



PUTTING THE
VILLAGE BACK IN
PORTCHESTER



a VISION for the FUTURE

Portchester is a place with a thriving village community

Many residents have lived here all their lives and will stop to chat in Portchester Village Centre while visiting the shops, community facilities and the popular Wednesday market. We believe the Centre is an important place to bring people together and would like to see that continue. However, whilst acknowledging changing shopping trends and the need to adapt to the changing local residents and visitors' needs, we want to ensure it remains an attractive and vibrant area for the future.

We also feel the precinct could do with a makeover, having last been updated in the early 1990s. Many local businesses and residents have told us they would like to see the area improved. They have also said they want to keep the free parking and attract a wider range of shops.

We also believe that an updated precinct, with some limited residential development that builds on Portchester's character, will attract more people and some investment into the area; equally there are opportunities to attract more trade to the Village Centre, for example, from people who are visiting Portchester's iconic castle.

As a Council, we need to bring together all the people who can influence the modernisation of Portchester Village Centre to create a vision for its future. As a Council we have limited control over all of the possible improvements that could be made. So, we need to work together with everyone who can make lasting changes for the benefit of the local community, residents and businesses, as well as private landlords keen to safeguard their investment.

You have an important role too. If you shop, use its cafes, restaurants, services, and businesses then the Centre will flourish.

This draft vision marks the beginning of the process to improve the Centre and precinct. Over the coming months we are looking for your ideas for the long-term regeneration of Portchester. Within this document we are asking for your feedback on issues that we believe need addressing. We also welcome your views on anything else you think could lead to positive change for the precinct.

Change cannot be achieved overnight, but with involvement from the whole community including landowners and businesses, we can ensure Portchester District Centre continues to offer the best facilities.

Councillor Keith Evans
Executive Member for Planning and Development



“Over the coming months we are looking for your IDEAS for the long-term REGENERATION of PORTCHESTER.”

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PORTCHESTER: then, now and the FUTURE

“PORTCHESTER’S story begins back in the **THIRD CENTURY**...”

OVER
30,000
VISITORS
PER YEAR

The making of a historic village

Portchester’s story began in the 3rd Century when the Romans built a fort here to defend the harbour. A settlement grew around the fortifications and in the 13th Century the village was granted a market.

At the heart of Portchester is the Village Centre, which is where the retail, food and community facilities are found. The pedestrianised precinct forms the core of this Village Centre and was created when the busy A27 was diverted in 1974. In 1991 environmental improvements were made but since then there has been little work to update the appearance and feel of this central pedestrian area.

Portchester today

The two wards are on Fareham’s most easterly border and stretch from the waterfront to Portsdown Hill in the north. It is home to approximately 18,000 residents and is located two miles east of Fareham Town Centre.

