed and some refuted and are happy to report that some issues have been raised of which they were not aware.

This document is, by the nature of the task we have undertaken, quite detailed. It is supplemented by a set of appendices with more detailed information. We reproduce below a summary of how we view the town today in terms of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats, split within the four task areas we studied: Social and Community Access, Environment, Economy, and Transport and Accessibility.

The Healthcheck is very much a continuing process where the views of everyone who lives in, works in, or visits Haslemere will be harnessed to ensure the continued success of the town and its surrounding area. We look forward to its continuation.

1.1 Strengths

Economy	Social and Community	Environment	Transport and Accessibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business community – a flourishing and expanding Chamber of Commerce, that is bringing together more and more businesses in all areas of the town and surrounding villages • Countryside/ Churches/ Character of town – all seen as plus points in attracting new residents and therefore adding to the vitality of the town. • Museum/ Music tradition and Haslemere Hall/ Sport/ Schools – In addition to attracting new residents, these facilities are also important in providing many jobs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally, a prosperous area • There is some public understanding of the need for ‘affordable’ housing • Considerable satisfaction with Doctors and Health Centre • Haslemere Community Hospital is a valuable community asset • The Voluntary sector is a major provider of social care and support • Haslemere is an area of low incidence of crime • Active voluntary sector willing to participate in community affairs • Some community partnerships already in place e.g. Healthcheck Steering Group, Haslemere Initiative • Strong and wide-ranging sports sector and leisure interest organisations • Attractive green open spaces and surrounding countryside • Considerable will to improve facilities for young people • Strong and active music, art, and drama groups • Haslemere Educational Museum, Haslemere Hall and Grayswood Hall are popular venues • ‘Cinema’ at Haslemere Hall popular with ‘middle aged’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The town is very attractive and has much to capitalise upon. • The general prosperity of the town is good and there is no reason for the appearance to suffer from neglect. • There are many well-connected and highly informed people in the town who can make a strong contribution. • There is considerable diversity of style within the town area so that there are many aspects that can be worked upon by various interest groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The railway, and accessibility to main towns • Proximity to main road network • High car ownership levels compared to national statistics • Car parks close to attractors (e.g. shops and station) • Major trunk route 3 miles away from town centre

1.2 Weaknesses

Economy	Social and Community	Environment	Transport and Accessibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Derelict areas - need motivation and action to resolve • Empty shops – not many, but some sites seem to take a long time to let or sell. Motivation and concerted action are needed to work with landlords to resolve. • Small employers – can be seen as a weakness and a strength as explained in 4.3.1 para 4. • Parking, town transport – needs action to improve parking for commuters and shoppers, and town transport system for non drivers and disabled which would also reduce congestion and keep traffic off side streets • No market – this must rank as a high priority, not just for bric-a-brac, but a high quality marketplace for local produce, local businesses, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pockets of disadvantage • People feeling a sense of community are in the minority • Unbalanced age profile e.g. high proportion of elderly people, significantly lower numbers of young people • Substantial unmet need for social housing Shortage of smaller housing units for purchase • High cost of housing • Shortage of NHS dentists • Access to Royal Surrey Hospital difficult for users and visitors who are elderly or have mobility problems • Delays in Social Services assessments for hospital discharge and packages of care results in vulnerable people left without support as well as bed blocking • Lack of drop in centre for drugs advice • Funding difficulties of some voluntary organisations providing essential social 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The town undoubtedly suffers from being a 'two part' centre. • The high proportion of commuters working a long day precludes many from community involvement. • The pressures that come from central government to add inexorably to the numbers of houses, creates tensions and threat. • Owners of derelict buildings in the town must be encouraged to improve their property and where it is in the Conservation Area, Waverley BC should take appropriate action to enforce legislation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 'two town' nature of Haslemere and Wey Hill divides the town and increases traffic levels • The combination of the Tesco/Lion Lane junction and Wey Hill leads to congestion • The A3 acts as a barrier between Haslemere and Hindhead/Beacon Hill • Regular bus services are poor • Narrow bridges, e.g. at the railway station and in Sturt Road • Some pavements in central Haslemere (e.g. Lower Street) are narrow or in poor condition • Commuter parking on residential streets around station • Little provision for cyclists • Lack of a comprehensive parking policy with patchy 'policing'

Economy	Social and Community	Environment	Transport and Accessibility
<p>visiting overseas suppliers and starter businesses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Library – again a high priority, also to include educational facilities for all age groups • Lack of youth facilities – another priority as the town does not seem to have a coherent youth policy, and there is a clear shortage of clothes, video, boutiques and cafes or young people. • Quality of customer service – general perception of expensive shops, unfriendly service and lack of choice. • Effect of commuters – taking up substantial amounts of parking • Lack of B&B accommodation – shortage of accommodation for visitors • Cost of housing – there is a shortage of affordable housing for sale or rent • Post office – Provision of only two sub post offices does not provide adequate quality of coverage 	<p>support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High level of fear of crime • Difficulty of access to Town Hall and limited staffing • Perception of elitism and hence exclusion from some community organisations • Only a limited minority feel they can influence decisions • Lack of information about activities of local organisations • Difficulties of access to sports and leisure facilities for disabled users • Limited facilities for wheelchair users in open spaces • Lack of open seating area/garden in the Town • Very limited provision of youth facilities • Fear of crime at Lion Green • Lack of Arts Centre • Haslemere Hall is dated and in need of substantial modernisation • Shortage of smaller, more intimate venues • Need for a better library facility 		

Economy	Social and Community	Environment	Transport and Accessibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part time Town Hall – opening of only 3 days per week is not adequate for a town of this size. Too little accessibility for the public to meet elected councillors; more understanding and communication could enable better appreciation of the efforts of the Town Council and Initiative 			

1.3 Opportunities

Economy	Social and Community	Environment	Transport and Accessibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop town centre and street environment – Potential for development in town centre, particularly at left entrance of main car park; Weyhill fairground car park site; and the station area Improve Retail mix - attract more boutique and specialist shops, and create a café and wine bar scene Business support services – create opportunities for business support centre and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Healthcheck is an opportunity to promote social inclusion The ‘Healthcheck’ provides an opportunity to present information about local housing need and so promote better understanding Possible development of key site 1 could include smaller housing units and open space/garden and other community facilities There is a continuing supply of small and medium sized development sites Provision of ‘affordable’ housing would be an important step in attracting and keeping young people, families and key workers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The fact that there are areas within the town centre that are ripe for re-development is a help in making positive changes. The economy of the town seems fairly buoyant so there should be sufficient momentum to carry forward improvements. The A3 tunnel should ameliorate the traffic situation somewhat. The limited opportunities to significantly improve the roads in the town centre, provide a useful 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A comprehensive parking strategy to meet the needs of residents, shoppers, employees and commuters is under consideration by Waverley BC Several opportunities for minor road improvements Potential for more community (demand-responsive) bus services

Economy	Social and Community	Environment	Transport and Accessibility
<p>develop closer relationships with small business associations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New library – opportunity to build a modern library suited to a town of Haslemere’s size and influence. • Parking problems – resolution of the parking problems would make the town safer and more attractive to pedestrians • Cycle paths and walks – opportunity to increase walking and cycling and thereby reduce congestion • Employment and education – create more training and job opportunities • Promotion and marketing – raise the profile and use of the town through promotion to visitors and local people. 	<p>Haslemere.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health policy to provide non acute care locally • Possibility of further expansion of services at Haslemere Hospital • Consideration of possible consolidation of local services under one roof • Opening of the A3 tunnel and closure of the old A3 offers significant opportunities to develop leisure facilities in that area • Development of a new library facility in Wey Hill area could lead to further improvement and/or development in that area 	<p>brake on unwanted development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The commitment by SCC to build a new library is encouraging, particularly for Weyhill. • . 	

1.4 Threats

Economy	Social and Community	Environment	Transport and Accessibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traffic congestion –traffic flow is heavy at peak times, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The expected increase in 65+ age group will have major implications regarding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The shortage of funds to see projects through is depressing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional traffic on local roads as a result of the A3 Hindhead

Economy	Social and Community	Environment	Transport and Accessibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> including HGVs. This may be improved by the A3 Tunnel Crime – relatively crime free, some fear of crime among the elderly population Pollution – impacting on the quality of the environment, due to traffic congestion, litter and Poor re-cycling facilities Housing – Cost of housing is too high for first time buyers, although some choice of rental properties could be exploited to offset this. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> housing and care needs Unless the number of young people and families also increases not only will the community lack vibrancy but also may not be able to produce sufficient workers and volunteers to support the ageing population. The number of households seeking accommodation will continue to rise as the trend towards smaller households continues Opposition to further development by articulate groups may prevent the provision of small housing units for purchase and/or social housing Lack of certainty over future of Haslemere Community Hospital Inactivity on improving youth facilities could lead to escalation of problems at Lion Green Present facilities at Haslemere Hall may not meet the needs of the community in 10 years time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential conflict from all who feel they should be driving projects in their own chosen direction is a potential hazard. A loss of momentum could cause the Healthcheck to run out of steam. The need for some early wins may encourage impetuosity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> improvement Several junctions have poor visibility and are potential accident locations Low demand threatens the viability of regular bus services

2 Background to and purpose of the Healthcheck

2.1 Purpose of this document

This document is the report on the current status and well being of Haslemere and its hinterland within the four workstreams of Economy, Social and Community, Environment, and Transport and Accessibility. It contains basic information about the study area, detailed information specific to particular issues, and the results of surveys and other participatory initiatives.

The report is supplemented by a set of appendices that are provided separately.

The report is not intended to provide solutions to issues or concerns. In some cases we have made reference to possible ways of resolving particular problems but this is done to help in the definition of the underlying causes of the problems. The next stage of the Healthcheck process will include 'visioning' for the future of the town and the definition of improvement projects and plans.

2.2 The Countryside Agency and the Market Towns Initiative

The Countryside Agency sets out¹ the traditional definition of a market town as a place where agricultural occupations predominated in a settlement that serves a rural hinterland. Market towns have long been at the heart of life in rural England. For centuries they have been the focus for commercial and social activity. In recent years many of these functions have been weakened by social, industrial and agricultural change. Some market towns are adapting to these changing demands and thriving whilst many are in decline. The focus of the Market Towns Initiative is not whether each town has a market but the relationship of the town to its rural hinterland and its capacity to act as a service centre.

People are at the heart of the future for market towns. Local solutions will help market towns to become places where people from the town and surrounding countryside:

- **Can buy most things they need**
- **Can obtain a range of basic services, such as legal advice and libraries**
- **Can find housing of all types – rental and for purchase**
- **Have a choice of jobs, particularly in businesses related to the products of the surrounding countryside**
- **Can obtain the training and education they need**
- **Can enjoy eating out, the cinema, theatre and musical events**

All of this demands good public transport access to help people from the surrounding countryside and visitors from further a field.

¹ Adapted from 'Market Towns Healthcheck Handbook', The Countryside Agency, January 2002

The Market Towns Initiative 'Healthcheck' is a tool to help people:

- **Identify the strengths and weaknesses of the town and surrounding countryside**
- **Obtain the information and ideas they need to manage change**
- **Provide a basis for creating an action plan**

The purpose of the Healthcheck is to help sustain Haslemere as a viable service centre serving a wider hinterland. It does this by:

- **Looking at what services and amenities are available for businesses and the community in and around Haslemere**
- **Creating a shared vision for the future of Haslemere**
- **Drawing up an action plan of key priorities that need to be addressed in the short, medium and long term.**

The project is divided into four main themes which lead to workstreams for collection and analysis of information:

- **Social and Community Access**
- **Transport and Accessibility**
- **Environment**
- **Economy.**

2.3 Genesis of the Haslemere Healthcheck

In 1996 the Haslemere Initiative was established to:

- **Support the growth of Haslemere and its surrounding villages for the benefit and enjoyment of all the community**
- **Strengthen Haslemere as a 'brand'**
- **Continuously improve it as a place to work, live and visit. In 1998 Cranleigh set up a similar initiative with comparable aims and objectives**

The Market Towns Initiative 'Healthcheck' is designed to help local communities find ways to assess and improve the vitality of their town and surrounding countryside and fits ideally with the aims of the Haslemere Initiative. Therefore the Initiative, in partnership with Haslemere Town Council and with the support of Waverley Borough Council and Surrey County Council, embarked on the Healthcheck process to enable Haslemere to:

- **Seek ways of improving the economic, social and environmental health of the town**
- **Provide a forum for the discussion and promotion of ideas to enhance the attractiveness of Haslemere as a place to live, to visit and in which to do business**
- **Initiate and develop projects to achieve those objectives in partnership with its constituent bodies**

2.4 Funding partners and working groups

The Haslemere Healthcheck is funded by the Countryside Agency with support from Haslemere Town Council, Haslemere Initiative, Surrey County Council and Waverley Borough Council. Haslemere entered into partnership with Cranleigh to fund the Healthcheck, necessitating the establishment of an ‘Overarching Steering Group’ to supplement the Haslemere Steering Group. Membership of the steering groups is as follows.

Steering Group membership

Name	Role/organisation
Phillipa Chapman (*)	Coordinator (to 31 May 2003)
Iain Lynch (*)	Waverley Borough Council
Vicky Westthorp (*)	Countryside Agency
Helen Wade (*)	Surrey County Council (Small Towns Initiative)
Christine Stevens (*)	Surrey County Council (Haslemere County Councillor)
Melanie Odell (*)	Haslemere Initiative (President, Haslemere Chamber of Trade)
Bryan Farley (*)	Haslemere Initiative/Chamber of Trade
Stephen Mulliner (*)	Haslemere Town Council (Mayor 2002/3)
Michael Foster (*)	Haslemere Town Council (Mayor 2003/4)
Mike O’Neil (*)	Haslemere Town Council (Town Clerk)
Jackie Gaskell	Social and Community Task Group leader (CAB Manager)
Andrew Brownrigg	Economy Task Group leader (Haslemere Initiative/Chamber of Trade)
Robert Serman	Environment Task Group leader (Chairman, Haslemere Society)
Simon Fawson	Transport Task Group leader (Haslemere Society)

(NB * denotes a member of the Overarching Steering Group)

The Steering Group provided overall direction to the Healthcheck and, in addition, assisted generously in many ways, e.g. during and after the launch meetings and during the consultation exercise. The working group, which was responsible for ‘delivering’ this document, comprised the four task group leaders and the Coordinator. In addition, Adam Phillips was co-opted on to the working group as a specialist adviser on the preparation, analysis and interpretation of the public survey: the other members of the working group owe him a debt of gratitude which they are happy to acknowledge.

