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## Brentwood Town Centre Regeneration Strategy: Final Report

The Essex Design Initiative Exemplar Programme in  
partnership with Brentwood Borough Council

Working together to deliver high quality  
development in Essex



Brentwood Borough Council



Essex County Council

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## Dedication

This document is dedicated to the memory of Alan Cherry CBE DL, Honorary Freeman of Brentwood and first Chairman of the Brentwood Renaissance Group, who sadly passed away prior to its completion.

# Town Centre Regeneration Strategy

## 1 Principal aims

This regeneration framework has been prepared by Essex County Council's Built Environment Branch, together with Brentwood Borough Council and Brentwood Renaissance. This document represents the amalgamation of three separate reports which identified short, medium and long term opportunities for the town centre. (see appendix)

Each of the three draft reports have been presented to the Brentwood Renaissance Group and circulated to key stakeholders for comment and input in the early part of 2009.

### Status of this document

This document will contribute to the evidence base to underpin key elements of Brentwood Borough Council's emerging Local Development Framework (LDF); in particular the Core Strategy (which incorporates development management policies) and the Site Specific Allocations Development Plan Document.

This document contains reference to a number of projects already underway, showing how these fit around the overall strategy. This document will be able to be easily updated and revised when some of the aims and initiatives are developed further.



1	2	Three objectives for the regeneration strategy: 1) Protecting and enhancing the town's heritage and many listed buildings is a key element of this document. 2) The economic prosperity of the town is also a vital objective. 3) Supporting future development and enhancement programmes similar to the Crown Street project.
3		

## The principle aims of this document are to:

- Create a robust strategy for environmental and accessibility improvements for the town centre
- Identify general development opportunities
- Raise the profile of Brentwood

# Town Centre Regeneration Strategy

## 2 Foreword

Brentwood is a busy and densely populated commuter town with a rich history and heritage. Typically for a commuter town it faces heavy competition from neighbouring towns as a destination town centre and as such is seeking to establish itself as a place where people can both spend time and money. Brentwood Town Centre has undergone large scale highways enhancement to improve the town centre for all its users. This much needed investment provides a great opportunity to use the High Street works as a catalyst for further development and improvements.

Brentwood needs to rise to the challenge of the current economic pressures by establishing itself as a destination which appeals to new businesses. In the same respect, it is vital that existing businesses are supported and buy into the future visions of the town. Town and city centres in today's service orientated economy, have an increasingly important role to play in presenting the image of a successful place and attracting new investment. Businesses no longer simply want a suitable site and premises but also to relocate to areas that meet the amenity and social qualities for their employees and visiting clients. Similarly, local residents and visitors to the town want a town centre that offers a diverse range of activities, retail and leisure opportunities.

Brentwood is under pressure to accommodate more residential developments while maintaining and increasing town centre employment- as directed by the East of England Plan. The town centre needs to address all of these issues for its own survival and for the wider benefit of the Borough itself.

Nick Abbott  
Brentwood Renaissance Chairman

“local residents and visitors to the town want a town centre that offers a diverse range of activities, retail and leisure opportunities”



The listed tourist and information office located at the heart of the town.



3 Preface

The aim of a Town Centre Regeneration Strategy is to bring together all relevant documents, policies and guidance to help drive Brentwood Town Centre forward, re-establishing itself as a desirable place to live, shop and work. This document draws on national, regional and local policy to establish a set of principals and long term aims for a Town Centre improvement programme.

The principal driver for this document was the 'Brentwood Town Centre Vision: initial proposals' document produced by the Essex County Council's Built Environment Branch. This document reignited enthusiasm and interest in the potential of Brentwood Town Centre. A new group, Brentwood Renaissance, was formed, incorporating Brentwood and Essex Councilors, officers and local business leaders.

This document builds on the previous studies that have been commissioned for Brentwood and applies the findings to establish a new set of aims and objectives.

Although numerous consultation programmes have been undertaken for previous projects throughout the Town Centre, this document has been the subject of a consultation process for a six week period, during December 2009-January 2010 and has been amended in response to comments received.



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|---|---|
| 1 | 2 |
| 3 | 4 |
| 5 |   |
- 1) Developing safe cycling throughout the town
  - 2) Investment on the High Street
  - 3) Brentwood has a wide range of town centre offices and housing.
  - 4) Railway connections to London and the south-east help to attract investment and visitors.
  - 5) Town centre shopping offers a range of goods and services but could be greatly improved.

## 4 Brentwood Today

### Quality of Life in Brentwood

The quality of life is one of the key measures of establishing the success of towns and cities. It is also a way of attracting people and business, with people more aware of lifestyle choice.