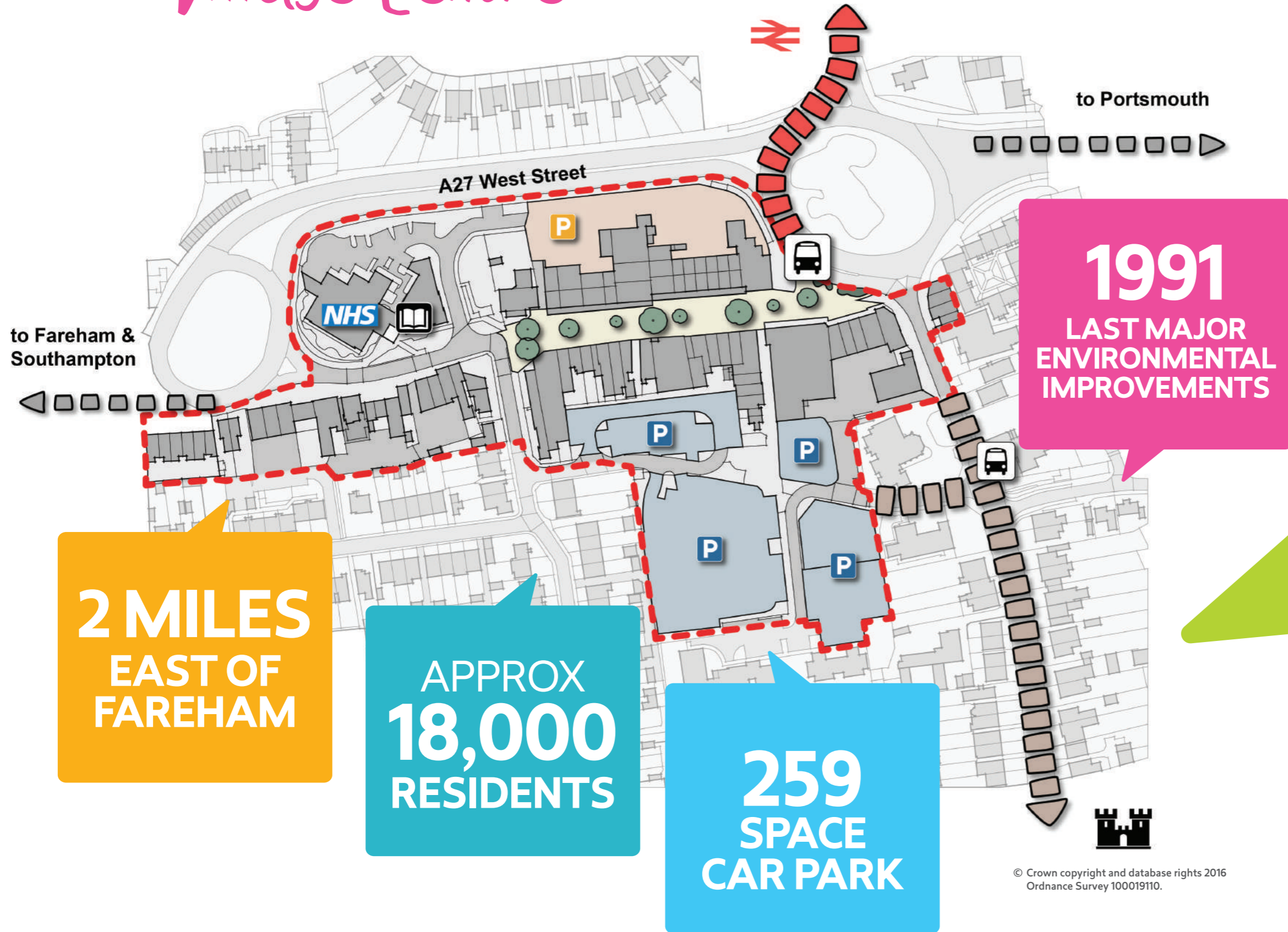
The Village Centre is a popular destination for local residents who not only visit the weekly Wednesday market but also the Centre’s shops and services. Research has shown that the precinct is reasonably well used. The Council-owned 259-space car park located to the south of the main pedestrian precinct is always busy and is up to 90 per cent full on market days. However, the dynamics of Portchester’s Village Centre have been changing and will continue to change.

Portchester Castle has now become a popular tourist attraction with more than 30,000 people visiting the Castle every year. However feedback from local traders suggests that visitors to the Castle do not visit the Village Centre.

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PORTCHESTER

Village Centre





“The timing is **RIGHT** for
a **Regeneration VISION**
for **PORTCHESTER...**”

Adapting to a competitive market

Portchester, Fareham and the wider region are experiencing the effects of growing populations, changing lifestyles and pressures on the household purse. There is greater competition between retailers and people are changing the way they shop, saving time and money by purchasing online and having goods delivered to their door.

In Portchester, the majority of people visit the Village Centre for short periods of time to top up their purchases rather than carry out a larger weekly shop. Those larger shopping trips are now often to bigger supermarkets, such as those found at Fareham Town Centre, Whiteley, Portsmouth and Southampton. This trend is set to continue as city and out of town shopping centres market themselves as destinations. The new Lidl store which opened towards the end of 2016 may further impact the Village Centre.

For all these reasons, the timing is right for a Regeneration Vision for Portchester that will encourage everyone to work together to ensure it continues to provide the best facilities to serve the local community.

“Most importantly we need the **SUPPORT** and **INVOLVEMENT** of the community”

Finding a way forward

A joined up approach is needed for modernising Portchester Village Centre and precinct. The Council has a vision for how this might be achieved - from creating a more attractive precinct and improving shop fronts to making the most of the free parking arrangements, encouraging new commercial and small scale residential developments. This will combine to improve what Portchester has to offer, build on the success of the Wednesday market and make the Centre more attractive. We want to explore this vision with you.