2.5 Moving forward with the Healthcheck

The Healthcheck will remain a partnership between the funding partners and key stakeholders as the project begins the transition into the next stage that will focus on generating projects and plans, and delivering them. The task group leaders will remain involved in the project: community groups and organisations have expressed interest in becoming involved during later stages and will be encouraged so to do. In addition, the Steering Group intends to employ a project manager/facilitator to take operational responsibility for delivery. All the participants are adamant that community involvement remains high to ensure local commitment and ‘buy in’ to the projects and plans.

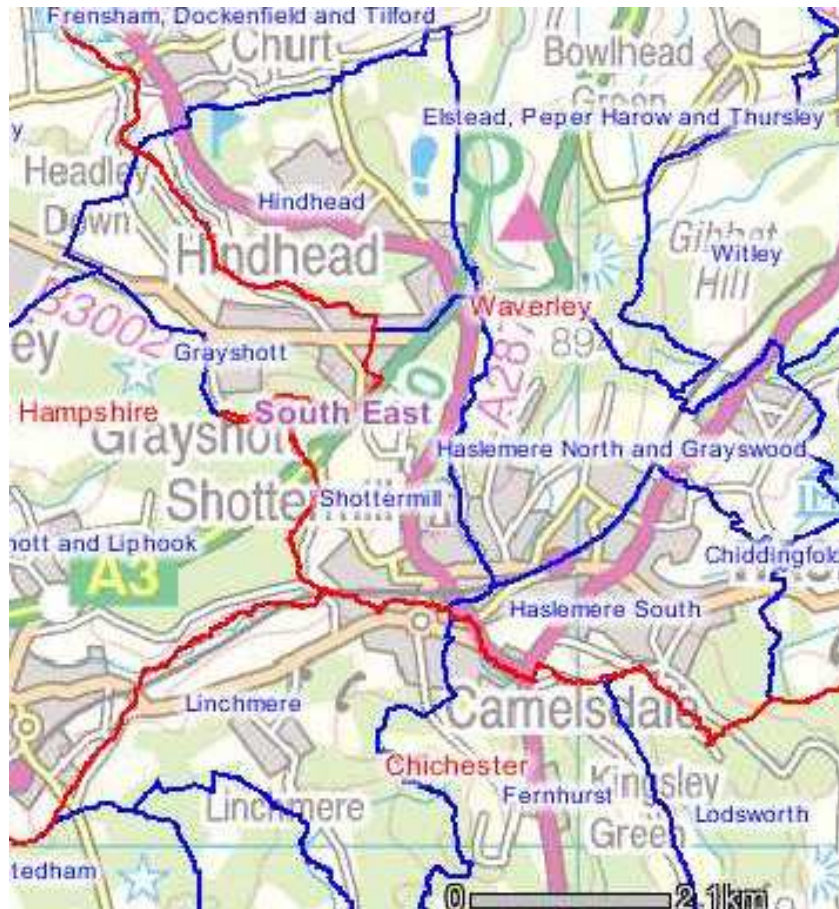
3 Background to the analysis of the current situation in Haslemere

3.1 Haslemere and its hinterland

Haslemere can be defined in several ways:

- It is a town
- It is the area covered by the remit of Haslemere Town Council
- It is that area which looks to the town of Haslemere as its source of daily or weekly items (e.g. shopping and services)
- It is the area from which Haslemere businesses draw their employees and customers.
- It is the catchment area for rail commuter services

Inevitably some of these definitions do not sit well together. In order to reach a working consensus on what 'Haslemere and its hinterland' means the Steering Group identified a 'supply side' and a 'demand side'. The 'supply side' of Haslemere comprises the four wards that are within the boundary of Haslemere Town Council. These (as shown below) are Haslemere North and Grayswood, Haslemere South, Hindhead and Shottermill. The collection of information on population, employment, car ownership etc. was limited to this area. The 'demand side' includes this area and others as appropriate, e.g. possibly as far south as Chichester for transport but a much smaller area for generation of shopping trips.



3.2 Our approach to collecting information

Our approach was to establish both factual data and perceptions. For instance, it is a fact that trains travel to London at roughly 15-minute headways in the morning peak. People have different perceptions as to whether this is a 'good' or a 'bad' service provision. In general, factual information came from formal sources, e.g. Census, SCC/WBC data, timetables, and personal research, whereas perceptions were assessed from the participative exercises such as responses to the questionnaire and comments at the launch meeting.

We have striven for accuracy, comprehensiveness and completeness. However, it is doubtless true that we have not gathered every piece of information that could be applied in a consideration of Haslemere and its hinterland, and we may in some cases have drawn incorrect conclusions. Information to correct any such will be gratefully received: we are, however, confident that our conclusions are not materially inaccurate. It is important to remember that the conclusions based on perception are just that; a synthesis of the views of the residents and other 'users' of Haslemere as expressed to us. We cannot contradict those views whatever may be our own opinions or those of other readers of this report.

3.3 Sources of information

The main sources for information are:

- **Feedback from the launch meeting, meetings with helpers, informal discussions and personal knowledge.**
- **'Snapshot' (sources as for worksheets, see below)**
- **Worksheets completed by the team using information from:**
 - Surrey County Council (SCC) and Waverley Borough Council (WBC)
 - Haslemere Town Council (HTC), e.g. general information, parking studies
 - Review of information in the public domain, e.g. 1991 Census, bus and train timetables
 - Personal research and knowledge
- **Analysis of the results from our public consultation**

3.4 Launch meeting

A public meeting held at The Georgian Hotel on January 15th 2003 marked the official start of the Healthcheck. About 180 people attended and contributed much that was interesting, relevant and provoking. The information we collected at the launch meeting was assessed and used as input to further meetings with a sub set of volunteers from the audience. These meetings provided many pointers as to how we should progress work on the Healthcheck, e.g. by setting up further consultation such as the public survey.

The input from all who attended the launch meeting, and particularly from those who participated in the follow-up meetings, was invaluable: the workstream leaders wish to acknowledge just how important that input has been.

3.5 The ‘Snapshot’

A key technique set out by the Countryside Agency in the documentation it provides for Healthcheck creation, is the preparation of ‘snapshots’ and ‘worksheets’.

Snapshots were completed early in the process and provide a brief, high-level view of the study area in the context of the four workstreams. They provide a benchmark from which to begin the more detailed study. The snapshot comprises a narrative (reproduced below) and a set of tables of information (provided in the appendices).

3.5.1 *A snapshot of Haslemere today*

Haslemere is situated in the Southwestern corner of the borough of Waverley in Surrey. It sits on the county border and is adjacent to the counties of Hampshire and West Sussex. Waverley has three other towns of note: Cranleigh, Godalming and Farnham. Haslemere is a town with very old foundations. The first known habitation was recorded in AD 1180. During the 14th, 15th and 16th centuries, iron and glass working and leather curing were prominent activities in the town. A wealthy ironmaster once lived at what is now Lythe Hill Hotel and local place names such as Furnace Place and Foundry Lane reflect these past industries. During the 17th and 18th centuries Haslemere’s activities diversified to include spinning, weaving, paper making, brick making, pottery, fencing and basket and broom making.

Haslemere is twinned with Bernay, (Normandy – France) and Horb (Black Forest region – Germany). Visits to both towns are organised each year.

Haslemere is distinct in that it has two commercial centres – the historic High Street and Wey Hill. The High Street includes the Haslemere Educational Museum founded in 1888. The Museum is open to the public and has a range of activities for school children.

Rural village communities surround Haslemere. For the purposes of this Healthcheck, the core ‘hinterland’ of the town includes the wards of Haslemere South, Haslemere North and Grayswood, Shottermill and Hindhead (which includes Beacon Hill). The ‘extended hinterland’ includes the communities of Fernhurst, Grayshott and Northchapel.

From 1998 to 2001 the number of employees rose by 6% (Surrey is 5%). The number of businesses has risen by 5% compared with Surrey’s figure of 6%².

Haslemere has a resident population of around 15,000 (Waverley Borough Local Plan 2002).

There are many groups and associations active in and around Haslemere focusing on education, arts, entertainment and sport. Haslemere and the surrounding area enjoy many local walks of natural and historic interest, including the Greensand Way that starts in Haslemere.

An annual Christmas market is held in the High Street: this is well supported by local businesses and the community. Haslemere has no regular market or farmer’s market,

Haslemere has many independent and specialist shops. The large supermarkets are Somerfield, located off the High Street, and Tesco’s and the Coop in Wey Hill.

² Annual Business Inquiry 1998 and 2001, NOMIS

A choice of cuisine is available from restaurants in the High Street and along Wey Hill. Pubs and hotels offer food and drink in and around Haslemere: Lythe Hill and The Georgian have health and fitness facilities.

The main road artery from Portsmouth to London separates Haslemere from Hindhead. The traffic signals which manage traffic at the A3/A287 crossroads at Hindhead often cause heavy traffic build-up: there is a plan to open a tunnel in 2009 to ease this congestion. The other notable 'hot-spot' is the traffic signals at the Tesco (Lion Green) Junction.

Car ownership is relatively high with an average 15% of households estimated to be without access to a car (UK average 27%, Surrey average 13%). The most 'rural' ward (Hindhead) has only 8% of households with no car.

Conditions for car travellers are generally satisfactory outside of peak hours but there can be congestion in the peaks. Some of the through roads and side streets are less than ideal for public transport and commercial vehicles. The public transport system is patchy in terms of coverage and frequency.

Bus services run between Haslemere and Aldershot, Grayshott, Alton and Guildford. In theory the bus services are linked to the train services but delays mean connections are often missed. There are no cycle ways within the four wards studied.

The railway station is situated between the High Street and Wey Hill and provides a regular commuter service to London Waterloo.

3.6 Worksheets

The worksheets are the primary technique for collecting detailed factual information about the town. The Countryside Agency provides a set of questions to be completed within each of the workstreams. Collection of this information is useful in that it provides definitive data: it is also valuable since it points the study team to areas which require further study.

The completed worksheets are included within the appendices: key points from them appear within the reports from the individual workstreams.

3.7 Survey of residents' opinions

A survey was carried out among people who live in and around Haslemere, to establish the extent to which the town satisfies their needs and to provide information for developing the 'vision' for the town and surrounding countryside and an action plan for realising this vision. A good response rate of 26% was achieved,

This provides the major source of 'perception' information. Other sources (e.g. the launch meeting and meetings with individual interest groups) provided valuable information but have less statistical validity. The full report of the survey and the results we obtained are set out in the appendices. Key findings from the survey are included within the analysis from the four workstreams that follow in chapters 4 to 7 of this document. Full results and analysis can be found in Appendix 3.

The principal objective of this survey was to assess public perceptions of Haslemere and the service it provides to its community to identify important issues which need action. An important secondary objective was to publicise the Healthcheck as widely as possible within the community and give everyone the chance to join the consultation process.

3.8 Survey of young people's opinions

The number of respondents to the resident's questionnaire who were aged under 16 was negligible. Therefore, it has been supplemented by two questionnaire developed for use with young people in school. The questionnaires were tailored to get engage primary and secondary age children. Advantage was taken of the new Citizenship curriculum requirement to introduce the questionnaire. Results have been fed into each of the workstreams, and reported in chapter 8. Full details are included in Appendix 4.

4 Economy workstream

4.1 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, threats (SWOT)

Strengths	<p>Business community – a flourishing and expanding Chamber of Commerce, that is bringing together more and more businesses in all areas of the town and surrounding villages</p> <p>Countryside/ Churches/ Character of town – all seen as plus points in attracting new residents and therefore adding to the vitality of the town.</p> <p>Museum/ Music tradition and Haslemere Hall/ Sport/ Schools – In addition to attracting new residents, these facilities are also important in providing many jobs</p>
Weaknesses	<p>Derelict areas - need motivation and action to resolve.</p> <p>Empty shops – not many, but some sites seem to take a long time to let or sell. Motivation and concerted action are needed to work with landlords to resolve.</p> <p>Small employers – can be seen as a weakness and a strength (explained in 4.3.1 para 4)</p> <p>Parking, town transport – needs action to improve parking for commuters and shoppers, and town transport system for non drivers and disabled which would also reduce congestion and keep traffic off side streets.</p> <p>No market – this must rank as a high priority, not just for bricabrac, but a high quality marketplace for local produce, local businesses, visiting overseas suppliers and starter businesses.</p> <p>Library – again a high priority, also to include educational facilities for all age groups</p> <p>Lack of youth facilities – another priority as the town does not seem to have a coherent youth policy, and there is a clear shortage of clothes, video, boutiques and cafes or young people.</p> <p>Quality of customer service – general perception of expensive shops, unfriendly service and lack of choice.</p> <p>Effect of commuters – taking up substantial amounts of parking.</p> <p>Lack of B&B accommodation – shortage of accommodation for visitors.</p> <p>Cost of housing – there is a shortage of affordable housing for sale or rent</p> <p>Post office – Provision of only two sub post offices does not provide adequate quality of coverage.</p> <p>Part time Town Hall – opening of only 3 days per week is not adequate for a town of this size. Too little accessibility for the public to meet elected councillors; more understanding and communication could enable better appreciation of the efforts of the Town Council and Initiative.</p>
Opportunities	<p>Develop town centre and street environment – Potential for development in town centre, particularly at left entrance of main car park; Weyhill fairground car park site; and the station area</p> <p>Improve Retail mix - attract more boutique and specialist shops, and create a café and wine bar scene.</p> <p>Business support services – create opportunities for business support centre and develop closer relationships with small business associations.</p> <p>New library – opportunity to build a modern library suited to a town of Haslemere’s size and influence.</p> <p>Parking problems – resolution of the parking problems would make the town safer and more attractive to pedestrians.</p>

Cycle paths and walks – opportunity to increase walking and cycling and thereby reduce congestion.