The Council tested local residents' opinions about local quality of life in a major 'Place Survey' in 2008, which was undertaken independently on the Council's behalf by BMG.

The survey showed that the top five things residents said are most important in making somewhere a good place to live include:

- Low levels of crime
- Health services
- Clean streets
- Public transport
- Parks and open spaces

### Economic development

A strong local economy is vital for the success of a town centre. Brentwood's Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) objectives for economic development and the local economy include the following aims:

- Providing, where possible, for the needs of existing local businesses in order for them to remain viable and competitive.
- Facilitating the creating of new businesses.
- Facilitating the development of existing and new businesses.
- Assisting in the provision of advice and guidance for local businesses.
- Help in meeting the training needs of local businesses.
- Co-operating with other organisations and agencies involved in economic development.
- Working in partnership with the business community and business support agencies

### Retail and Leisure

Brentwood High Street has a typical range of national retailers which generally occupy the largest buildings. These anchor retailers are backed up with a mix of small independent local business. Brentwood currently attracts the middle to lower middle retail market, with very few higher end retailers. To change this, the town needs to improve its image, attracting more shoppers which will, overtime, develop the market for more specialist retailers.

Brentwood's current challenges have been highlighted as far back as 1999 in the 'Brighter Brentwood: Strategy for continued success' URBED report.

Brentwood competes locally with the retail centres of Chelmsford, Romford, Billericay, Basildon, Lakeside shopping centre and regionally with Bluewater shopping centre in Kent and London. To help Brentwood remain competitive as a retail destination, the town needs a major injection of vitality and quality, through improvement of existing facilities and co-ordinated new development.

In 2008, a planning application was submitted for a mixed use retail and leisure development, including a multiplex cinema, on land to the north of the High Street. This application represents the largest town centre development for many years and will provide an opportunity for the town to attract investment, additional retail opportunities and most importantly attract more visitors. However, it is vital that the development is integrated carefully into the town, not seen as a separate destination.

Brentwood, like many other similar towns has seen a growth in the bar, restaurant and café sector. These uses make up a significant percentage of the town centre shopping outlets. It is important to achieve an appropriate balance between the different shopping uses and for the Council to monitor and control this through its planning policies.

# Town Centre Regeneration Strategy

## Office

Employment within the Borough is very much concentrated in the service sector, which is mainly located in the Brentwood Town Centre, the Brentwood Station area and the Warley Business Park. There are however, seven industrial estates and numerous other smaller enterprises scattered throughout the Borough. Notwithstanding this, over 50% of the resident workforce commutes out of the Borough to work, particularly into London.

Brentwood is home to some major employers including Ford Motor Company, British Telecom, Countryside Properties Plc, Cleanaway Plc, the Anton Group, Océ UK Ltd, Mellon European Financial Services and Cox's Insurance to name but a few.

## Hotel

Premier Inn Hotels have recently moved into the town, representing a major success for a changing town. Town centre hotels rooms, bed spaces and other associated facilities are important for businesses and reflect the growing need and demand for over night accommodation.

## Residential

The town centre study area contains a significant amount of residential accommodation which has been added to in recent years, with large new developments located above the Bay Tree shopping centre and south of Hart Street.

The Borough is subject to considerable pressure for development for both housing and employment and increasingly for leisure and recreational purposes. Some 80% of Brentwood's housing is owner occupied, the majority of which has been built since 1945. Much of the older housing has been renovated and there are very few areas of poor quality housing in the Borough, although there is a need for more affordable housing.

Most of the identifiable large town centre residential sites have been developed. There is the potential to increase the provision of town centre housing through use of the upper floor levels above retail units. This could benefit the high street in many ways including upkeep of buildings, increased town centre use and surveillance against crime. Mixed use infill developments provide the best opportunity to maximise the sites commercial value for retail and residential town centre uses.



- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 1) Brentwood town centre has a wide variety of housing. 2) The new Premier Inn hotel. |
| 3 |   | 3) Café culture starts to develop in parallel with streetscape enhancement.           |



# Town Centre Regeneration Strategy

## Transportation

One of Brentwood's key assets is its accessibility to the main road and rail networks. However, traffic flows on the local road network are congested, particularly during peak travel times.

Brentwood's location, (close to the major roads of the A12, the A127 and the M25 motorway) is advantageous, but when there are problems and accidents on these roads, Brentwood becomes an alternative route for drivers. This compounds the already high local traffic movements at peak times.

There are no easy solutions to these issues, but the Council has been working closely with Essex County Council to explore improvements in the Town Centre.