However, none of this can be achieved by the Council alone.

Whilst this document sets out the overall aims and ambitions we have to improve the precinct and wider Village Centre, it relies on a number of external partners including local landowners, business and Hampshire County Council, which owns and is responsible for the pedestrian precinct and the surrounding roads.

In times of financial pressures and budget constraints there is not much funding available to deliver these changes so we also need to work with developers to deliver some limited but appropriate development in the Centre which will bring investment into the area.

Most importantly we need the support and involvement of the community. This vision sets out how, when working together, we can improve Portchester Village Centre.

Who do we NEED to WORK with?



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What you have told us so far

Understanding the needs of the community is critical to ensuring we have the best plans in place for influencing and shaping the future of Portchester Village Centre. That is why we interviewed a number of local traders, businesses and landlords, as well as holding discussions with small groups of local residents in the summer of 2016.

From this early consultation we were able to identify some strong messages from the community...

Portchester
has community
SPIRIT

**FREE
PARKING
is KEY**

The centre
looks **TIRED**
and dated

The **PRECINCT**
could offer a
wider **VARIETY** of
SHOPS, CAFES and
RESTAURANTS

A **LIMITED**
amount of **HOUSING**
development in the
precinct could be a
GOOD idea

MORE could be
done to **ATTRACT**
people who were
visiting Portchester
CASTLE

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What did businesses in the precinct think?

During interviews, most traders and landlords told us they had seen both a reduction in visitors and in the range of shops during the past five years. While a number of traders had adapted well to the online marketplace, others had not.

Most businesses felt the Wednesday market was a good thing and helped to bring in customers. They thought more community events and public entertainment could attract people to the precinct. There was also a willingness from local business and traders to work together to help improve the area. In addition, the majority believed that new housing could help bring in more shoppers and make the village centre more vibrant.

The larger trees in the precinct were a common issue raised by businesses, with traders complaining of fallen leaves clogging their gutters and the roots damaging paving.

We've SEEN
a DROP in
VISITORS

There's been a
REDUCTION
in the range of
SHOPS

Wednesday
MARKET is a
GOOD thing

MORE community
EVENTS and public
ENTERTAINMENT
could ATTRACT people
to the PRECINCT

A number of TRADERS
have ADAPTED well
to the ONLINE
marketplace...
OTHERS have not

NEW HOUSING
could HELP bring in
more SHOPPERS

Fallen LEAVES
clog the
GUTTERS

The VISION for PORTCHESTER Village Centre

Your views shaping the draft vision

This initial resident and business consultation work has helped us to shape our draft vision for the Village Centre and precinct. We would now like to know what the wider public thinks. Please read the rest of this document and then tell us whether you think we are heading in the right direction.

A shared vision for Portchester

The Council has a vision to build upon the strengths of the Village Centre to create a clear community driven identity. The Council's aims are to work with the community, key partners (such as Hampshire County Council) and other organisations to improve the attractiveness and visual appearance of the precinct. We want to look at ways we can encourage more vibrant and active public areas that are easy to navigate and user friendly.

Apart from the Council car park, we do not own the land or buildings so our power to make changes ourselves is limited. Achieving an improved future for Portchester relies on key organisations and partners all working together.

With all this in mind this Draft Vision sets out our aspirations for delivering positive change for Portchester Village Centre.



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What we are trying to achieve and how

As a starting point, we have identified five key areas we could collectively tackle to improve Portchester Village Centre and its pedestrianised precinct.

Car Parking

Ensure the Council's free car parks meet the needs of shoppers and other key users of the centre

Events & Activities

Strengthen the Wednesday market, and encourage business and community run activities and events within the precinct

Shopping experience

Encourage local shops and businesses to improve their shop fronts, canopies and what they offer customers

Redevelopment

Encourage both private and public landowners to improve the look and vibrancy of the precinct through future redevelopment proposals

Visual appearance

Improve the attractiveness of the precinct for its users by working with Hampshire County Council who own and manage this area

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IMPROVEMENT 1:

Car Parking

A clear message from our early consultation work, including our parking surveys, was the importance of free parking that is easily accessible and within walking distance from the main precinct. Much of this is provided to the south of the precinct in the Council owned car park.