Employment and education – create more training and job opportunities.

Promotion and marketing – raise the profile and use of the town through promotion to visitors and local people.

Threats

Traffic congestion – traffic flow is heavy at peak times, including HGVs. This may be improved by the A3 Tunnel.

Crime – relatively crime free, some fear of crime among the elderly population.

Pollution – impacting on the quality of the environment, due to traffic congestion, litter and poor recycling facilities.

Housing – Cost of housing is too high for first time buyers, although some choice of rental properties could be exploited to offset this.

4.2 Summary

Haslemere is a very attractive town with character, but Wey Hill is rather dull and unappealing. The Town's streets are dirty and litter and pollution are a problem.

Traffic speed needs controlling and heavy goods vehicles should be restricted.

Parking facilities are inadequate and need better signposting.

Cycling facilities and pedestrian pathways and pavements need improvement.

Town transport system is very poor, and needs serious improvement.

Visitor attractions need to be promoted better. More Town events need to be organised and supported, and more bed and breakfast accommodation is needed.

The range of shops, the choice of products and prices available are good, but there are some obvious shortcomings that should be targeted, such as men's, teenager and children's clothes, and sports equipment. The restaurant and pub scene is flourishing but cafes for the young and wine bars would be welcome.

Employment opportunities are minimal, and prospects are restricted due to the nature of the businesses in the town. More starter units would attract entrepreneurs and boutiques, and some restricted commercial development and factory units would allow businesses to expand and stay in the area.

Adult education and training facilities are not adequate, and business support services should be improved.

A general improvement in the style, quality and image of all business services in the Town is needed as well as an effort to offer a more friendly and sympathetic level of customer service.

Haslemere needs a regular market, and a central focal point in the town, a town square that could also incorporate starter units, community facilities and recreational areas. Some of the area, currently derelict on the edge of the town centre car park and behind the Lower Street shops, could be considered, either separately or as part of a wider scheme to regenerate the whole of Key Site One³. This area covers extends to the whole car park and the garage, ambulance site, BT building and Town Meadow. In addition consideration should be given to initiating discussions with South West Trains for regeneration of the station surroundings, and to the Fairground car park and Wey Centre in Wey Hill, as part of the ongoing plan to build a new library and improve the unsatisfactory state of this public site.

³ As designated WBC plans, this area includes the area from High St flanked by West St and Lower St down to Tanners Lane, including BT building, Fire Station, Somerfields, and Town Meadow.

4.3 Worksheet analysis

4.3.1 Employment

Unemployment is not a significant problem, with little change in recent years, and long term jobless relatively small.

The mainline commuter station, allowing easy access to London, Guildford, Woking and Portsmouth and many smaller towns in between, enables residents of Haslemere and its neighbouring villages to look for jobs elsewhere. The nature of Haslemere's businesses, which relies mainly on many small owner managed shops, and a few larger employers, such as Tescos, Branksome and Vivid Imaginations, explains the shortage of job vacancies in the town. However, this also explains the opportunities that exist for entrepreneurs and small businesses to succeed in the town.

Whilst there are employment opportunities for school and college leavers within the sports, recreational, tourism, retail and community sectors, the lack of larger employers, and thus future career prospects, is a matter of concern in keeping young singles and married in the area.

However, this perception of employment opportunities and future prospects could be revised with closer scrutiny of the nature of many of the smaller businesses, whether they are owner managed, branch outlets, franchises, tenancies or just linked to consortia. Whilst it would seem at first that career prospects are restricted, businesses such as banks, building societies, estate agents, solicitors, accountants, supermarkets, chemists, off licences, hotels, restaurants, pubs, travel agents, shoe shops, furniture, furnishings, car, gift shops, flowers and hairdressing all offer apprenticeship and training opportunities that can lead to greater seniority locally within a chosen sector or within neighbouring towns. In addition this can apply to jobs within the medical and health sector such as hospitals, nursing homes, health centres and dentists, and also within other areas of the public sector.

Household earnings are above average, and the nature of the quality and range of shops appeals to the residents of this fairly affluent area of Surrey.

It is important the Town looks to improve and expand the range of shops, to improve the quality of the service offered by businesses in the town, to attract more brand names to set up, and thus create more employment opportunities and prospects for young school leavers and young married people to find work. This situation may also improve when the beneficial effect of the A3 tunnel, directing heavy vehicles and through traffic away from the town enables the character and attractions of the town to be better utilised.

Tourist attractions such as the Museum, the attraction of the local countryside, and plans to enhance the Town's cultural and entertainment facilities will also help to attract more businesses to the town and create more employment opportunities.

The superb range of sports facilities in the town, and the excellent selection of churches, and schools also add to the town's appeal, and create better facilities that help to keep people living and working locally.

There is a large consultancy and home working business community and a large percentage of females working in the town. Much of this is based on part time, job sharing and evening employment. These opportunities could be promoted more.

4.3.2 Retail and Town Centre Services

Most of the retail shops and town centre services are based in the High Street and Wey Hill areas of the town.

Outlying villages such as Hindhead, Beacon Hill, Grayswood and Brook, have a few local shops and amenities that service local needs with some pubs, restaurants, petrol stations and small convenience stores.

The town centre consists mostly of banks, estate agents, charity shops, solicitors, building societies, travel agents, chemists, restaurants and hotels, with a good selection of specialist retail units providing shoes, gifts, clothes, books, kitchenware, hardware, toys, cards, antique shops, furnishings, beauty treatments, hairdressing, pet shops, bakery, bookmaker and lingerie. Somerfields, Woolworths and Boots are in the Town Centre as are the Police Station, Fire Station, Town Hall, Museum, Visitors Information Centre and car showroom. The new Charter Walk arcade has provided recent additions to the boutique range of shops.

Wey Hill has a wide range of retail shops, including restaurants, takeaways, drycleaners, pubs, gifts, building societies, pet shop, shoes, chemist, card shops, car accessories, health foods, musical instruments, women's clothes, charity shop, carpets, furnishings, computers and accessories, art shop, estate agents, bookmaker, as well as the Town Library, the Wey Centre, the new Haslewey Community Centre and Tesco's.

There are a few empty shops in both the town centre and in Wey Hill that suffer from over demanding landlords and an inflated idea of local demand for expensive rents. The problem must be resolved.

The town does not currently have a general market; there was an attempt recently to set up a regular weekly market in the main car park, and there was also briefly a fish stall in the town. These were not professionally managed, and not well enough supported. There must be a serious attempt to reinstate a proper regular English market in the Town, since other towns locally operate successful English and farmers markets.

Retailer confidence in the town has improved over recent years but is currently not very high due to a general economic downturn. The town's businesses need marketing; despite the efforts of a very dynamic and enthusiastic Chamber of Commerce, it is essential that a business directory is produced for the town, that promotional literature is produced identifying the more specialist businesses and services that it offers such as restaurants, antique shops, music and art, and that a marketing and publicity programme be initiated as soon as possible.

Incentives should be offered for new tenants to encourage the occupation of empty shops. Greater control should be available over the types of shops allowed to start up in the town.

Greater efforts should be made to attract businesses to fill gaps in the range of shops and services. Incentives should also be offered to maintain and renovate properties, and to adhere to an attractive style in keeping with the area and nature of the town.

If new retail units are to be created in the town consideration should be given to building medium size units, as many small businesses are unable to expand due to lack of units over 1000 sq ft. More consideration should be given by planning authorities when change of use is submitted, and consultation with the Haslemere Town Council and the Chamber of Trade would be beneficial.

4.3.3 Training and Education

The range of schools in and near Haslemere is excellent with many private boys and girls junior and senior schools, junior and middle Church of England schools, and state schools at Woolmer Hill and Bohunt in Liphook.

School leavers are mostly well qualified from the private schools, and a large number of state school leavers also. The non-selective nature of state schools naturally means that there is a lower standard of grades overall, but the top end of the range compares very favourably with the private sector.

There is a good selection of crèches and junior schools in the area. Internet learning and access points are available at all schools in the area, but limited at the library.

Non-vocational courses are limited to adult educational courses held at one of the local schools.

There is a need for higher education and vocational course facilities in the town, and it is essential that the new library, when it is build, is equipped with full internet training and learning links.

4.3.4 Commercial and Industrial Property Needs

The majority of commercial property in and around Haslemere is for retail use, and this is covered within the worksheets in the appendix. There is limited office floor space, with small units let quickly and larger units over 2000 sq ft more difficult to let. Currently about 5000 sq ft is vacant. Rental levels have shown a small increase in recent years, but are reasonably affordable. Smaller units would be desirable. Light industrial floor space is concentrated in four areas: two are close to the station, one in Kings Road and one along the lower end of Wey Hill near Fosters Bridge. Most of this is occupied. The area does not attract large industrial users; perhaps due to topography and traffic difficulties, but more small and medium size light industrial floor space is needed.

4.3.5 Tourism and Visitor Services

The main tourist and visitor attractions in the town and surrounding countryside consist of the Museum, surrounding National Trust land, proposed South Downs Park, local music and dramatic productions, Lurgashall Winery, sports facilities and clubs and the bi-annual charter fair. There is an annual Arts and Culture Festival planned.

The main hotels are 4 star Lythe Hill, 3 star Georgian, Haslemere Hotel and Punch Bowl Hotel. Accommodation is also available at Branksome Conference Centre. There is a local youth hostel and two campsites are planned.

There is a shortage of bed and breakfast accommodation.

The local Visitors Information Centre is situated temporarily in the Museum.

There is a good selection of restaurants and pubs, some of which offer accommodation.

The town has a comprehensive Visitors Guide; there is a local Music events guide and a town map. Haslemere in Bloom is improving annually, and the Wey Hill improvement scheme is proposing to plant trees or shrubs along the pavements, but the town does not participate in Britain in Bloom or Best Kept Village competitions.

There are first class business and conference facilities at Lythe Hill and Branksome, and excellent spa facilities at Lythe Hill, Georgian and nearby Grayshott Hall and Forest Mere.

4.3.6 Business Support

The town has a flourishing and influential Chamber of Trade and Commerce, and an active Town Initiative. At present there is no Town Manager, but this is a topic for discussion.

There is a bi-annual Charter Fair, organised by the Round Table and there are regular Chamber of Trade events including an annual Race Night, Christmas Market and Christmas Street Carol Singing. An annual Haslemere Arts and Culture Festival is being planned.

Broadband is not in great demand due to the high cost of installation for small businesses but this could grow if a new library is suitably equipped: internet cafes and ‘telecottages’ could create more demand. The Town has a successful website, where much local information is displayed, including a business directory. (WWW.HASELEMERE.COM)

The Chamber has a members’ directory.

Business and conference facilities exist at Branksome Conference Centre, Lythe Hill Hotel and The Georgian House Hotel, but there is a need for a small business service centre for use by the many consultants working locally.

4.3.7 Questionnaire Analysis and Free Format Comments (average view)

The survey of resident’s opinions provided the following information:

Range of shops	fair to good
Product range in shops	not that good
Public transport/buses	not good
Parking	fair
Adult Education and training facilities	fair
Employment opportunities	not very good
Visitor attractions	fair
Signposting	fair to good
Look of town/character	good
Easy town to shop in	yes
Prices in shops	reasonable
Shopping locally	not good
Community feel	pretty good
Footpaths	fair to good
Traffic calming needed	yes
Cycling facilities	poor
Heavy vehicles restrictions	yes
Support for pub and restaurants	fair

General topics for consideration

Wey Hill unattractive dull

Need more cafes - stay open longer

Streets - unclean, scruffy, litter, pollution, roadsweeper

Recycling facilities needed

Traffic/town transport

Speed control

Town Market

Range of shops - shortage of children's' and men's' clothes

Teenage clothes

Newspaper delivery

Community work - school leavers and unemployed

Service in shops

5 Social and community workstream

5.1 Population

5.1.1 SWOT analysis

Strengths	Generally, a prosperous area Stable population High numbers in professional/managerial jobs
Weaknesses	Pockets of disadvantage People feeling a sense of community are in the minority Unbalanced age profile e.g. high proportion of elderly people, significantly lower numbers of young people
Opportunities	The Healthcheck is an opportunity to promote social inclusion
Threats	The expected increase in 65+ age group will have major implications regarding housing and care needs Unless the number of young people and families also increases not only will the community lack vibrancy but also may not be able to produce sufficient workers and volunteers to support the ageing population.

5.1.2 Factual data

Statistics

Population statistics	Census 1991 ⁴	Estimates 1998 ⁵	Census 2001 ⁶
Haslemere North and Grayswood	3,592	3,700	Not available
Haslemere South	3,736	3,800	Not available
Hindhead	3,367	3,300	Not available
Shottermill	4,557	4,400	Not available
Haslemere total	15,252	15,200	Not available
Waverley	113,220	115,364	115,665

The population of the four 'Haslemere' wards stood at 15,250 in 1991. Data at ward level from the 2001 census now (7) stands at 15,612 and estimates indicate that there was a small reduction in population to 15,200 by mid 1998. This was contrary to the overall trend in Waverley where the 1998 estimates indicated a 1.9% increase. The overall trend in Waverley in the 2001 census shows a 2.14% increase but in Haslemere a recovery of a 2.4% increase is recorded. Surrey County Council projections indicate that there will be an overall reduction in population in Waverley by 2006.