The Brentwood High Street Area Transportation Study explored options to improve traffic flows through the Town Centre. Public transport issues have also been considered as part of the process.

Brentwood railway station is located a short walk from the High Street and has a frequent service to London taking approximately 30 minutes. Other regional centres such as Southend, Chelmsford, Basildon and Colchester are also easily reached by rail.

The town does not have a specific bus station hub; buses stop and pick up along the High Street, in both directions. This encourages the use of the services as they are direct to the destination.

## Pedestrians and cyclists

Cycle networks are limited throughout the town centre especially where cars predominate. Improvements to cycling, making it safe and easy, should, where appropriate, be a transport priority. The High Street has recently undergone a large improvement scheme increasing footway widths and making access easier for all users.

## Public transport

The current public transport network within the town of Brentwood is generally good, with additional services being trialed. New GPS and intelligent bus shelters are due to be installed in the High Street making bus transport information reliable and easily accessible. Any additional bus capacity, within the town centre would need careful consideration. The high level of vehicle congestion has a knock on effect for bus services.

Brentwood Railway Station and its forecourt is in need of large scale improvements. The surrounding public realm is narrow, cluttered and congested with bus stops, drop off points and taxi ranks all vying for limited space.

## Parking

Brentwood has approximately 1900 public car parking spaces. Pressures for further development and land values within a tightly constrained centre clearly places pressure on the provision of surface car parking.



Developing pedestrian friendly streets (Crown Street) is one way to reduce car use in the town centre.



# Town Centre Regeneration Strategy

## The historical town centre

Brentwood's medieval town centre was essentially ribbon development along the main road. As a planned town, there would have been regularly laid out plots initially of uniform size. The road, of Roman origin, was wider than today, having been encroached upon to varying degrees at varying times.

The High Street remains very wide as far as St. Thomas Chapel, after which it narrows appreciably to about 15m. The existence of 15th-century buildings on both sides of the street show that this had happened by an early date.

The medieval town had a very limited street plan, the most significant element being the market-place which led to the development of Hart Street, a back lane parallel to the High Street. This has survived the changes of the 20th century, and though the market infill origins of the area may no longer be readily apparent, the street plan has been respected by the new housing in Hart Street, the vernacular style of which has succeeded in giving something of a traditional market town character to this part of the conservation area.

Beyond the High Street, on both sides of the road lie a variety of small spaces and yards, these are known as 'backlands'. Backlands are a characteristic and archaeologically sensitive feature of historic town centres, but one vulnerable to unsympathetic use and development. Today, the back lands in the conservation area are almost entirely developed or have been reduced to yards used for parking.

The Local Plan contains policies encouraging the development of shops and frontages to the rear of the High Street. This would greatly improve the appearance of this area but there is little hint of it happening yet.

## The town centre

Retail fronts onto each side of the High Street, which is the principle shopping area. A few side streets including Crown Street and St. Thomas Road have smaller local businesses located along them. To the south of the High Street lies the Baytree shopping centre and to the north is the Sainsbury's supermarket.

## Public Realm

The High Street has been the focus of a large scale enhancement scheme lead by Essex County Council Highways. The High Street and two side streets, (Crown Street and St. Thomas Road) have been repaved and designed to improve the environment for pedestrians. This current upgrading of the key streets will inevitably raise expectations for some of the other minor town centre streets and pedestrian links. The pedestrian links and passages to William Hunter Way would be an obvious next step in improving the public realm.

## Accessibility and connectivity

The route to the railway station is less than ten minutes walk from the High Street, but is not initially obvious. The station is currently a poor gateway to the town and could be improved. Access from the railway station to the high street is less obvious.



High Street enhancement scheme, September 2009.

# Town Centre Regeneration Strategy

## Brentwood Today- summary

Brentwood Town Centre needs to improve its competitiveness, redefine its civic focus and become an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable centre. Brentwood is a small urban borough with relatively limited options for growth, but there is a wealth of opportunities to improve the town, attract business investment.

To ignite a Brentwood Renaissance that attracts more investment and increases the Town Centre's vitality, the following key points stand out:

- Public realm- establishing the catalyst for revitalising the Town Centre
- Shop front policy programme- using guidance, policy and funding for improvements
- Business liaison- engaging key stakeholders in investment opportunities
- Transportation and access- movement in and around the town centre
- Events and attractions- making the Town Centre more of a focus



### 5 Vision

Our vision for the town centre expands upon Brentwood's corporate plan mission statement, and is:

To conserve the qualities of Brentwood Town Centre while enhancing and improving the negative aspects of the function and appearance of the town.