There is also a private car park to the north. The Council is keen to work with the owners to improve parking for the area but we do not have any power to make changes here ourselves.

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The Council's car park has a total of 259 free car parking spaces.

The majority (194) are designated as long stay parking, with 51 spaces designated as short stay. 14 other spaces are reserved for Blue Badge holders. In addition, lorry parking for 11 heavy goods vehicles is also available.

The CAR PARKS today

51
SHORT STAY
SPACES

14
BLUE BADGE
SPACES

11
SPACES FOR
LORRIES

194
LONG STAY
SPACES

259
SPACE
COUNCIL
CAR PARK

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Ordnance Survey 100019110.

In June 2016 we carried out a survey in Portchester's car parks (including the private car park to the north of the precinct) to find out how they are used and whether there is adequate free parking to meet the needs of people using the precinct now and in the future.

The result of this work showed that the Council car park is well used, particularly on market days when up to 90 per cent of spaces are occupied. We found most people (85 per cent) stay for up to three hours, nine per cent stay for more than three hours, and six per cent stay for more than eight hours. The latter were mostly shop workers, business owners and people using the community facilities. Less than three per cent of spaces were used by commuters or residents.

In terms of the lorry park, on market day all spaces were used, the rest of the week only five of the 11 spaces were occupied.

Despite the lorry park being full on Wednesday due to the market, less than half the vehicles parked here were associated with the market itself and were typically heavy goods vehicles.

“...the COUNCIL car park is WELL USED...”

6% OF PEOPLE STAY FOR MORE THAN 8 HOURS

90% OF SPACES OCCUPIED ON MARKET DAY

LESS THAN 3% OF SPACES USED BY COMMUTERS OR RESIDENTS

85% OF PEOPLE STAY FOR LESS THAN 3 HOURS

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Our parking survey confirmed that the car parks were well used, but also showed us that the allocation of long stay spaces is much greater than required. We also have too many lorry parking spaces which could otherwise be used by shoppers visiting the Village Centre.

We propose changing the car park layouts to increase the number of free short stay parking spaces closer to the shops. We would include dedicated parking for Light Goods Vehicles as the existing lorry park would close.

30
EXTRA
FREE
PARKING
SPACES
BRINGING
TOTAL TO
289

INCREASING SHORT
STAY SPACES
FROM **51** TO
189

REDUCING LONG
STAY SPACES
FROM **194** TO
82

INCREASING BLUE
BADGE HOLDERS
FROM **14** TO
18

SPACES FOR
7
LIGHT GOODS
VEHICLES (LGV)
SO TRADERS HAVE PARKING
FOR MARKET DAYS

Next steps

We are keen to talk more with local groups and organisations, including market traders, on how they feel about these proposed changes which will mean moving the short stay parking closer to the Village Centre and making changes to the lorry park. Once we have your feedback on this and the other proposals in this document we will create a final Vision. If this does include proposed changes to parking in Portchester there will need to be further consultation on a Local Parking Order in Autumn 2017.

We propose changing the car park layouts to increase the number of free parking spaces available.

What do **YOU** think?

IMPROVEMENT 2:

Potential redevelopment opportunities

The local community plays a vital role in a place like Portchester. Residents living in and around the Village Centre contribute to the visitor numbers and vibrancy of the precinct. However, footfall is declining. So we want to look at ways to change this and bring investment to the precinct and Portchester Village Centre as a whole.

New shops, businesses and housing can all generate increased investment and further improvements to the appearance of buildings. Development can also help in meeting the need for new housing in Portchester.

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Changing consumer habits

Many village and town centres across the country have declined in recent years in the face of recession and competition from both out of town retailing and the internet.

Adapting to change

Some retailers are adapting to the change in their customers' shopping habits. However, we have increasingly seen businesses that have not been able to respond quickly to these changes closing down and leaving shop units empty.

The Government is trying to make things easier for developers by allowing them to change a shop unit's use, in certain instances, without first needing planning permission from the Council. Where empty shops occur we want to be able to explore other uses of the units with shop owners and businesses in the precinct. Alternative commercial, leisure or community uses may also contribute to improving the vibrancy and activity within the precinct. Such uses could be cafes and restaurants, offices, education or training centres, or community group spaces.