⁴ 1991 Census of Population Small Area Statistics, ONS

⁵ Population Estimates Unit, ONS

⁶ National Statistics Online – Census 2001 – Profiles – Waverley

(7) 2001 Census

Age Profile

Age Profile	Census 1991						Estimates 1998				Census 2001	
	Has N and Gryswd	Has S	Hind	Shott	Wav	UK	Has N and Gryswd	Has S	Hind	Shott	Wav	UK
0-15	21%	16%	18%	18%	18%	20%	23%	18%	19%	21%	19%	20%
16-19	5%	6%	6%	5%	6%	5%					5%	5%
20-34	15%	16%	18%	22%	19%	23%	52%	54%	56%	58%	17%	20%
35-59	32%	33%	32%	30%	34%	31%					36%	34%
60 and over	27%	29%	26%	25%	23%	21%	24%	28%	25%	21%	23%	21%

Haslemere has a high proportion of older people, with an average of 25% of the population across the four wards being 60+, compared with the Waverley average of 23% and the UK average of 21%. The 20-34 age group is under represented in both the 1991 and 2001 Census data for Haslemere and Waverley compared with UK data. The shortage of affordable housing and lack of local career opportunities may well be contributory factors. Although ward level data is not yet available, Waverley Census 2001 data indicates that there has been an increase of 32.29% in people aged 85+ since the 1991 Census. Projections indicate that that between 1991 and 2006 there will be an overall decline in the proportion of population in all age groups under 50 years old, with the exception of 20-29 year olds who are the main household forming group. The 65+ group is expected to remain steady until 2006 and then increase by 25% until 2016. The ageing population has major implications regarding future care and housing needs.

If the community is to remain vibrant then ways must be found to attract and keep young people and families in Haslemere to ensure a balanced community and avoid what one respondent to the questionnaire described as ‘the feel of an old people’s town’.

5.1.2.1 Pockets of relative disadvantage

Haslemere is generally a prosperous area with a high percentage of people in professional and managerial jobs. The area ranks low in terms of overall deprivation in the DETR Indices of Deprivation 2000. However, the indices can be misleading as measures at opposite extremes give a neutral effect when combined and pockets of disadvantage fail to be identified. All Haslemere wards rank high in deprivation measures relating to access to services and Haslemere North and Grayswood and Hindhead also rank high in housing measures. In 2000 Waverley Borough Council and Surrey County Council published the Waverly Community Profile, in which all wards were assessed for predominance of factors that can contribute to significantly above average risk of economic and social disadvantage. The identified factors and the results of that assessment are set out below.

In all four 'Haslemere' wards there are a significant number of households experiencing at least three risk factors. In Haslemere North and Grayswood there are households experiencing seven risk factors. With the exception of Hindhead ward there is a significantly high percentage of lone pensioner households throughout the area. Many nursing and residential homes are situated in Hindhead, which is likely to account for this exception.

Households that do experience social and/or economic disadvantage often find that their problems are compounded when living in an otherwise prosperous area where costs are higher and support mechanisms may not be as well established as in less affluent parts of the country. Frequently this leads to social and economic exclusion and this may be reflected in the questionnaire responses considered in 5.1.3.

5.1.3 Public Perceptions

Of the people who responded to the questionnaire 70% feel Haslemere to be a 'good place to live', but only 46% sense a feeling of community. Several respondents who feel community spirit is lacking made the comments, e.g.:

'There is no community feeling, I have been here with my family for two years and that's why we are leaving'

'It's easy to feel isolated in Haslemere'

'Cultural diversity is rarely recognised here'

Of the nine people who participated in the CAB client consultation only one sensed a feeling of community.

Although many people feel rooted in the community, it is clear that a significant number feel isolated or even excluded.

5.2 Housing

5.2.1 SWOT Analysis

Strengths	<p>There is some public understanding of the need for ‘affordable’ housing</p> <p>Two current housing schemes (Hindhead and Kilnfields) will provide some additional social, shared ownership and key worker housing</p>
Weaknesses	<p>Despite the above developments there is a substantial unmet need for social housing, with people waiting 6.4 years to be housed</p> <p>The private rental market is very small</p> <p>There is a shortage of smaller housing units to buy</p> <p>Young people and families with incomes less than £35,000 pa are unlikely to be able to access the housing market</p>
Opportunities	<p>The ‘Healthcheck’ provides an opportunity to present information about local housing need and so promote better understanding</p> <p>Possible development of Key Site 1 could include smaller housing units</p> <p>There is a continuing supply of small and medium sized development sites</p> <p>The provision of ‘affordable’ housing would be an important factor in attracting and keeping young people, families and key workers in Haslemere.</p>
Threats	<p>The number of households seeking accommodation will continue to rise as the trend towards smaller households continues</p> <p>Shortage of housing for young people and families, and key workers, will have an influence on the number of volunteers and workers available to support an ageing population.</p> <p>Opposition to further development by articulate groups may prevent the provision of small housing units</p>

5.2.2 Factual data

5.2.2.1 Type of Housing

Over two thirds of the local housing stock is in houses and bungalows. The supply of terraced houses is 15.6%, significantly lower than the national average of 27%, and flats and maisonettes at 16% are lower than the national average of 20%. Although the population is expected to decline slightly over the next few years, the number of households will continue to grow as the trend towards smaller households continues. The Waverley Housing Needs Survey 2001 identified a significant need to develop smaller housing units to meet the existing shortfall and the projected increased need.

5.2.2.2 Housing Tenure

The number of owner-occupier households (81%) is significantly higher than the national average of 67%. Furthermore, half of those own their properties outright, without a mortgage. The social housing rental sector (Local Authority or Registered Social Landlord owned) accounts for 16% of households. It is likely that Waverley Borough Council involvement in new build schemes will be restricted to wider regeneration schemes in partnerships, such as those at Kilnfields which will provide additional social housing, houses for shared ownership, and private sector housing. Other new build schemes for social housing will be promoted mainly through Housing Associations.

5.2.2.3 Housing costs

Housing costs are significantly higher than the national average. In the three months to the end of 2002 the average price of houses sold was £253,278 compared with the national average of £144,724. A first time buyer is unlikely to be able to access the housing market and purchase a flat or a terraced house with an income of less than £35,000.

5.2.2.4 Unmet housing need

On average, applicants for social housing wait 6.4 years to be housed and it is estimated that the unmet demand for social housing will stand at 1,715 units across Waverley in 2006. However, the actual unmet need is likely to be much higher as many people in need of social housing do not make an application, including many 'concealed' households – children living with parents, households with grandparents or lodgers. In some cases three generations of a family are living in overcrowded accommodation and have not applied to the Council for accommodation.

The shortage of smaller properties to purchase at 'affordable' prices has meant that many young people who have been brought up in the area, and who aspire to own their own homes, leave the area because they are unable to access the housing market. The very fact that terraced housing and flats are in short supply will no doubt influence the selling price.

Service providers find it difficult to recruit key staff because of the high cost of housing, both to rent and to buy.

5.2.3 Public perceptions

One of the main concerns expressed at the launch event was the need for more 'affordable' housing, both to rent and to buy. This is endorsed in the 'free style' responses to the questionnaire although there is also response against further development. The preferred use for any additional land that might become available is for open space. Further analysis of responses would be necessary to establish whether the housing status of respondents was representative of the community as a whole. There is a strong and articulate body of opinion against development of small housing units on land formally occupied by one property.

5.3 Health and Public Safety

5.3.1.1 SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Considerable satisfaction with Doctors and Health Centre Haslemere Community Hospital is a valuable community asset There has been some expansion of services at Haslemere Hospital The Voluntary sector is a major provider of social care and support Haslemere is an area of low incidence of crime
Weaknesses	Parking at Haslemere Hospital and Health Centre is a problem Access to the Health Centre and Hospital by public transport from Woolmer Hill and other areas is difficult Limited opening hours of Minor Injuries Clinic Shortage of NHS dentists Access to Royal Surrey Hospital difficult for users and visitors who are elderly or have mobility problems Parking at the Royal Surrey is difficult and expensive Delays in Social Services assessments for hospital discharge and packages of care result in vulnerable people left without support as well as bed blocking Restrictions on Social Services funding for placements in Nursing Homes results in many elderly people being placed many miles from their nearest relatives Lack of drop-in centre for drugs advice Funding difficulties of some voluntary organisations providing essential social support High level of fear of crime
Opportunities	Health policy is to provide non-acute care locally Further expansion of services at Haslemere Hospital Expansion of Hoppa bus service
Threats	Lack of certainty over future of Haslemere Community Hospital Inability of CARE car services to meet demand because of shortage of drivers Changes at or possible closure of King Edwards Hospital – future of McMillan Unit? Support/community care needs of the elderly will be significant call on resources

5.3.2 Factual data

5.3.2.1 Ambulance, Police and Fire Services

Both Ambulance and Fire services meet response time targets. Police targets have not been met and policing methods have now been changed. However, there has been a steady rise in the annual police wastage rate and the Surrey Police Performance Management Unit Report (22/1/03) stated that the relative youth and inexperience of the Surrey Police Force is a continued inhibitor to performance.

5.3.2.2 Health and Social Care Services: current provision

The main sources of healthcare services are Haslemere Health Centre and Haslemere Community Hospital. Acute care is provided at The Royal Surrey Hospital at Guildford. The nearest MacMillan Unit is at King Edwards Hospital at Midhurst. Local services are being expanded at Haslemere Hospital and there is potential for further development of services.

5.3.2.3 Unmet Need

Although the number of NHS dentists meets the standard there is a continuing shortage of dentists prepared to take on new work. Many restrict NHS work to existing patients or to children of private patients.

The nearest drop-in centre for drug advice, counselling and information is in Guildford.

5.3.2.4 Threats to Services

Two years ago Haslemere Community Hospital was threatened with bed closure. Although reprieved at the time there is still lack of certainty about the long-term future of the hospital. Although the former West Surrey Health Authority envisaged that the maximum amount of care not requiring an acute hospital would be provided locally, and substantial sums have been allocated to improve the space used for minor injuries, there are issues around 'whether the quality of care that can be provided from an elderly building such as Haslemere Hospital meets modern standards'⁷.

The future of King Edward's Hospital is uncertain.

5.3.2.5 Provision of other Social Care Services

Surrey County Council social care services are severely constrained by budgets. Delays in assessments and care packages or in agreement of placements in residential or nursing homes lead to delayed discharges (bed blocking) and significant numbers of vulnerable people living alone without support. Delayed discharges run at about three or four a week in Haslemere Hospital and 60 a week in the Royal Surrey. Where packages of care are agreed, lack of continuity of care workers is a problem. The CAB reports several cases of elderly people, thought to be suffering from dementia, living alone and unable to make essential decisions about their affairs. The CAB is very concerned about the delay by Surrey Social Services in arranging assessments, which is leaving vulnerable elderly people without necessary support. Voluntary sector organisations are significant providers of social care and support services e.g. Alzheimers Society, Age Concern, Citizens Advice Bureau, Meals on Wheels, Crossways Counselling. Support to young families will soon be available from Homestart. All these organisations are reliant on grants and donations, and some have serious funding problems.

⁷ Guildford and Waverley PCT, Local Care Network/Primary and Community Care Strategy.

5.3.2.6 Crime

Crime rates are low. Surrey is described as ‘the safest county in England’ and Haslemere has the lowest crime rate of the four areas that make up Waverley. The highest number of recorded crimes is for criminal damage, graffiti and vandalism.

5.3.3 Public Perceptions

Although 65% of respondents to the questionnaire think the availability of doctors to be good and 80% rate the Health Centre as good, the following issues were raised:

- **Unsatisfactory appointment booking system**
- **Inadequate parking**
- **The need for a surgery in other parts of the town**

Only 36% of respondents thought availability of hospital services to be good, but it is not clear whether the shortfall is in the existence of services or ability to access them. Access to the Royal Surrey Hospital is difficult for users and visitors who are elderly or who have mobility problems, parking is difficult and expensive, as is public transport. Several participants to informal consultations have commented that the opening hours of the Minor Injuries Unit at Haslemere Hospital should be extended.

26% of respondents think the availability of dentists to be ‘not very good’ or ‘poor/very poor’. The CAB reports several enquiries each week concerning difficulty finding NHS dentists.

Fear of crime is significant, although it is generally recognised that violent crime or crime against the person is very rare (Fear of Crime Survey 2000). At the Launch event one participant commented ‘Haslemere recreation ground is only safe place for a single woman to walk with dogs’. The 2003 Fear of Crime Survey identifies Lion Green as the area where people feel most unsafe, the reasons being mainly youths/threatening/ loitering and drunkenness. The same reasons, but to a lesser degree, apply to High Lane Estate, Shottermill and Beacon Hill. The other significant reason for feeling unsafe is poor street lighting – Tanners Lane, Weydown Road, The Edge and Critchmere Lane are all mentioned.

5.4 Local Government and Community Organisations

5.4.1 SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Locality Office at Lion Green Active voluntary sector providing community services and willing to participate in community affairs Some community partnerships already in place e.g. Healthcheck Steering Group, Haslemere Initiative
Weaknesses	Difficulty of access to Town Hall Limited staffing of Town Council Office Limited public knowledge about ability to address Town Council Difficulty getting to know about local organisations Perception of elitism and hence exclusion from some community organisations Only a limited minority feel they can influence decisions Community organisations have difficulty meeting commercial rents
Opportunities	Haslemere Rotary Club is planning a 'Meet Haslemere Organisations' event Haslemere Police Station is underused and could provide a venue for local services
Threats	Any additional costs could be a disincentive to improvement/relocation of local services

5.4.2 Factual data

5.4.2.1 Local Government and local services

Waverley Borough Council Locality Office is situated at Lion Green and is open six days a week. This is a valuable point of contact with the Borough Council. The Locality Office accepts payments that would otherwise necessitate a journey to the Borough Offices in Godalming.

Haslemere Town Council offices are situated in the Town Hall in the High Street. A Town Clerk, Assistant Town Clerk and Finance Officer, all of whom work part time, staff the office. Access is restricted by:

- **The physical position of the building in the centre of a one-way system**
- **Lack of facilities for people with disabilities or restricted mobility who are unable to access the Council Chamber on the first floor**
- **Limited opening hours; the office is open three days a week with lunch time closure**

The public are able to address the Town Council directly at the Annual Town Meeting and at the commencement of meetings of the Amenities Committee, and can ask questions at other meetings of the Council provided sufficient notice is given. The Grants Panel meets to consider applications for funding in private.