To create a vibrant town centre which balances the requirements of retail, residential, office and leisure uses around an efficient network of public transport and a high quality High Street.

This vision can be divided into four key components; the public realm, retail and leisure, transport and new development.

These four areas are all inter linking factors in the renaissance of the town centre and the realisation of each is essential in achieving a successful regeneration strategy.

In implementing this vision, the following key principles should be followed to help shape and plan the renaissance programme for the town centre:

Create opportunities to attract new and retain existing businesses, customers, employers and employees. New **retail and leisure** developments will be attracted into the town centre, creating a vibrant and competitive location and designation. New development needs to be of a high quality that improves the town for long term success.

Create high quality, safe and pedestrian-friendly **public realm** that encourages walking and cycling where appropriate.

Develop a public realm that builds on the qualities and character of the new High Street improvements. Improve the legibility and movement patterns, making the town accessible to all ages, social groups and abilities both day and night. Reconnect spaces within the town including improving the links with the station to the High Street.

Improve sustainable **transport** connections around Brentwood and to the surrounding neighbourhoods. Enhance and define key gateways into the town centre. Encourage and establish sustainable transport alternatives to the car. Improve the railway station and surrounding forecourt. Develop a series of safe, direct and appropriately located cycle routes in and around the town centre, creating links to the station.

Assess, identify and deliver **new development** opportunities



# Town Centre Regeneration Strategy

## 6 Regeneration Strategy

This regeneration strategy draws on the emerging opportunities in Brentwood and translates the vision into a coordinated set of key aims and objectives. These are listed below.

- Residential, commercial and retail/leisure development opportunities
- Sustainable transport network
- Quality public realm
- Town centre shops and shopfronts
- Investment in Brentwood's Heritage

This document does not identify specific land allocations or development sites, this will be the role of the Core Strategy and Site Specific Allocations Development Plan Documents.

### Residential, commercial and retail/leisure development opportunities

- The proposals for a new cinema need to appropriately address how the scheme integrates with the town and the surrounding residential areas.
- Monitoring and controlling, through planning policy the effect of the night time economy on the town and its users.
- Review of the town's car parking strategy and potential development opportunities
- Review of the town centre capacity to identify unfulfilled or new development opportunities.
- Identify infill and other development site opportunities and ensure the most appropriate schemes come forward

### Sustainable transport network

- Station forecourt redesign and improvement
- Create high quality, safe and pedestrian friendly streets and spaces that encourage walking and cycling.
- Improve legibility and movement patterns for all users.
- Reconnect spaces within the town centre and reconnect it to the surrounding neighbourhoods.

- New dedicated cycle routes to key destinations around the town.
- Introduce cycle links to the railway station providing adequate secure and safe cycle parking as well as additional facilities such as lockers.
- Develop a wider cycle network (where appropriate and feasible) that connects the commercial centre to surrounding residential areas of the town and the other settlements in the Borough
- Expanding the High Street improvement scheme and pedestrian links could be improved else where in the town centre; in the town centre; especially William Hunter Way, Kings Road.
- Tackling the wider issues, symptoms and cures surrounding town centre car use, congestion and car parking.



Rope Walk, Liverpool. Improvements to the quality of the public realm was a key requirement for the regeneration of this part Liverpool.



# Town Centre Regeneration Strategy

## Quality public realm

**Aim: to create a unique sense of place to attract and retain residents, businesses, students, customers, employers and employees.**

The opportunity should be taken to look again at the spaces around the chapel ruin. This scheduled ancient monument should be the focal point in the High Street, but at present the Chapel ruins are like an inaccessible island, around which, people walk to access the Baytree Centre and surrounding shops. The area could have a piazza-like feel to it, but needs a greater sense of enclosure. There could be a role for public art here.

The alleyways on the north side of the High Street almost all require better treatment, whether to encourage public use of them or to improve the views down them. Most of the links between William Hunter Way and the High Street requires better quality surfacing and railings, whilst signs and other street clutter could be reduced. At the east end of the road, the yards and low outbuildings could benefit from trees, soft landscaping and better boundary treatment.

Following on from the success of the High Street improvement scheme a vision for the future development of William Hunter Way should be produced. William Hunter Way occupies an important but problematic position at the edge of the conservation area, and has an effect on its setting. It should be recognised that removal of traffic from the High Street undoubtedly raises issues for pedestrians and traffic on William Hunter Way.

The road lacks features of visual interest or which are human in scale.