We understand that people may have concerns about the impact of development, no matter how small scale, on existing services. We would continue to work with partners to help ensure services meet demand.

*“Some **RETAILERS** are **ADAPTING** to the **CHANGE** in their customers' shopping **HABITS**”*



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Redevelopment opportunities

Reconfiguring the Council car park would provide 30 new spaces and releases the area at the back of the Co-op store for potential redevelopment. As well as new flats, more commercial space could be created on the ground floor. This would improve the space between the car park and main pedestrian precinct.

As part of this we could also look at ways in which the area around the bottle bank and bins could be improved, as well as the public toilets.

Other recent changes to Government planning rules mean space above shops can sometimes be converted into flats without the need for planning permission. The Council has discussed this opportunity and the potential for some extensions above existing buildings with some private landowners. If done in a coordinated and well-designed way this could help bring further footfall and investment into the Portchester area.

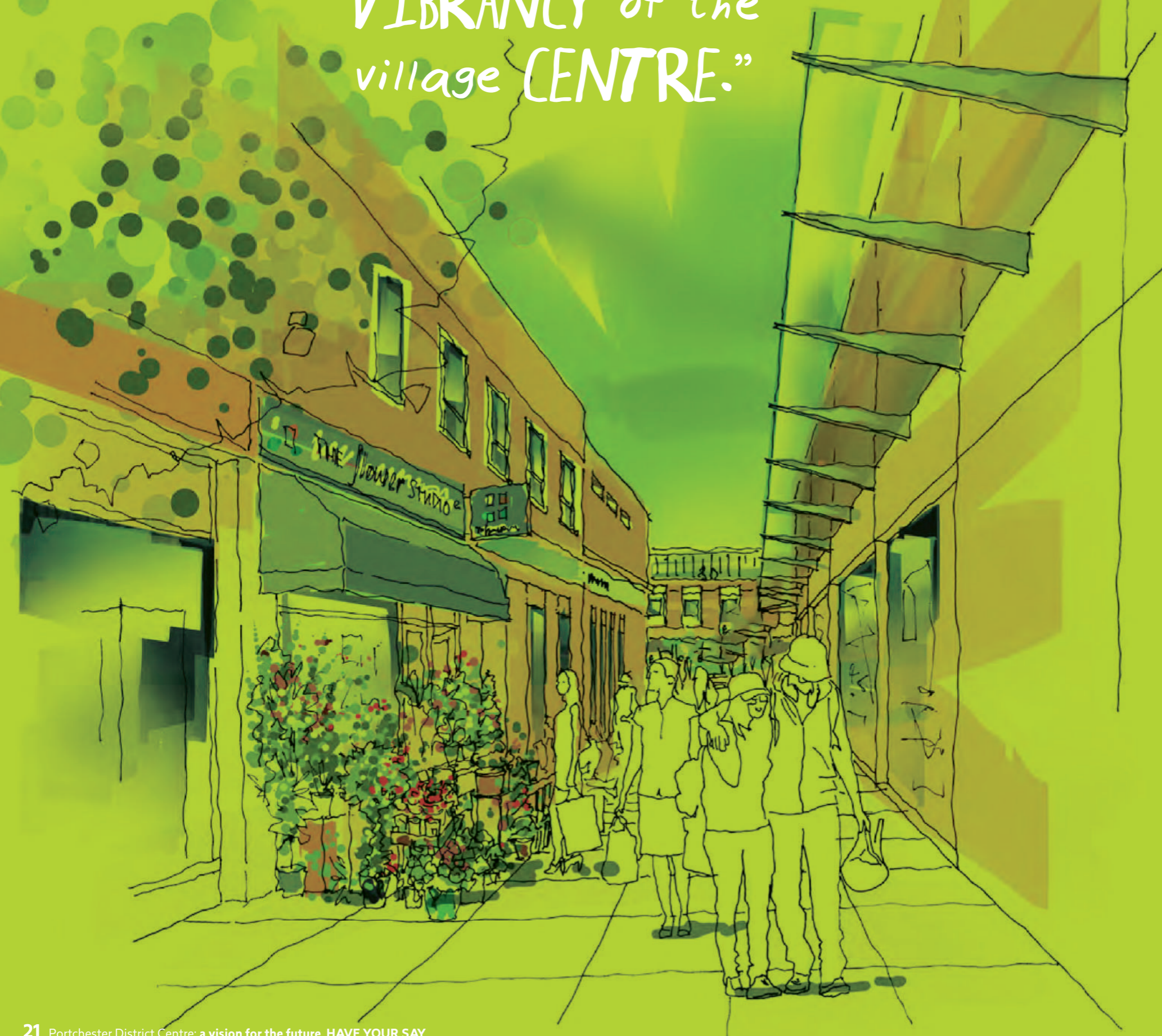
SPACE ABOVE
SHOPS CAN
SOMETIMES
BE CONVERTED
INTO FLATS



“..more **COMMERCIAL**
space could be **CREATED**
on the ground floor.”

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“...maintain the VIBRANCY of the village CENTRE.”



How might empty shop units and redevelopment be used to make improvements?

We will encourage shop owners, businesses and organisations to fill empty shop units as they arise in the main pedestrian area to maintain the vibrancy of the Village Centre. Outside of this area we will be encouraging non-commercial use for shops if they become empty. This will be achieved within existing planning rules.



Next steps