There is no local point of contact with Surrey County Council. No Town, Borough or County Councillors hold 'surgeries' but these are held four times a year by the local MP.

A Visitor Information Centre (VIC) is sited at Haslemere Museum, but is closed on Mondays.. Other local services, essential to the infrastructure of the town, are provided by active voluntary community groups.

5.4.2.2 Community Involvement

There are approximately 200 community and leisure interest organisations in Haslemere. Some community organisations provide essential community services to the public and are directly involved in making Haslemere a better place in which to live, work or to visit, e.g. Chamber of Trade, Haslemere Society, Haslemere Initiative, Citizens Advice Bureau, Volunteer Bureau, Alzheimer's Society and Haslemere Activity Unit for Disabled (HA4UD). Community groups have been responsible for the initiation and development of several major projects in the town over the last few years, some with the aid of grants from local authorities and some without, e.g. rebuilding of Grayswood Village Hall (Hall trustees), building of The Edge (Haslemere Sports Association) and building of Haslewey (Age Concern).

Informal discussions indicate that there is feeling that it is difficult to get to know what community groups and leisure interest groups are involved in and at worst some community groups are elitist and exclusive.

5.4.2.3 Location of community services

As has already been mentioned, the Town Hall is in a difficult location, being surrounded by a one-way system. Other voluntary community services are dispersed around the town in commercially let premises. For many community services, funding is a problem. .

5.4.3 Public Perceptions

Only about a quarter of respondents to the questionnaire feel they can influence decisions about important local developments if they wish to. None of the participants in the CAB client consultation feel that their views are taken into account when decisions are made. 'Free style' responses to the questionnaire include the following comments:

- **'Councillors need to be more accessible'**
- **'Hindhead and Beacon Hill don't feel part of Haslemere, they need their own Parish Council'**
- **'We need a one stop shop for town services and a civic centre'**
- **'There needs to be more consultation with residents'**

5.5 Sport, Leisure and Open Space

5.5.1 SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Strong and wide-ranging sports sector Attractive green open spaces and surrounding countryside Considerable will to improve facilities for young people Large number of leisure interest organisations
Weaknesses	Lack of information/publicity about activities of local organisations Difficulties of access to sports and leisure facilities for disabled users Some unmet need for sports facilities e.g. tennis courts available for public use, squash courts and indoor crown bowling Limited facilities for wheelchair users in open spaces Lack of open seating area/garden in the Town Very limited provision of youth facilities Fear of crime at Lion Green
Opportunities	The Healthcheck presents an opportunity to identify resources for development of youth facilities The possible inclusion of open space/garden in any development of Key Site 1 Opening of the A3 tunnel and closure of the old A3 offers significant opportunities to develop leisure facilities in that area SITA is a possible source of funding for a community landscaping project
Threats	Inability to access funding for development of youth facilities Inactivity on improving youth facilities could lead to escalation of problems at Lion Green

5.5.2 Factual Data

5.5.2.1 Sport and Leisure: Current provision

In general terms, Haslemere is well provided with sports facilities, with sports centres at The Edge and The Herons providing swimming, badminton, gymnasium, squash, football and rugby and hockey facilities (including two all weather pitches which are for hockey but not rugby) and an athletics track. The second pitch just built has in fact replaced the rugby pitch, which is why fundraising is now necessary to purchase, nearby land from a local farmer. Additional sports pitches are to be found at Hindhead Recreation Ground and Haslemere Recreation Ground, where there are also tennis courts. A further sports pitch is being constructed at Kilnfields. Haslemere Rugby Club is currently fundraising to purchase land for additional pitches at The Edge. There is a skateboard park at The Herons. In addition, there is a large number of commercial leisure and fitness facilities in the area.

Over 200 community and leisure interest organisations are in existence in Haslemere.

5.5.2.2 Unmet need

Sports organisations have identified the need for indoor tennis courts, additional squash courts and an all-weather 400-metre athletics track.

Although sports facilities for children and young people are good, there are no other leisure facilities specifically for this age group. The recent Surrey County Council Youth Survey highlighted the need for internet access points (cyber cafes), drop-in facilities where young people can meet their peers away from adults, creative arts facilities, cinema and retail facilities.

5.5.2.3 Participation

Twenty-three sports clubs are members of Haslemere Sports Council and over forty sports clubs are listed on <http://www.haslemere.com/>. Haslemere Rugby Club has been highlighted by the RFU as one of the top Community Rugby Clubs in England and is seen as a 'centre of excellence' for wheelchair rugby. It is estimated that approximately 25% of the population is a member of a sports club or leisure facility.

The most common sport or exercise activities amongst respondents to the questionnaire are walking (84% of respondents participating), swimming (60%), riding a bicycle (40%), 'keep fit' (38%) and running or jogging (23%).

5.5.2.4 Open Space

Open space is plentiful in Haslemere. Children's play areas are to be found at Lion Green, Town Meadow, Beacon Hill and Grayswood. Other open spaces include St Christopher's Green, Eight Acres at Beacon Hill, Haste Hill, Shepherds Hill, Wey Hill Fair Ground and Weydown Common. In general, open spaces are well maintained and litter free. Apart from a roadside grassed area at Beacon Hill, there are no facilities for wheelchair users and public toilets only at Wey Hill Fair Ground. Problem areas are dog fouling at Haslemere Recreation Ground, litter and graffiti at Wey Hill Fair Ground, and litter, debris and vandalism at Lion Green. Lion Green is recognised as a place where youths 'hang out'.

The town is surrounded by land owned by The National Trust, including Blackdown, Hindhead Commons, The Devil's Punchbowl and Marley Common.

5.5.3 Public Perceptions

Generally, people feel that Haslemere has a good range of sport and leisure facilities, with 69% of respondents to the questionnaire rating these as good, very good or excellent. Responses included requests for additional facilities such as indoor bowls and indoor tennis. Participants in the CAB client consultation are concerned about cost of facilities.

One of the main concerns expressed at the launch event was the lack of leisure facilities for children and young people, both in the Town and surrounding rural areas, and this was confirmed by the questionnaire responses with only 12% thinking facilities are adequate. This concern was also evident in the 'free-style' responses to the questionnaire where 'more facilities for children and young people' was the most popular suggestion for making Haslemere a better place to live. Suggestions for additional facilities included a commercially run Club and a 'cyber-café' as well as those mentioned above. A questionnaire specifically designed for school age children has been distributed via schools: the results have yet to be analysed. However, young people who have participated in informal discussions have been firm in the view that they must be involved in planning any additional facilities.

Consultation with HAU4D identified that lack of suitable transport at evenings or weekends limited the ability to access sport and leisure facilities. Access to pubs, restaurants and churches had improved significantly but facilities at both The Herons and The Edge were considered to be poor.

There is considerable concern about Lion Green. As mentioned in section 5.3.3 above the recent Fear of Crime Survey identified Lion Green as the area where people feel most unsafe, the reasons being 'youths/threatening/loitering/drunkenness'. However, the presence of young people at Lion Green is believed to be because of a lack of other facilities.

The most popular use for land that may become available (amongst respondents to the questionnaire) is for it to be used for parks or landscaped open space.

The lack of disabled facilities at open spaces in the Town was identified in discussions with members of Haslemere Stroke Club. They would like to see an open seating area, with a garden, in the centre of the Town, a suggestion that had support from questionnaire respondents and at the Chamber of Trade consultation.

5.6 Culture and Heritage

5.6.1 SWOT analysis

Strengths	<p>Strong and active music, art, and drama groups</p> <p>Modern museum keen to strengthen links with the community</p> <p>Willing volunteer trustees to manage and develop Haslemere Museum and Haslemere Hall</p> <p>Haslemere Hall and Grayswood Hall are well used</p> <p>Willing volunteers to organise community events</p> <p>‘Cinema’ at Haslemere Hall popular with ‘middle aged’ group</p>
Weaknesses	<p>Lack of Arts Centre</p> <p>Haslemere Hall is dated and in need of substantial modernisation</p> <p>Haslemere Museum has revenue funding problems</p> <p>Haslemere Hall is dependent upon cinema and bar receipts to cover revenue costs</p> <p>Shortage of smaller, more intimate venues</p> <p>Young people want a ‘proper’ cinema</p> <p>Need for a better library facility</p>
Opportunities	<p>Development of a new library facility in Wey Hill area could lead to further improvement and/or development in that area</p> <p>Healthcheck is an opportunity to consider all options for development of cultural facilities</p> <p>Possible development of area at the back of Wetherspoons through to Town Meadow could include community facilities</p>
Threats	<p>Lack of facilities attractive to young people will discourage young people from settling in the town</p> <p>Present facilities at Haslemere Hall may not meet the needs of the community in 10 years time</p> <p>Strong, but possibly minority support, for Haslemere Hall as it is may impede consideration of development of modern, flexible facilities</p> <p>Difficulty in accessing funding to develop facilities</p>

5.6.2 Factual Data

Cultural facilities in the Town include, Haslemere Museum, Haslemere Hall and the Library. Haslemere Hall is well used by local groups and has staging, dressing rooms, properties room and limited flying facilities. The Hall is also used as a cinema for three to four days each month. Cinema and bar receipts enable the Hall to be more or less self-supporting. The Hall has disabled access to the rear but the steps at the main entrance, the cramped foyer, and different levels in the building, make it a difficult venue for people with poor mobility.

Haslemere Museum has recently benefited from a Heritage Lottery Grant and has undergone modernisation and established an education room. Although benefiting from endowment funds, these are being reduced, as the Trustees have to call upon capital to meet revenue costs.

It is generally accepted that the library on Wey Hill is inadequate and Surrey County Council has earmarked £650,000 for provision of a new library; a suitable site has yet to be identified.

There is no Arts Centre in Haslemere although exhibitions are occasionally held in the Museum. Occasional concerts are held in St Christopher's Church.

Other venues for events include Grayswood Village Hall, Marjorie Gray Hall, Haslemere Museum lecture hall and several church halls. There is a shortage of smaller, more intimate venues for arts events such as jazz and folk concerts, and for meetings.

Haslemere has active music and drama groups with approximately 200 people involved in Haslemere Players, Haslemere Thespians and Opera Omnibus. Other arts-based groups include the Art Society, NADFAS, Town Band, Music Society, HHH, jazz and folk groups and the Dolmetch Society.

Haslemere has many literary associations with authors such as Conan Doyle, Bernard Shaw, H G Wells and George Elliott to name a few.

Regular public events include a biennial Charter Fair and a Christmas Fair. An annual Haslemere Festival is planned for 2004 that will bring all the cultural activities of the town together. National events such as the Millennium, Jubilee and New Year are celebrated.

5.6.3 Public Perceptions

Cultural and entertainment facilities are seen by 35% of respondents to the questionnaire as 'not very good' or 'poor/very poor'. Over half of the 16-24 year olds responding say they are 'not very good' or 'poor/very poor'.

Around two out of three respondents rate the service provided by the Museum and Haslemere Hall as 'good/very good' or 'excellent', although a majority believes Haslemere Hall facilities will be insufficient to meet the needs of the community in ten years time. In response to the question 'what will be needed?' over 150 respondents think a larger, modern facility will be needed, with some calling for a radical improvement and/or multi-functional, adaptable facilities.

The service provided by the Library is seen by 26% of those who gave an opinion as 'not very good, poor or very poor', although this rating may relate more to the facility than the service. The issue of a new library was a major concern at the launch event when Surrey County Council's proposal to revamp the Wey Centre met considerable opposition. That proposal has now been withdrawn and how and where the £650,000 ringfenced for library improvements is to be used has yet to be decided. Free-style responses to the questions inviting comments about facilities and changes that would make Haslemere a better place to live strongly expressed the inadequacy of the present library and supported a more modern, extensive facility. Several comments were made in favour of the library remaining in the Wey Hill area.

6 Environment workstream

6.1 SWOT analysis

Strengths	<p>The town is very attractive and has much to capitalise upon.</p> <p>The general prosperity of the town is good and there is no reason for the appearance to suffer from neglect.</p> <p>There are many well-connected and highly informed people in the town who can make a strong contribution.</p> <p>There is considerable diversity of style within the town area so that there are many aspects that can be worked upon by various interest groups.</p>
Weaknesses	<p>The town undoubtedly suffers from being a 'two part' centre.</p> <p>The high proportion of commuters working a long day precludes many from community involvement.</p> <p>The pressures that come from central government to add inexorably to the numbers of houses, creates tensions and threat.</p> <p>Owners of derelict buildings in the town must be encouraged to improve their property and where it is in the Conservation Area, Waverley BC should take appropriate action to enforce legislation.</p>
Opportunities	<p>The fact that there are areas within the town centre that are ripe for re-development makes it easier to make positive changes</p> <p>The economy of the town seems fairly buoyant so there should be sufficient momentum to carry forward improvements.</p> <p>The A3 tunnel should ameliorate the traffic situation somewhat.</p> <p>The limited opportunities to significantly improve the roads in the town centre provide a useful brake on unwanted development.</p> <p>The commitment by SCC to build a new library is encouraging, particularly for Wey Hill.</p>
Threats	<p>The shortage of funds to see projects through is depressing.</p> <p>Potential conflict from all who feel they should be driving projects in their own chosen direction is a potential hazard.</p> <p>A loss of momentum could cause the Healthcheck to run out of steam.</p> <p>The need for some early wins may encourage impetuosity.</p>

6.2 Background

The worksheets indicate graphically just how attractive the town of Haslemere and its setting is officially perceived to be. The Conservation Area status of the town centre and the close proximity of both the Surrey Hills AONB and the Western Weald area of the Sussex Downs AONB, emphasise that in aesthetic terms, the people of Haslemere enjoy a superb quality of life.

The built environment draws on the natural features of the landscape and we find attractive old houses of great character, nestling in the folds of hills and concealed in quiet lanes around the town. For all its quaint charm, the history of the area is one of industry. Though the soil is generally of indifferent agricultural quality, the land was productive, for it was here that iron was smelted from as long ago as the early middle ages. The furnaces were fed by charcoal from the woods and water from the many springs quenched the hot iron. There is little evidence of industry here now; while there is still some manufacturing, most companies are small and 'high tech' so, environmentally speaking, there is no great problem of pollution - other than by traffic.