Although care has been expended on its design and layout, both sides of it are unattractive, and the backs of the High Street buildings (which are within the conservation area boundary) are mostly very ugly: some could be improved relatively simply by better maintenance and good signage, whilst the yards and open spaces would benefit from soft landscaping and the removal of parked cars.

Some of the town centre's key side roads would benefit hugely from enhancement schemes, i.e. Moores Place, South Street, and Hart Street. Well designed paving schemes could improve the pedestrian environment, on car dominated roads. Scope for full pedestrianisation probably does not exist, but consideration should be given to closing access to Moores Place from the High Street. Through traffic makes it hazardous to pedestrians. In Hart Street, the asphalt pavements and road surface are in a dreadful condition and a scheme of block paving is shortly to be implemented. Block paving, which has been used on Crown Street, could be used for both pavements and the road, with stone detailing.



New Road, Brighton. The enhancement of this street has helped improve local business, encourage pedestrians and improve the night time economy, transforming the area.

# Town Centre Regeneration Strategy

## Town centre shops and shopfronts

Many of the conservation area shop fronts are of a poor design and fail to relate to the elevations above them. Often the signage is particularly inappropriate, with garish fascias and lighting.

No other single aspect of a building has such a significant impact on it and its surroundings as shop fronts and signage. As an illustration of this, there are a number of High Street buildings which have new shop fronts in a traditional style which contrast with the modern design of the elevations above them and indeed improve their appearance. This is particularly true of the restaurants, cafés and bars which have opted for a traditional style as something that is more welcoming to their customers.

Brentwood Borough needs to be more proactive in the application of the excellently drafted policies for shop fronts and advertising in its Replacement Local Plan.

There has been a proliferation of free-standing sandwich boards along the High Street and side roads which have started to blight the appearance of the street and restrict movement of pedestrians. This needs to be addressed.

## Investment and protection of Brentwood's Heritage

### St. Thomas Chapel

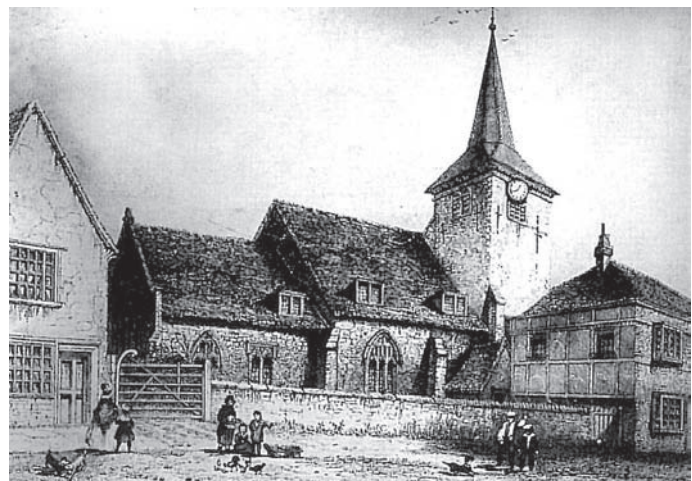
The remains of the Chapel of St. Thomas Becket are historically part of the most important site along the High Street. The current High Street redesign will provide the catalyst for potentially delivering an enhancement of the site and chapel ruins.

The Replacement Local Plan says that the Borough 'will seek to compile a list of buildings of local or historic interest' (para. 9.57). These should be buildings of good architectural quality, or associated with a noted architect or historic figure, and which make a positive contribution to

the appearance of the area in which they are located. There are a large number of buildings in the conservation area which satisfy these criteria. They include:

- The Brentwood School main building by Chancellor on Ingrave Road.
- Brentwood cathedral and associated buildings, i.e. Clergy House, the range of office buildings and Song School
- Wilsons Corner, a landmark department store
- Nos 1-23 High Street, a terrace of three-storey Victorian buildings dating from 1883
- Good inter-War years public houses in the High Street, the Lion and Lamb and the Swan.
- The Post Office in the High Street
- The former Burtons department store
- HSBC bank building of 1924

Reviewing conservation policy and looking to apply the findings of the Conservation Area Appraisal would help achieve some key aims in addressing and conserving Brentwood's heritage. The conservation area has been extended in four places following recommendations highlighted by the conservation area appraisal.



St. Thomas's Chapel, 1834.

The historic ruins and surrounding site could be enhanced to create a desirable destination and public space.

## 7 Development proposals

The following development proposals highlight a wide range of projects, each set around a short, medium and long term timeframe. Within this timeframe the development proposals need to be realistic, deliverable and well defined.

Short term proposals principally relate to the public realm and town centre buildings and appearance. Medium term proposals (2-6 years) seek to develop a robust sustainable transport strategy for the town, enhancing the historical heritage of Brentwood, reviewing and establishing the criteria for development opportunities within the town centre.