Your feedback will help inform the scale and size of the redevelopment that we will be discussing with developers and landlords within the Village, both in terms of new builds and changing the use of empty shop units. It will also be taken into consideration in the Local Plan Review, which the Council uses to plan potential development and residential development sites throughout the borough.

We would like to encourage more housing in the precinct (such as flats above shops)

What do **YOU** think?

We want to encourage some shop units outside the main precinct area to be used for other purposes if they are vacant

What do **YOU** think?

IMPROVEMENT 3:

Visual appearance

3

When you visit Portchester Village Centre and precinct it can be difficult to know you've arrived.



How the Village Centre and precinct look today

The majority of roads and pavements in and around Portchester Village Centre are owned and maintained by Hampshire County Council.

The precinct and pedestrian footpaths are made up of grey paving slabs, red block paving or black tarmac surfacing which are all starting to look tired and worn. The pedestrian routes to the precinct from the east and the west could be improved as well as the pedestrian crossing from Castle Street. There is also a lack of attractive signage directing people to the precinct.

The trees in the precinct have grown to a size where the roots are starting to push up parts of the paving, causing trip hazards. They are also difficult to maintain and are blocking the view of CCTV cameras. Large planters on the eastern end also obscure the precinct from the A27.

There are railings around the Village Centre, the roads and subways. Some are needed for safety reasons, while others are not and just look untidy. Some are in poor condition and are beginning to rust.

At night the precinct is lit by standard highway lamp columns. The lanterns are not particularly attractive or well arranged. Some columns have their light limited by the precinct's trees.