The arrival of the railway in 1860 resulted in Haslemere becoming a commuter town and its prosperity became rooted in the City. The people are, for the most part, well informed and articulate and expect the town to reflect their aspirations and success. It is against this background that we consider the environmental aspects of the Healthcheck.

6.3 The Public Consultation

At the public meeting held on January 15th the crowded room at the Georgian Hotel testified to the wide interest, and to an extent, the concerns, that the residents of the town have. Clearly the people value the town and its character and want to safeguard the good parts and improve the bad. They want to influence the way things are decided.

The comments were volunteered and endorsement of the subjects raised was optional. The principal issues, unsurprisingly, were broadly those which respondents to the questionnaire raised when invited to give their own comments.

6.3.1 The Questionnaire

The questionnaires (1118 returned out of 4300 issued) distributed at shops, the four villages and the railway station, confirmed that the appearance of the town is important to all the respondents - everyone had a view and nearly 60% think the town looks "good" (20% 'very good') and 70% think it is a 'good' place to live in (25% 'very good'). Most residents (four out of five) feel that Haslemere has a character of its own although a much smaller proportion (two in five) sense a feeling of community.

Views were expressed about numbers of shops and, more specifically, *which* shops should be found here. The town's ability to attract shopkeepers and store operators is one of commercial viability and while this is more a matter for the Economy than for Environment there are clear environmental implications. More shops result in greater traffic flows and more congestion. The overwhelming response was that we do not want greater commercial activity if it going to significantly increase traffic.

However, the question inviting views on land use for space created by, for example, the closure of the BT exchange, resulted in a strong preference for more open space (44%); more shops was seen as being a more desirable prospect (at 38%) than more car parking (25%). Increased housing is unpopular unless it meets a social need by way of providing social housing. Many confuse the nomenclature, using expressions such as 'affordable' or 'low cost' without considering the fundamental point that unless accommodation is provided on a rental basis by Housing Associations or housing authorities, it will only be available at the market level and that, generally, is neither low cost nor affordable in most people's terms.

The need to restrict the number of new houses being built - and indeed of development generally - was probably the greatest issue identified. There was considerable criticism of consent granted for infilling and back-land development. The often quoted point was that the town is in great danger of losing its character as a 'market town' of some rusticity and charm.

The derelict property and the need for tidying the town generally and Wey Hill in particular, were frequently mentioned. Litter, dog fouling and the condition of the two public lavatories were all widely held matters of concern.

- **Wey Hill is seen as being particularly unattractive, more trees on the roadside would help.**
- **The new betting shop in Charter Walk was criticised as being alien and out of character.**
- **Several supported the redevelopment of the Somerfield, i.e. High Street, car park with a new town square with trees and shops.**
- **Car parking is widely criticised – a third describing the amount of car parking space in the town as not very good or poor. Specific sites at the Hospital and the station were mentioned and the need to control on-street car parking was seen by many as important.**
- **The library attracted a lot of interest. Its location, range of facilities and scope were all covered by a significant number of people.**
- **Street cleaning, dog fouling, dirty road signs, litter and re-cycling were all raised often, with the limited facilities for re-cycling - particularly plastics - coming high on the list of spontaneous complaints. 37% of respondents chose to comment spontaneously upon re-cycling: There was frequent comparison with Hampshire where plastics re-cycling is available. Many expected kerb-side collection for bottles and plastics.**
- **Tesco lights were criticised by a great many and the environmental implications of the congestion that they cause is a matter of great concern. The evident inability of SCC to tackle the problems causes much frustration.**
- **Several respondents suggested that volunteers could do more. They did not actually say that they themselves would feel moved to join such groups but a periodic public 'spring-clean' may have a therapeutic effect on the sense of community.**
- **The state of footpaths is not good but we do not have sufficient analysis to know what the concerns are; we know there are many rural paths and that some are inadequately signed. As part of the attraction of the town to visitors, good signage is of greater significance than may be apparent from the survey. The frequently mentioned need for further pelican crossings in the town centre - specifically at Lower Street - will have implications for the appearance of the town. Many share the view that we need to limit street 'clutter' and these will add to it.**

The vitality and thus the appearance of the town are clearly dependent upon having a varied and active populace and that requires a range of local employment opportunities. There are many small businesses that have graduated from operating from home to a small lock-up unit and there is a need for more such facilities. The more that local services operate from within the town, the less need there is for their customers to travel, i.e. it is more 'sustainable' in the current idiom. Commercial property agents in the town feel that small-scale business units provide a key to commercial success.

Housing costs are such that first time buyers find it almost impossible to get on to the first rung of the ladder. Many cite the need for 'affordable housing' without understanding that it will not be truly 'affordable' if it is not provided as a social housing component of a larger development scheme (i.e. one providing at least 15 units). WBC had about 900 council houses but about 40% of these have been sold under 'right to buy' legislation. Such a significant number taken out of the social housing pool has a marked effect on the mobility of the labour supply.

The business opportunities presented by encouraging more visitors was raised frequently and one person mentioned the lack of any caravan/camping site within a reasonable distance of the town. As a centre for visitors who like walking, Haslemere has many attractions but there is a definite lack of reasonably priced accommodation. There are relatively few B&Bs and the hotels are generally expensive.

6.4 Conclusion

The 'environment' is a fragile thing, both ecologically speaking and within a subjective assessment. Haslemere has apparently managed to retain an air of some rustic charm despite the huge volume of traffic that passes through the town. Clearly everything possible must be done to preserve the character and what charm that remains.

The look of the town is thought by nearly 60% to be 'good' but there are many areas where rampant neglect is rife. Firm action must be taken by the Borough Council to enforce its powers to safeguard the Conservation Area.

The wish to use land that may become available land in the town for a town park is revealing. There will be pressure for development to fund planning gain proposals to make good shortcomings in the town, and clearly any opportunities that do arise will need to be carefully managed. The strong view that the areas of dereliction at the back of the High Street should be re-developed to provide a new 'town square' needs to be explored in detail. There are several functions that could with advantage be sited there - the VIC, a market and perhaps some commercial units.

Litter rightly attracts the attention of many. More needs to be done to match the standards of street cleanliness that Godalming enjoys but more also needs to be done to educate people, particularly the young and the patrons of takeaway food establishments, some of whom have no compunction about dropping litter. Re-cycling must take a greater priority than at present. The environmental pressures we face dictate that we must do more to match our fellow Europeans' standards.

Traffic is probably the single most damaging factor as far as the environment is concerned. It is to be hoped that the A3 tunnel will provide some amelioration and relief but while the town continues to provide an attractive interlude on journeys to the coast, we can expect the flow of cars to increase. The extent to which commercial pressures capitalise on the market that that influx presents depends on planning and on car park availability.

7 Transport and accessibility workstream

7.1 Introduction

We define 'Transport' as the provision of facilities to enable movement. This includes (in no particular order) roads, bus services, rail services, car parking, cycle provision, and footpaths. We consider 'Accessibility' to be the effect that the provision of these services has. For instance, the main line rail network is a transport facility; its presence implies good accessibility for residents of Haslemere to major cities. Conversely, an inadequate bus service could be construed as meaning that the accessibility needs of the young, low income and vulnerable groups are not well met.

7.2 Results and Conclusions

7.2.1 SWOT analysis

The SWOT analysis provides a high level view of the facts about transport and accessibility within and around Haslemere. By its nature it is not comprehensive and it also includes some amount of judgement which may not be to the liking of all, e.g. 'high car ownership' is defined as a strength whereas to many it may be a weakness.

Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The railway station and accessibility to main townsProximity to main road networkHigh car ownership levels compared to national statisticsCar parks close to attractors (e.g. shops and station)Major trunk route 3 miles away from town centre
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The 'two town' nature of Haslemere and Wey Hill divides the town and increases trafficThe combination of the Tesco/Lion Lane junction and Wey Hill leads to congestionThe A3 acts as a barrier between Haslemere and Hindhead/Beacon HillRegular bus services are poorNarrow bridges, e.g. at the railway station and in Sturt RoadSome pavements in central Haslemere (e.g. Lower Street) are narrow or in poor conditionCommuter parking on residential streets around the stationLittle provision for cyclistsLack of a comprehensive parking policy with patchy 'policing'
Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">A comprehensive parking strategy to meet the needs of residents, shoppers, employees and commuters is under consideration by Waverley BCSeveral opportunities for minor road improvementsPotential for more community (demand-responsive) bus services
Threats	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Additional traffic on local roads as a result of the A3 Hindhead improvementSeveral junctions have poor visibility and are potential accident locationsLow demand threatens the viability of regular bus services

7.3 Factual data

Haslemere presents several faces, each of which generates traffic.

- **It is a market town with a catchment area of radius ten miles at least. It has ‘sub regional’ facilities such as a Health Centre and hospital, culture, social and entertainment venues.**
- **It is a residential town that provides local facilities such as shops, garages and supermarkets**
- **It is a commuter town, that serves rail users from the town and surrounding area (anecdotally from as far away as Chichester).**

The absence of a major trunk road through Haslemere’s centre adds to its charm. The A3 (some 5 km to the northwest) and the M3 (a further 15 km northwest) carry traffic from London to the south and west. They are located far enough from central Haslemere to be distinct from it. The A3 is, however, of considerable influence in Hindhead (within Haslemere’s hinterland) and acts as a barrier between Haslemere, Beacon Hill and points north. The A286, linking Guildford and Midhurst, runs through the town and provides an alternative to the A3.

Haslemere is generally prosperous and this is reflected in its car ownership statistics. In the UK as a whole 27% of households have no car and 28% have two or more. Our estimates for the four wards in Haslemere in 2002⁸ are 15% and 44% respectively. Clearly most households in Haslemere are more mobile than the norm. It is important to remember, however, that even with this high car ownership large proportions of the population do not have access to a car all of part of the time (potentially up to 40% during the working day). The semi-rural nature of Haslemere, combined with the high car ownership, adds to the difficulties in providing comprehensive, competitively priced public transport services.

Traffic in Haslemere is ‘peaky’. During large parts of the working day it is possible to drive around the town and surrounding area with little delay. The situation becomes more fractious during peak hours when, for instance, the queue to the A3 at Hindhead can delay travellers by 20 minutes or more, lengthy queues tail back from the Tesco/Lion Lane traffic signals to Fosters Bridge, and other parts of the area are subject to delay and increased accident risk.

Haslemere has a main line railway station. Services run between London and Portsmouth at roughly 15 minute intervals with occasional services elsewhere (e.g. to the west coast line to Manchester and Edinburgh). Commuter numbers are roughly 2,500 per day.

There are over one thousand ‘formal’ car parking spaces in the area of study, with some 350 available for shoppers and workers in Haslemere town centre and Wey Hill. There are few occasions when it is not possible to park within reasonable walking distance (400 m) of shops and other facilities. Parking fees range from £0.35 for 45 minutes and £3.30 for eight hours in the town centre, to £2.00 for 24 hours in Weydown Road. But the long term car parks (including the free parking at the fairground site) are much used by rail commuters and are generally full before 8:00 am. The prevalence of commuters parking on residential streets is evident around Weydown Road, Derby Road and elsewhere within walking distance of the station. Car parking elsewhere within the surrounding villages is adequate.

⁸ Based on the 1991 Census and early indications from the 2001 Census

Regular, fixed route bus services run through Haslemere en route to Guildford, Aldershot and Farnham. Demand-responsive, variable route buses are relatively new to the area. 'Hoppa' buses are run by Waverley Community Transport, funded jointly by The Countryside Agency and WBC. The DoRiS service provides a similar facility in West Sussex and serves some of Haslemere's hinterland.

7.4 Perceptions

7.4.1 Summary of perceptions

Our assessment of how people feel about Haslemere and its hinterland is based on what we have been told: at the launch and subsequent meetings with 'helpers', and via the extensive public survey, ie the completed questionnaires.