Long term proposals (6+ years) seek to realise a vision for the railway station. Transforming it into an appropriate transport interchange and a key gateway into Brentwood.

The timeframe for achieving these proposals is indicative but is arranged around the deliverability in direct relation to funding. Each proposal has been assessed against likely funding sources and delivery bodies, see section 8, page 17. The longer term proposals are unlikely to be feasible and/or viable at this stage, but have the potential to be so in the near future.

All of the following proposals are focused on the town area, as highlighted on page 14. This area represents the town centre and station area boundary as currently mapped in the Local Plan.

### Short term

#### Public realm strategy

On the completion of the High Street enhancement scheme it is important to build upon the success of the revitalise streetscape; identifying opportunities and priorities to maximise potential funding and investment. A public realm strategy should highlight detailed design plans for the town centre area.

The public realm strategy should outline how available funds should be allocated to specific projects, when, where and what criteria the improvements will follow.

The public realm strategy should ensure that there is no duplication between the delivery of separate public realm schemes, while ensuring that the strategy provides a robust set of design principles to follow.

The public realm strategy should be developed in partnership with a Public Arts strategy to ensure an integration of design for the public realm.

The strategy should incorporate the following set of headings:

- Street hierarchy
- Materials
- Lighting
- Street Furniture
- Planting
- Public Art
- Maintenance regime
- Street furniture audit

The strategy should be used for planning applications contributions, highways maintenance programmes and highways investment.



O'Connell Street, Dublin. This busy street manages to carefully combine all users and activity.