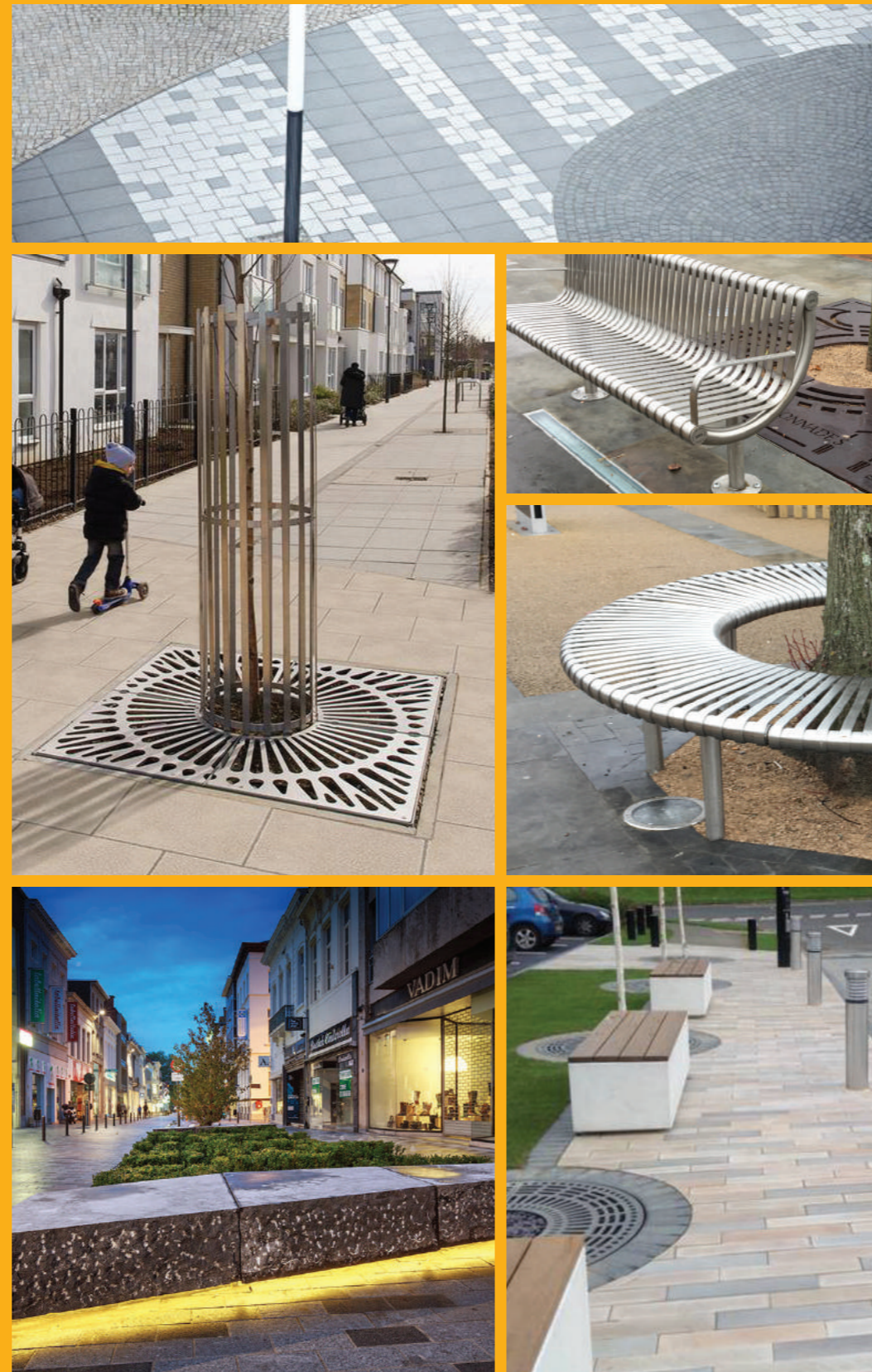
“...the **ROOTS** are starting to **PUSH UP** parts of the **PAVING**...”



“Some **RAILINGS** are in **POOR** condition and are beginning to **RUST**”

The Council is currently in discussion with Hampshire County Council to look at ways we can possibly improve this public space. Our ambition is to undertake some of the following works.

“...maintain the **VIBRANCY** of the village **CENTRE**.”



Above images for illustration purposes only

How can the appearance of the Village Centre and precinct be improved?

- Improve the ‘gateway’ entrances to the main precinct area from both the east and west on the A27 to create a sense of arrival
- Repave precinct surfaces and footpaths using attractive, durable, low maintenance materials
- Enhance the pedestrian routes to the precinct from the car park
- Add clear signposting to the precinct from main roads, local attractions and amenities such as Portchester Castle and the Railway Station
- Remove the large trees along the pedestrian precinct that are causing damage to the paving. We could introduce a new planting scheme with some small varieties of trees or shrubs in colourful planters or tree pits that are easier to maintain
- Look at ways that seating, refuse and recycling bins, and interesting street furniture and features could also be integrated
- Review the need for railings in some areas around the precinct. Replace those that are necessary for health and safety purposes and remove others
- Improve the layout of pedestrian lighting so that it is attractive and distinct to the precinct but also improves safety for shoppers

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Next steps

Your comments and views on the proposed improvements to the Village Centre's visual appearance will help us create the Final Regeneration Vision for Portchester.

We also need to talk to local groups and organisations, including the market traders, about their requirements in this area. Once we know the local priorities for improvements we can talk to Hampshire County Council about what we are able to do based on the funding available.

This will lead to further consultation on an 'environmental improvements scheme'. Our aim is for this to take place by the end of 2017.



Do you have any comments about the possible public space improvements?