In summary, concern centres on:

- **Parking, in particular how best to meet the sometimes-competing needs of residents, shoppers, workers and commuters. This includes a wish for cheap or free parking for shoppers, and some strategy to remove commuter cars from residential streets.**
- **The growth of traffic, the congestion this causes, and the impact of HGVs. Associated with this is support for traffic calming and speed limits.**
- **The Tesco/Lion Green traffic signals**
- **The recent traffic management works in Wey Hill**
- **A generally poor perception of buses but satisfaction with rail services**
- **The provision of footpaths in Haslemere (their nearness to traffic and poor state of repair)**
- **A wish to improve bus services but no apparent strong inclination to use them**
- **The likely impact of the Hindhead tunnel is beginning to register.**

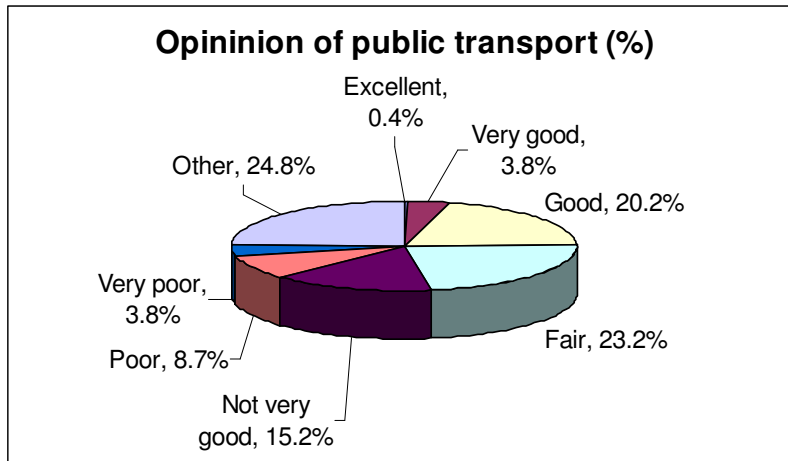
7.4.2 Launch and subsequent meetings

The key points to come out of our launch event and subsequent discussions with helpers were:

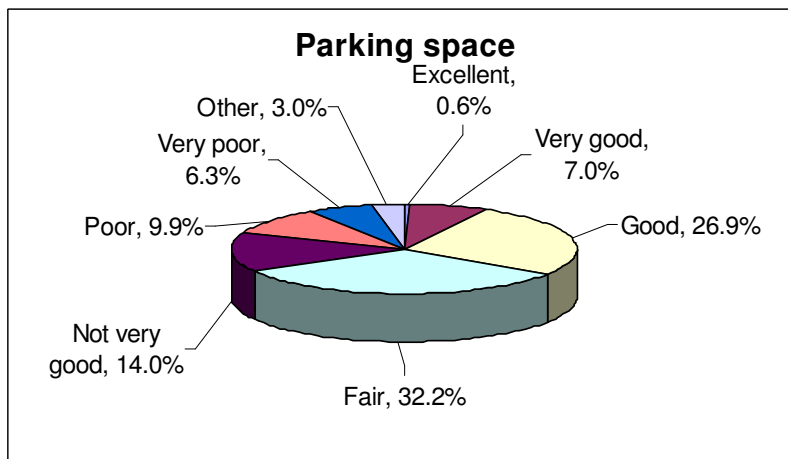
- **The potential for a controlled parking zone in Haslemere should be reviewed. Different parking strategies for shoppers, employees and commuters, and the removal of parked cars from residential streets, should all be in scope**
- **Bus services should be improved, e.g. by more flexible services and smaller buses between the town centre and the station/Wey Hill**
- **The Tesco lights (Wey Hill/Lion Lane junction) need to be redesigned to ease congestion**
- **Traffic congestion in Haslemere could be eased by making some roads one-way and by other traffic management measures**
- **Footpaths are inadequate in some parts of Haslemere**
- **Traffic calming measures need to be brought in to reduce traffic speeds in Haslemere**
- **There are too many heavy goods vehicles in Haslemere, some of which do not start or stop in the town and should be restricted from entering the town**
- **Facilities for cyclists in and around Haslemere are inadequate**
- **Pick-up and set-down facilities at the station need fundamental review. This could include a multi-storey car park and designated areas for picking-up and setting-down. There is also potential for extending the footbridge at the station northwards to the area north outside Jewson's.**
- **The planned tunnel along the A3 at Hindhead will have a major impact on Haslemere and the surrounding area, particularly the effects of increased traffic along local roads.**
- **A one-way system (Tanner's Lane car park, to West St, High St, Lower St) would provide benefits particularly for footpaths e.g. in Lower Street.**
- **There are several danger points in central Haslemere such as Lower St, Health Centre car park, and the Church Lane junction.**
- **There is a need to establish whether the wider community feels that road traffic is given too much priority over pedestrians, e.g. a blanket 20 mph limit within the town would make it more attractive for pedestrians.**
- **The Wey Hill improvement scheme should be reviewed after its completion to assess the impact of the pinch point and other changes.**
- **The location of bus stops needs to be reviewed, e.g. the stop currently in Lower St might be better located on the High St**
- **A ban on HGVs using Haslemere, as a through route should be assessed.**
- **Signage needs to be clearer and better maintained.**
- **More traffic wardens would be needed to police a Controlled Parking Zone, with one objective being to remove commuters' cars from local roads.**
- **Accessibility for the mobility-impaired both to transport facilities and to individual premises needs to be understood better and, of appropriate, improved.**

7.4.3 Public consultation- results from the questionnaire

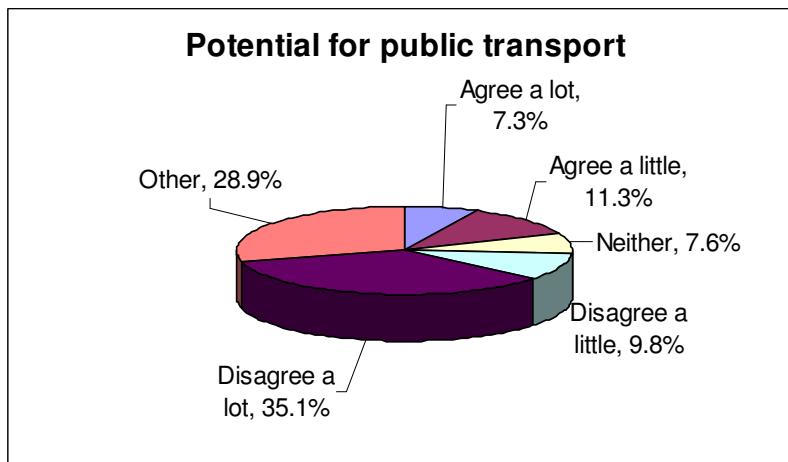
The issues raised during the launch meeting were used as the basis for defining the questionnaire. Our analysis of the responses to this is summarised below.



General perception of public transport is poor (50.9% 'Fair' to 'Very poor'). But note that 24.8% 'Don't know', implying they do not use public transport.

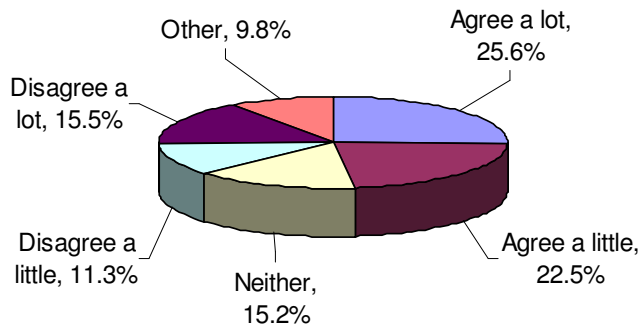


30.2% consider the provision of parking within Haslemere to be less than 'fair' and 34.5% 'good' to 'excellent'



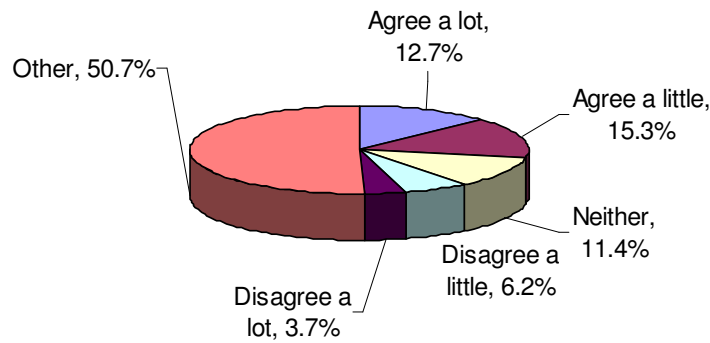
Very few people (18.6% 'a lot' or 'a little') consider that they would switch to public transport (ie largely buses in this context)

Avoid town at peak times



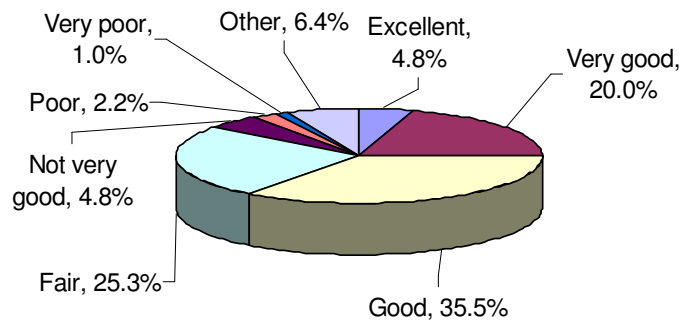
About half of the respondents (48.1%) agree 'a little' or 'a lot' that they avoid the town in peak periods, presumably due to traffic and parking difficulties

Easy for disabled



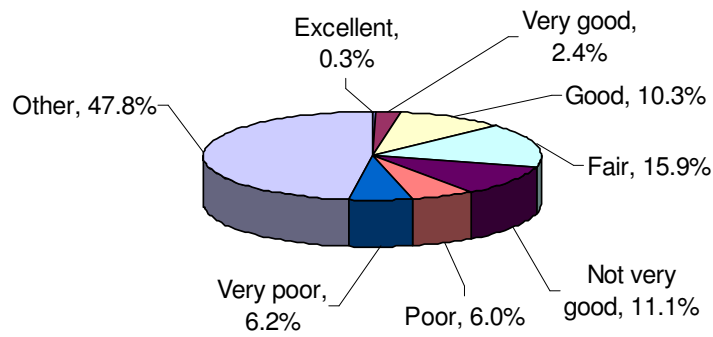
50.7% of respondents have no opinion on whether Haslemere is a good place for the mobility disabled. A small majority of those with a view agree a little or a lot that it is an easy place (28.0%).

Railway station



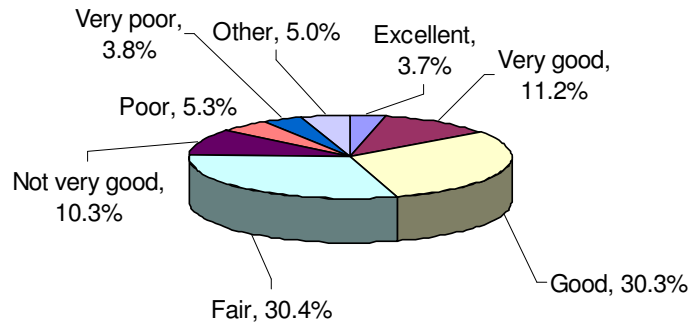
The railway station is well-regarded (60.3% 'good' to 'excellent'). But does this really mean the perception of the service through the station?

Buses



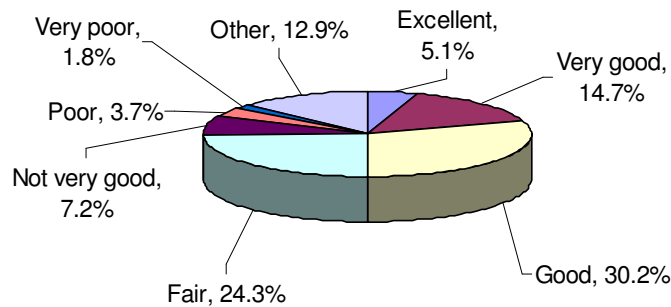
Nearly half (47.8%) of respondents have no view on bus services. Only 13.0% rate the service as 'excellent' to 'good'.

Town car parks



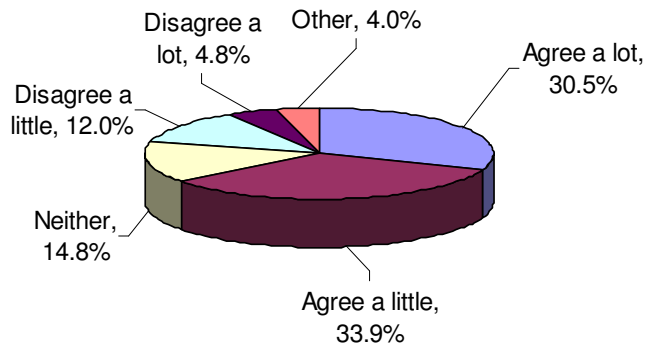
The majority (60.7%) view car parking provision in the town as either 'fair' or 'good'. Other views are about even.

Footpaths



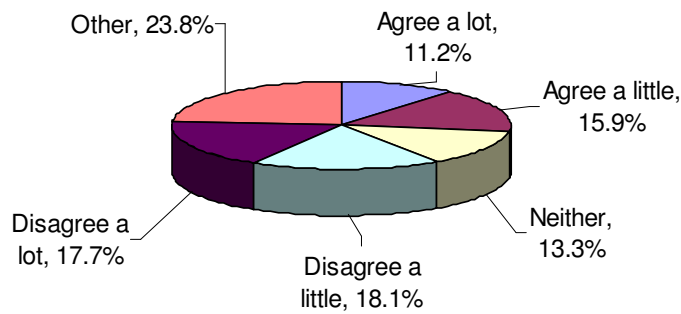
Again, the majority (54.5%) of respondents consider footpaths to be 'fair' or 'good'.

Increase car parking



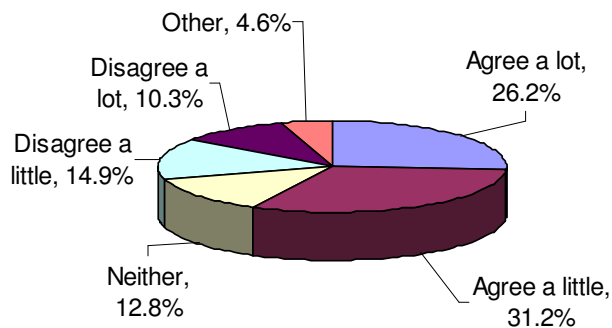
A majority of respondents (64.4%) agree either 'a lot' or 'a little' that there should be more car parking spaces in Haslemere

Shuttle bus



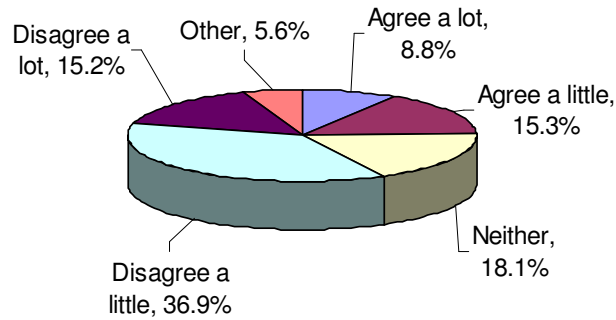
Only a quarter of respondents (27.1% agree 'a little' and 'a lot') say that they would use a new shuttle bus running between Wey Hill, the station and the town centre.