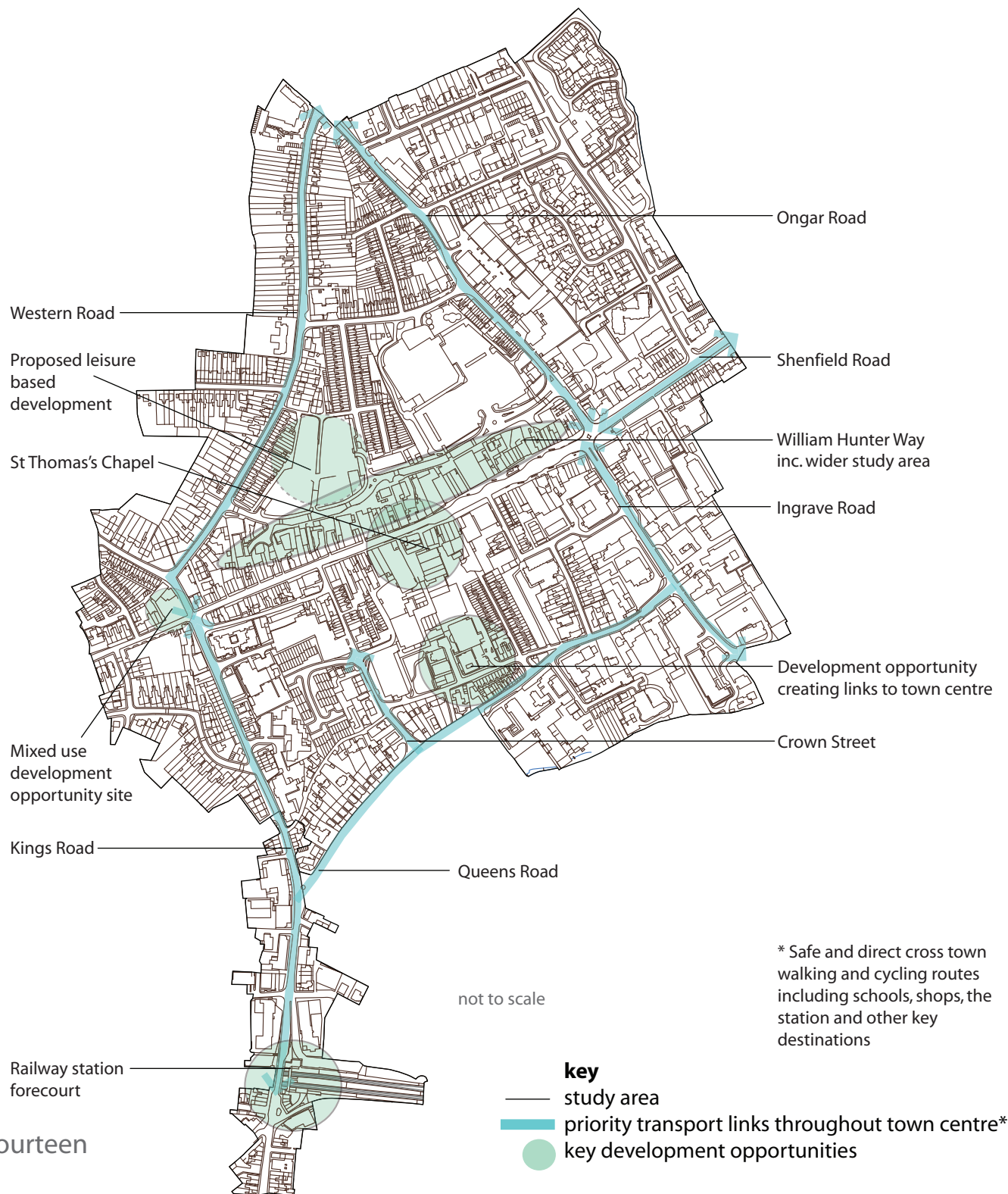


# Town Centre Regeneration Strategy

## Study area map

The key areas of focus are based around Kings Road and Queens Road to the railway station (including the railway forecourt), Hart Street, New Road, Hambro Road, and Coptfold Road. The William Hunter Way Car park proposals should be included to ensure that they link into the High Street.

In addition, it is important to also consider the maintenance strategy, to be developed in parallel to the strategy. This will ensure the investment made in the town centre will be suitably managed and maintained.





# Town Centre Regeneration Strategy

## Shop front guidance policy

Shopfront guidance has been produced and has been formally adopted by the Council as a Supplementary Planning Document in March 2010.

The guidance document incorporates the following headings:

- Planning process
- Shopfront application requirements
- Detailed design process
- Elevations
- Materials and colours
- Display
- Adverts, lettering, lighting and signs

The guidance document is straight forward and simple to understand and use, while addressing the key points above.

A template highlighting each design stage, including design principles and design solutions has been produced. The template makes reference to the importance of Design and Access Statements.

Understanding the constraints and opportunities of a site should identify what might be acceptable in the surrounding context and this forms a good basis from which to begin developing designs.

It is important to understand the wider streetscape. Any alterations or new shopfronts should be considered in the context of the wider street scene. Shopfronts should relate to each another in terms of scale and location. The relationship between individual properties can contribute to an overall streetscape character, which creates an environment attractive to shoppers.

The age/period of a building or a group of buildings can provide a positive basis from which to begin developing designs. This is especially relevant on historic buildings.

Where part of all of a shopfront is to be replaced or altered, a set of design stages or principles should be agreed and followed.

The design principles evolve from a response to site context and resolve some of the possible conflicts that might exist.

Having identified the relevant constraints and resolved any potential conflicts through the principles outlined above, appropriate design solutions should be established. Distinctive, original designs of high quality in terms of design, detailing and materials should be encouraged.

Sustainability elements should be assessed and reviewed, possibly by thermal imaging technology or specialist assessment.

Ref: Shop front Guidance for Brentwood Town Centre: First Draft



Shopfronts along Westbourne Grove, London. Carefully selected materials, details and considered streetscape design enhance the street, helping to attract shoppers and investment.

## Medium Term

### Chapel of St. Thomas- square

The chapel ruins stand halfway along the High Street on the southern side. It originally consisted of a chancel and nave with a tower in the north-west corner and porch on the north side of the nave opening on to the High Street. Only part of the west end of the nave and the north-west tower survives.

The ruins of the Chapel of St. Thomas Becket have had an element of restoration in collaboration with English Heritage. The building footprint survives but, some of these remains have been covered by vegetation making it difficult to understand the historical importance of the Chapel.

The following opportunities and constraints highlight the key issues:

#### Opportunities

- Opening of the space as a plaza/square
- Welcoming space
- Joined up approach with High Street
- Lighting of chapel ruins as a feature

#### Constraints

- Consecrated land
- Archaeological remains
- Limited budget may require additional funds

Ref: Chapel of St. Thomas Becket, Brentwood: an enhancement vision

### Town Centre Development opportunities

Brentwood town centre is under increasing pressure to improve the range and quality of development. Brentwood town centre is a small area with few current opportunities for new development. When new development opportunity sites become available, it is vital that the proposals respond to the town centre vision.

An example of a development opportunity site is located at the gateway to the town centre on the Kings Rd-High Street crossing. This site offers the opportunity to improve the gateway into the town centre. Sites like this, need to be developed to the correct mix of uses and provide a rare opportunity for new town centre development.

As other small infill development opportunity sites come forward it is important that they enhance the role, vitality and viability of the changing town centre.