What do **YOU** think?

Thinking about the Council's proposals to work with Hampshire County Council to improve the look of the Village Centre; we want to know what your priorities are.

What do **YOU** think?

4

IMPROVEMENT 4:

Events and activities

“One of Portchester’s
STRONGEST draws is the
Wednesday **MARKET**”

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“More **EFFICIENT** use of the precinct space will give the **OPPORTUNITY** to **ATTRACT** a wider selection of stalls.”

A thriving weekly market

One of Portchester’s strongest draws is the Wednesday market. We know from our parking survey that more people visit the precinct on this day than any other. We can see there are opportunities to build upon the success of the market to attract more people to the precinct not just on Wednesdays but throughout the week.

How might Portchester’s market success be built upon?

Proposals to improve the visual appearance of the precinct and remove the larger trees will allow for the space to be reorganised, particularly for market days. More efficient use of the precinct space will give the opportunity to attract a wider selection of stalls.

Community groups and organisations could be encouraged to use the precinct on other days of the week. Fareham Town Centre has already benefitted from hosting events in its central pedestrianised area, particularly during school holidays when children’s activities have been arranged. This could also work in Portchester Village, improving the attractiveness and liveliness of the main pedestrian area and encouraging the local community to visit.



Next steps

Your comments will help us draft the final vision document by telling us what our priorities should be for attracting new stalls and traders to the Wednesday market. We also need to talk to local groups and organisations, including the market traders, about their requirements in this area.

Any work to improve the appearance of the precinct will consider the needs of the market and any capacity for more stalls and businesses. We will be talking to Hampshire County Council about what environmental improvements are possible within limited budgets and we will consult again with residents before the end of 2017

We will also begin talking to community groups and organisations to see if they wish to use this space on other days of the week.. Licenses and permissions from the Council, key partners and the wider community may be required dependant on the event.

What other stalls or retailers do you think would benefit the Wednesday market?

What do **YOU** think?

Do you think having community events and/or community groups in the pedestrian public areas will improve the vitality of the precinct?

What do **YOU** think?

IMPROVEMENT 5:

Shopping experience

5

Many of the shop fronts in Portchester precinct and along the main pedestrian walkways look outdated.

The precinct shopping experience today

The shop canopies in particular look old fashioned, have a cluttered appearance and detract from the shop signage and frontage displays. If these were replaced with new modern ones we think this would have a positive impact on the appearance and perception of the precinct, helping to increase trade.

While there are a few tables and chairs outside some businesses in the precinct, more could be done to create a café culture and add to the vibrancy of the area.



“...**MORE** could be done to create a **CAFE CULTURE**.”

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“...**IMPROVE** the visual appearance of the **SHOPS** and attract a greater level of **VIBRANCY** and interaction along the **PEDESTRIANISED** area.”

How can the shopping experience be improved?

As part of our early consultation process we have spoken to many of the local businesses and traders in and around the precinct. Feedback from these early discussions is that traders understand they will have to work with the Council to see any tangible changes to the precinct. As part of this vision we want to continue to engage with private land and business owners, along with Hampshire County Council, to look at how the shop fronts and canopies can be updated to modernise the appearance of the precinct.

The Council's ambition is that by working with the community and with developers interested in creating some limited new housing we can improve the visual appearance of these shop fronts.

The Council also believes that there may be opportunities to attract new businesses into the area, such as restaurants and cafés. The Council wants to look at ways that more outdoor seating, tables and chairs can be introduced in the precinct subject to the appropriate licences. The intention is that this will help improve the visual appearance of the shops and attract a greater level of vibrancy and interaction along the pedestrianised area.



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Next steps

We will continue to discuss what opportunities there are to improve shop fronts with land and business owners and Hampshire County Council. These improvements will be informed by what level of redevelopment and investment is proposed in terms of potential new homes and attracting new business into the precinct.

Your feedback will help us create planning polices, which set out how we intend to encourage and direct development in and around Portchester Village Centre. Some of this will be included in our forthcoming Local Plan Review and, potentially after that design guidance for Portchester.

Would replacing the existing shop canopies help improve the look of the precinct?

What do **YOU** think?

Do you think having more outdoor café and restaurant seating will help increase the vibrancy of the precinct?

What do **YOU** think?