Controlled parking



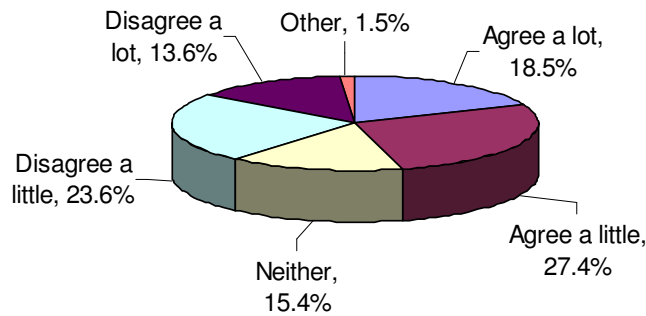
57.4% agree 'a little' or 'a lot' that there should be a controlled parking scheme in Haslemere (with the implication that different types of parking need require different solutions)

Congestion inhibits shopping



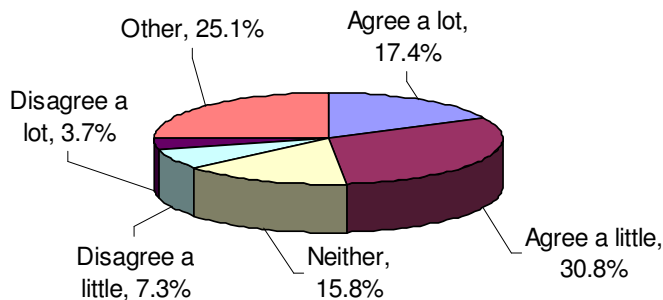
Most people (52.1% disagree 'a little' and 'a lot') seem to shop in the town despite any perceived problems caused by traffic congestion, with 24.1% apparently inhibited

More traffic calming



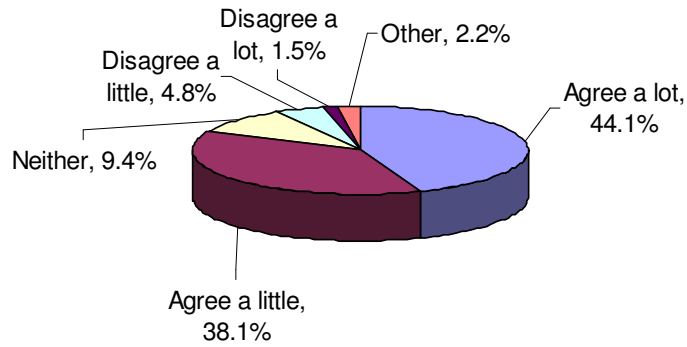
Nearly half (45.9% agree 'a lot' or 'a little') of respondents agree, whilst 37.2% disagree that additional traffic calming measures are needed to slow down traffic

Inadequate cycling facilities



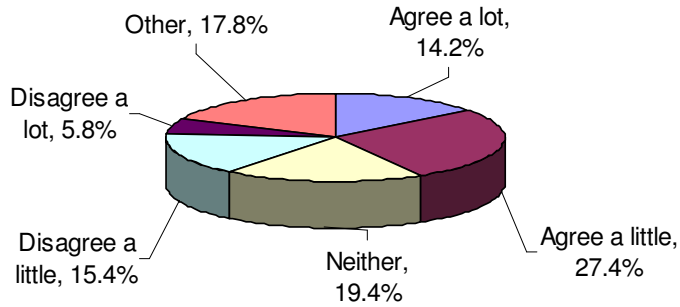
A quarter of respondents have no view on cycling facilities. 48.2% of all respondents agree that facilities are inadequate

Restrict HGVs



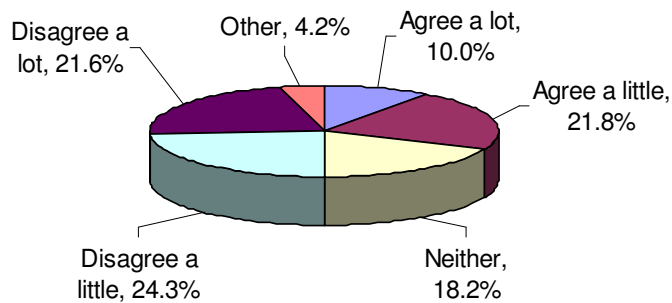
The impact of HGVs is clearly perceived as an issue by respondents with 82.2% agreeing 'a little' and 'a lot' that HGVs should be restricted.

Use buses if service improved



There is a fairly even spread of views on whether improved bus services would be used

One way system



Support for a one-way system in Haslemere town is not strong (31.8% agreeing 'a little' or 'a lot') with 45.9% disagreeing.

7.4.4 Freeform responses

Respondents answered the freeform questions as follows..

Issue	Number of responses	% of total
Parking - various responses on parking cost, availability, location and type of use	113	34%
Improve and tidy pavements	44	13%
Resolve the congestion and potential danger at the Tesco/Lion Green traffic signal junction	34	10%
Improve bus services/lower fares/higher frequency	30	9%
Implement more traffic calming measures in the town centre and villages	26	8%
Ameliorate the impact of increasing traffic, especially HGVs	26	8%
Resolve parking issues at the Health Centre	20	6%
Improve parking, pick-up/set-down at the railway station	14	4%
Pedestrianize e.g. Lower Street, West Street	10	3%
Improve facilities for wheelchair users	10	3%
Assess the impact of the A3 'rat runs'	4	1%

8 Young People

8.1 Introduction

Local schools were invited to take part in the schools Healthcheck questionnaire, designed specifically for young people. A total of 1171 questionnaires were returned providing a clear insight into the opinions of younger members of the community. Illustrations from pupils in the Primary age group showing things that would “make Haslemere a better place for young people” have been used throughout this document.

8.2 Economy

64.9% of respondents like living in and around Haslemere, however, only 13.4% would like to work there as an adult. This suggests a continuation of the commuter settlement character of the town, and that in-commuting and relocations will be required to continue to staff local businesses.

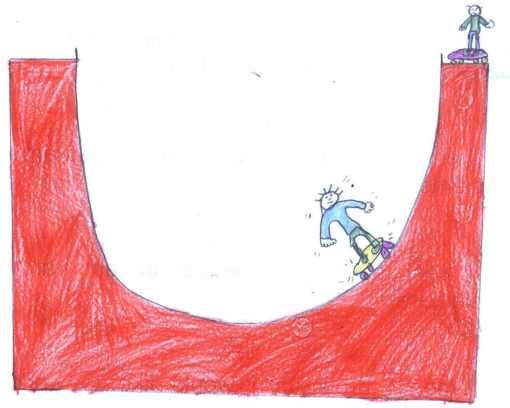
There appear to be opportunities for new business development to cater for young people, particularly in terms of clothing, fast food restaurant and toys.



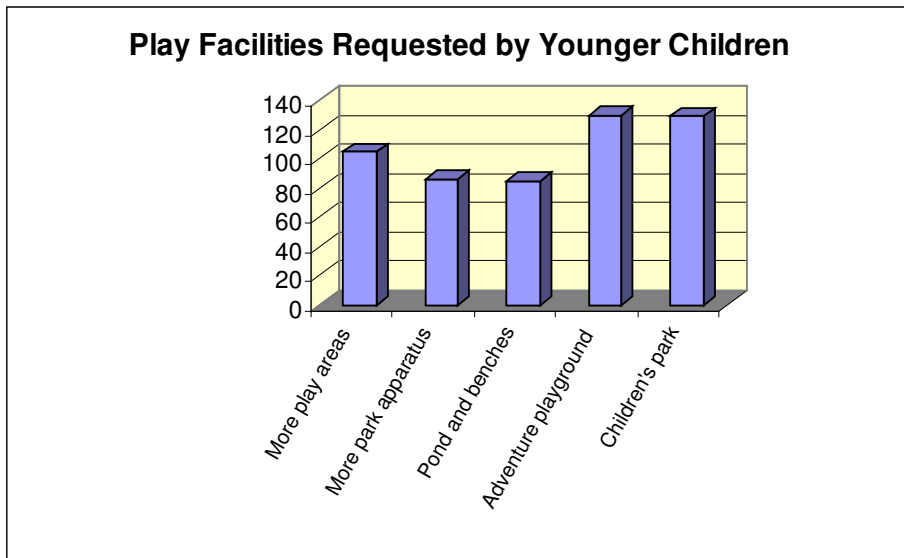
8.3 Social and community

There is also a significant group that feels that the available leisure facilities do not meet their needs. Just over 50% make use of the sports facilities. However, 241 respondents felt there should be more leisure/ fun things to do, and there were almost 2000 requests for leisure, sport, play and entertainment facilities/ activities. The most popular suggestions were:

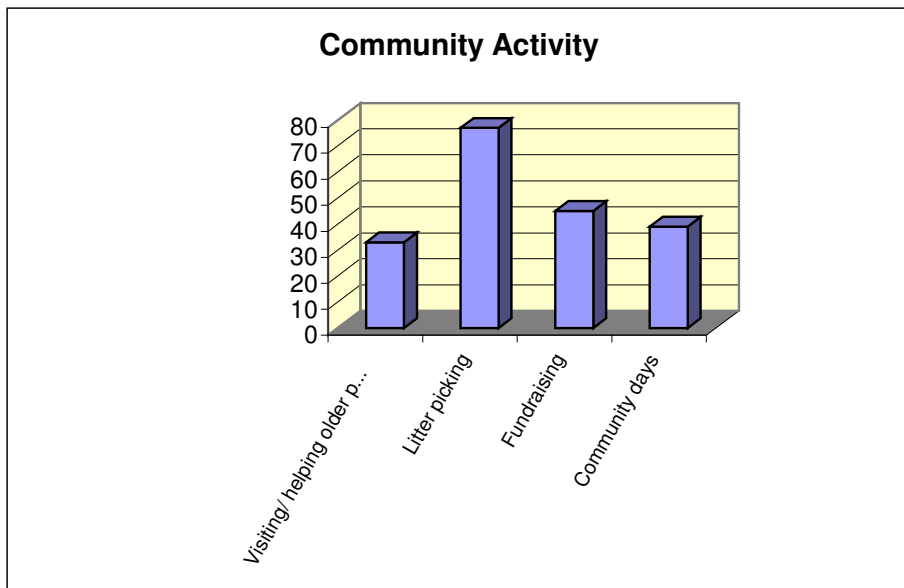
- ❑ Clubs
- ❑ Places for teenagers to 'hang-out' at night
- ❑ Cinema
- ❑ Under 18 nightclub
- ❑ Bigger and better skate park



There were also a significant number of requests for improved play facilities for younger children shown here:



There were various ideas for how younger people could contribute to the community in their own time, and suggestions of a community volunteering and awards scheme.

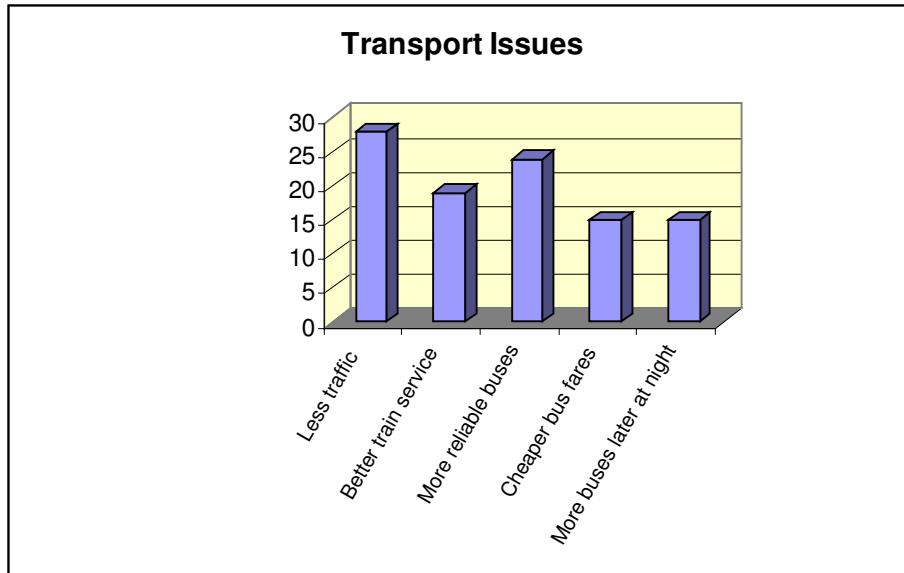


8.4 Environment

Environmental issues have a low representation, apart from the call for the reduction of vandalism and graffiti.

8.5 Transportation and Accessibility

Nearly half of the respondents use the bus regularly, and 32% don't. A postcode breakdown of these responses may provide a useful insight into these figures. More generally, the following needs on transport issues were raised:



The way forward.

The Healthcheck will remain a partnership between the funding partners and key stakeholders as the project begins the transition into the next stage that will focus on generating projects and plans and delivering them. The task group leaders will remain involved in the project. Community groups and organisations that have expressed interest in becoming involved during later stages will be encouraged so to do. In addition, the Steering Group has now employed a project co-ordinator to take operational responsibility for delivery. All the participants are adamant that community involvement remains high to ensure local commitment and 'buy in' to the projects and plans.

The Vision for Haslemere

In October 2003 the Steering Group organized a community meeting to work on The Vision statement for Haslemere. Using this as a basis, the following 'strap line' was produced:

Haslemere - a distinctive country town:

- Valuing the past
- Shaping the future by
 - Promoting the social, economic and environmental well being of the community.

This vision will be realised through the implementation of 7 main aims over the next 5-10 years and these will form the basis of the Action Plan that will be created during the beginning of 2004.

The aims are to:

1. **Develop a comprehensive range of businesses that reflect the needs of the community and support employment.**
2. **Increase the provision of affordable housing, to rent and to buy.**
3. **Increase community involvement and improve social inclusion.**
4. **Improve derelict and unattractive sites.**
5. **Safeguard Haslemere's environment and distinctive features.**
6. **Develop an effective transport infrastructure.**
7. **Improve the visitor economy.**

'The Health Check provides a unique opportunity' said **Bryan Farley (December 2003) Chairman of the Haslemere Initiative**, ' Firstly, to have a say in preserving all that is valued in this idyllic corner of Surrey; secondly, to plan for the future - for a community in which all can live, work and play in harmony with each other and those who pass through as visitors or on business'.

Quote from Michael Foster – Town Mayor 2003/4

"2004 will be an exciting year for the Haslemere Healthcheck. The public consultation, which was enthusiastically received, has been completed. Our Project Co-coordinator, Janet McWilliam, is now working in the town and we can move forward to develop projects to preserve our heritage and to enhance Haslemere for future generations".