### Sustainable Transport strategy

In association with Highways and Transportation a sustainable transport strategy needs to be produced for the town centre study area of Brentwood. The sustainable transport strategy needs to be developed to inform the LDF core strategy. Recommendations and options should be subject to a wider public consultation addressing the following areas below:

Cycle routes plan

Car park strategy

Congestion

Railway station interchange (long term)

National and local policies should be used to provide an evidence base to drive change and improve transportation issues throughout the town.

This commission needs a clear brief including steer and input from ECC and Brentwood Highways.

Ref: Delivering a Sustainable Transport System (DaSTS) and Towards a Sustainable Transport System: Supporting Economic Growth in a Low Carbon World (Department for Transport, 2007)

## Long Term

### Railway Station and forecourt

Brentwood's railway station represents a poor gateway to the town. The station itself, including the surrounding forecourt and public realm, needs to be the focus of an improvement and investment programme.

A development vision for the station and forecourt needs to demonstrate how the station could be improved for its users and as a gateway to the town.

The area to be incorporated as part of this improvement vision should include the immediate spaces that join the station forecourt, taking into account the adjoining land (including the taxi rank) and neighbouring buildings.

A public realm strategy should help feed into the place making process. Reviewing potential links from the station to the town centre, incorporating cycle and pedestrian routes; improving both accessibility to the town centre and creating a gateway into Brentwood itself.

Development of a range of retail units clustered around the station forecourt should be explored. Small units could be provided, catering for a range of uses and customers. Building a deck over the taxi rank would provide space for retail units and would make space for pedestrians and cyclists without adding pressure on the congested Kings Rd. This option should be explored as part of the feasibility study.

Opportunities for residential development around the station, could also be explored. Potential land, both to the north and south of the station could provide space for new residential lead development. Improvements into the stations transport interchange opportunities, namely buses, taxis and cyclists are critical in the successful transformation of the station forecourt area. Bus stops need to be carefully designed to enable increased capacity without

having a detrimental affect on the traffic flow along Kings Road. The current lack of space around the station results in a haphazard mix of uses and pedestrian flow.

The links to the High Street should be explored in the production of a sustainable transport strategy. This document should look at the effect and type of alternative transport arrangements and how they might be applied.

The integration of the public realm strategy with proposals for the station forecourt will provide a set of criteria and options for a variety of robust links for pedestrians and cyclists alike.

### William Hunter Way

Development along William Hunter Way will become more important as the proposed leisure development adjacent begins to take shape.

There is scope for new development fronting William Hunter Way backing onto the rear of the existing High Street shops.

The public realm will need to be improved and upgraded, specifically the connecting lanes through to the High Street.

An agreed approach for the changing future of William Hunter Way need to be agreed in a design and development brief, establishing a vision for the short to long term.

### Development opportunity linking High Street with southern town centre

Brentwood's main shopping arcade, the 'Baytree Centre' is located on a primary link route between southern town centre and the High Street. There is a opportunity to improve the pedestrian link through public realm interventions and development opportunities.

Current development options are limited but there is potentially scope for improving the setting of a number of listed buildings.

# Town Centre Regeneration Strategy

## 8 Programme and funding forecast

Project	Funding status	Delivery body	Timing
Shopfront Guidance Policy	Private investment English Heritage Brentwood Renaissance	Property Owners/ECC Brentwood Borough Council	Short term
Public Realm Strategy	Developer contributions from town centre development	ECC Highways/Brentwood Borough Council	Short term
Review of town centre car parking strategy	Local authority	Brentwood Borough Council Essex County Council	Medium term
Review of town centre capacity study	Local authority	Brentwood Borough Council	Medium term
Review and monitoring and controlling nighttime economy	Local authority	Brentwood Borough Council	Medium term
Sustainable transport strategy	Local authority	Brentwood Borough Council Essex County Council	Medium term
Investment in Heritage/ St. Thomas Chapel	Private investment English Heritage Brentwood Renaissance	Brentwood Borough Council Essex County Council	Medium term
Town centre mixed use development opportunities	Private investment	Developer/Land owner	Medium term
William Hunter Way- design and development brief	Local authority	Brentwood Borough Council	Medium term
Station Forecourt	Private investment Developer contributions Local Authority	Developer/Land owner Network Rail/ Brentwood Borough Council/ ECC	Long term
Development opportunity linking south Brentwood with town centre	Private investment Developer contributions	Developer/Land owner	Long term
William Hunter Way development and public realm improvements	Private investment Developer contributions	Developer/Land owner	Long term



## 9 Bibliography and Appendix

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