

Tenterden into the Future

What kind of place do you want your town to be - now and in the future?

- **SEE** what a systematic "healthcheck" has identified as key issues
- **TELL** us whether you agree - What do **you** think are Tenterden's strengths and weaknesses?
- **TELL** us what's important to **you**, for the future "health" and prosperity of the town

This is about
the future for
Tenterden



We're looking for your comments

This display looks at how well Tenterden serves the needs and wishes of the people who live in or visit the town, including those in surrounding communities.

It identifies some key issues, which are summarised here for your comments.

We need you to tell us whether we have focused on the right areas, whether we have missed some, and which are most important to **YOU**.

We also need you to say what kind of town **you** want Tenterden to be.

Appendix 3 - Exhibition boards used for the Community Day



Focus on The Environment

The town has a strong and distinct character all of its own, reflecting its history and rural setting.

The historic core is of outstanding architectural and townscape quality, and is a vital component of its unique image and identity.

In reality, the rich mix of buildings and uses is the result of centuries of adapting to change. Tenterden has, thus far, largely avoided the depressing "cloning" effect evident in so many country towns.

But we can't afford to take it for granted. The accelerating pace of change, the different lives we lead and the growth of traffic all bring challenges needing careful management, if Tenterden is to remain a satisfying place to live and visit.

Focus on The Environment

Heritage assets -

The town has many fine medieval and Georgian listed buildings, tree-lined Greenways and an appealing mix of houses, shops and public buildings. However, there is no clear focal point and much of the High Street is cluttered with signs, parking signs and signage that are out of character.

How should we improve the appearance of the High Street to provide an appropriate setting for our public and historic buildings?

Dealing with pressures for growth -

Recent development of Tenterden has consisted of ribbon development off the main High Street, especially the A25 and the B2080. As a result, there is a sense of sprawling suburbs. Many residents no longer live within walking distance of the town centre.

How should we accommodate the expected long-term pressures for housing without destroying the town's character and setting?

High landscape value -

Much, but not all, of the countryside around Tenterden is protected for its outstanding natural beauty or is designated as special landscape areas.

Which areas of countryside do YOU regard as especially important for their landscape significance, nature conservation or their contribution to visitor interests?

Improving the environment -

There are unattractive and neglected areas around the town, including some off the lanes, behind the High Street, and areas beyond the town centre.

Which areas in your opinion are in need of improvement and how? What about your own neighbourhood?

Town's "gateways" -

The town's character also depends on its setting and close relationship with the countryside, which comes close to the town centre. There is a gradual change on the main approach roads to the "gateways" to the town. Tree-lined verges and large houses set back from the road are interspersed with fields and open spaces.

Are there clear boundaries between the town and the countryside? How can we maintain and improve the "gateways" to the town?

Links to the countryside -

Views of the countryside from the town, and of the town centre from the surrounding countryside, are important to the town's identity. One of the attractions of the town is the ease of access on foot and by cycle from the town centre to the surrounding countryside.

What is your favourite walk/route out into the countryside? How would you encourage greater use of access into the countryside?

Focus on The Local Economy

There are more than 500 businesses in Tenterden, but only four employ more than 100 people. All of them are being asked for their opinions.

The retail sector taken as a whole is important, but the maintenance of an attractive environment depends on a strong economy. Historic buildings, that are the essence of the town's attraction, need viable uses.

There are a wide variety of shops and services in Tenterden - more than would often be found in a town of this size. It has also been successful in maintaining more or less full occupancy of the 120 or so units. New shops include the arrival of a number of national names.

However, businesses will only come (and stay) where there is real demand.

Tourism in all its forms contributes greatly to the economy of the area.

Focus on The Local Economy

Employment -

The unemployment rate is generally low, and jobs are spread over a wide area, growing "all the year" in some areas means that firms can find it difficult to recruit the right people. There are a large number of small and medium-sized businesses around the town, but few premises available if local firms wish to expand.

How best to meet employers' skill and labour needs and match job opportunities to the local workforce?

Retail and services -

Tenterden offers a wide range of shops and services, but it is a tough environment, especially for independent shops. Viability depends on local consumer habits and how well actually shop.

How can the town best maintain its role as a focus for day-to-day shopping and as a "destination"? Do you like having the market, and do you use it?

Changing shopping habits -

The last few years have seen the arrival of more national chains, and the development of supermarkets. Further afield, there is fierce competition from other centres, all of which are seeing major investment.

How have your shopping habits changed, and would you like to see more national shops come to the town?

Tourism and visitors -

The attractiveness of Tenterden to visitors is a key strength. With major attractions in the town and nearby, and the ambience of the town centre, Tenterden and its businesses are well placed to capitalise on revenue from visitors.

How best to coordinate the complementary assets of tourism and the town centre, and improve the experience for visitors? What is needed to sustain this important aspect of the town's economy?

Events and accommodation -

There are regular events at East & East Green Railway and at the Green Barns Centre, the Fair Festival, Outdoor and Heritage Shopping in Tenterden and the major shows.

How can the local events programme be strengthened, and the town capitalise on nearby major events such as at Chert Hills? Is there a need for more accommodation?

Training and education -

The town has good educational facilities, but vocational training and further education is mainly further afield, difficult for those on low incomes. In areas of low employment, retraining needs can often only be met by improving skills.

Are the training and education on offer suitable for your needs, as users and employers? If there are gaps, where are they?

Focus on Key Issues



Looking at each area in turn, we pose a number of simple questions.

Everyone has their own perceptions. Please use the post-it notes to comment on the issues that interest you most.

This is in no sense an "official" view, but represents the consensus of the working groups.

The Tenterden Town and Rural Partnership currently has a Steering Group of eight, representing the Weald of Kent Preservation Society, the Chamber of Commerce, Tenterden Town Council, Tenterden and District Residents Association, Ashford Borough Council and local business. If you would like to get involved in the work of the partnership, you would be welcome. Let us know.



This exhibition has been put together by the Tenterden Town and Rural Partnership, with the help of funding from the Channel Corridor Partnership and Kent County Council



The "Healthcheck"



The "Healthcheck" has taken a systematic and fresh look at the town.

Following a series of public meetings, nearly forty volunteers came forward for working parties last year, people with local and specialist knowledge.

Together they have built up a picture of all aspects of life in and around the town - not yet a "diagnosis", nor a plan; this needs your contributions.

They have looked back at work already done, and brought it up to date. Their conclusions are summarised under four main headings:

- * The Environment
- * The Local Economy
- * Social and Community
- * Transport and Accessibility



What Next?

HAVE YOUR SAY

We're asking:

- In each of the four areas of the healthcheck, **which of the key issues are most important to YOU?**
- What's **your vision for the future Tenterden?** How would you describe it, in a few words?

The next stage is to build an action plan around **YOUR** vision and **YOUR** priorities, something that can lead to **ACTION** - influencing the local plan, and a basis for funding bids, with evidence of need.

What Next?

STAY INVOLVED

We will be asking the working groups to take the lead on the action plan, taking into account what people have said - including the special consultations with businesses and with young people.

If you'd like to take part, **let us know. Sign up for the workshops, on the sheets provided.**

Please return your questionnaires by 31 May - don't forget that you can win our Prize Draw!

Thank you for your time.