

# Section 5

## The plan preparation process, and what people said

### The Process and the Players

- 5.1 The Tenterden Town and Rural Partnership started its work in Spring 2004, when the Healthcheck was launched at an open meeting and volunteers came forward. It formed a Steering Group composed of key players and interested parties and, after a lengthy process of acquiring funding, appointed a part-time coordinator in November 2004. The role of the group was initially to act as an informal short-term group that would meet during the lifetime of the healthcheck process, to oversee it, to get involved, and to seek the involvement of others.
- 5.2 The Tenterden Town and Rural Partnership currently has a Steering Group of ten, representing the Weald of Kent Preservation Society, the Chamber of Commerce, Ashford Borough Council, Tenterden Town Council, Wittersham Parish Council, Tenterden and District Residents Association, the Leisure Centre Trust and local business.
- 5.2 The group appointed its own chair, and it was the role of individual representatives to ensure that they did report to their sector/ organisation and seek feedback - and tried to involve others as much as possible in the processes or events. The idea was that working groups would involve a good cross-section and mix of local and expert knowledge
- 5.3 Members of the group agreed to lead four working groups, based around the four areas of the Healthcheck, and these began work over the winter of 2005. A list of the organisations and individuals involved is included as **Appendix 1**.
- 5.4 As part of the initial work, the steering group and each of the working groups went through a “big issues” exercise, to identify what they thought might be the issues arising out of the healthcheck,
- 5.4 Each of the working groups was asked to complete the worksheets, as far as they were able, to share the results, and then to identify what they thought might be the half dozen or so key issues that arose in each of the four areas. The consultation process that followed would then focus on asking whether these were the same main issues as concerned the wider community, and which ones were most important to them.
- 5.5 A special workshop session was held with Parish Councils, supplemented by a questionnaire on the main concerns for the rural communities, and the extent to which they looked to Tenterden for services and facilities.
- 5.5 The “key” issues were turned into direct questions, to invite views and opinions. A specially produced leaflet and questionnaire listed the main points, and were widely distributed - through an insert in the Borough Council’s “Ashford Voice” magazine, on the Borough web site and through free-standing versions put out through the Library, own Hall and local shops, as well as through local organisations and the Parish Councils. Copies of these documents are included in **Appendix 2**. A prize draw was offered, to encourage participation. An online version of the questionnaire was offered, and used by a small number.
- 5.6 At the same time, separate questionnaires were being organised by Home-wood School on what young people would like to see (**Para 5.24, Page 58**), and another questionnaire was distributed by post to 550 local businesses, focusing on issues of skills, premises and recruitment (**Para 5.23, Pp 55-57**).
- 5.7 Also at the same time, the co-coordinator and members of the Steering Group continued to talk with key players and with local groups, including the Town Council and the Residents’ Association

5.8 On 21<sup>st</sup> May 2005, the Partnership organised a “Community Day”, with an extensive exhibition of the healthcheck findings, key issues and questions, fully illustrated with photographs, and with facilities for commenting on “post-it” notes on the four topics of the healthcheck as well as on key issues. The exhibition material is included as **Appendix 3**.

5.9 The community day was well attended, with 200 people, and provided a lot of feedback, from questionnaires, post-it notes and discussion. People were also invited to a series of follow-up sessions of the working groups, at which the results would be fed back and the priorities for the Action Plan worked out.



## What people said was important to them – analysis of comments

5.10 The exhibition and questionnaires posed a number of questions, some of the most important being:

- Of the issues identified in each area, which are most important to YOU ?

- If you had to pick just two issues, one important for the short term and one for the future, what would they be?

- What kind of town and community would you like Tenterden to be in the future?

- What are your views on the specific issues identified in each of the four areas of the healthcheck?

5.11 The main themes and priorities for the draft action plan were derived directly from the responses to these questions, and from a range of informal discussions by the working groups and steering group.

5.12 The following pages contain an analysis of the responses.

5.13 First in 5.16 on page 43 is an indication of what concerned

people most for the short term, and what they thought were going to be significant issues for the longer term future of the town.

5.13 Then in 5.17 to 5.20 on pages 44 - 47 there is an analysis of the key concerns in each of the healthcheck areas - environment, economy, transport and Social & Community.

5.14 In 5.21 are the themes that emerged from the answers to the question “What kind of town and community would you like Tenterden to be in the future?”, and continued through pages 48 - 53 are quotes from what people actually said in their questionnaires.

5.15 In 5.22 on page 54 there is an analysis of the responses to the questions “What are the good things about Tenterden, and what are the things that aren’t so good?” and in 5.23 on pages 55/57 an analysis of the separate questionnaires that went out to 550 local businesses; finally in 5.24 on page 58 there is a summary of the results of the survey of Homewood pupils of what young people would like to see in Tenterden.

## 5.16 What issues concerned people most overall, for the short term and for the future:

**Table 1 – arranged in order of priority for short term**

| Short term |  | (Future) |
|------------|--|----------|
| 38         | Parking  | 9        |
| 25         | Management of the environment                    | 5        |
| 19         | Retail identity                                  | 9        |
| 18         | Traffic  | 16       |
| 16         | Growth of the town                               | 57       |
| 15         | Maintaining environmental quality                | 45       |
| 14         | Public transport                                 | 6        |
| 10         | Information and being heard/ fostering community | 10       |
| 10         | Pedestrian safety/ cycling                       | 2        |
| 7          | Facilities for the young                         | 11       |
| 6          | Affordable housing                               | 22       |
| 5          | Expansion of Homewood                            |          |
| 5          | Anti-social behaviour/ police                    | 1        |
| 5          | Heronden Gatehouse                               | 2        |
| 3          | Better leisure centre                            | 1        |
| 2          | Jobs   | 4        |
| 2          | Tourism  | 3        |
| 1          | New library                                      | 3        |
| 1          | NHS dentist                                      | 1        |
| 1          | Market   |          |
| 1          | Improved Healthcare                              | 6        |
|            | (Balanced community)                             | 8        |

**Table 2 – arranged in order of priority for future**

| (Short term) |  | Future |
|--------------|--|--------|
| 16           | Growth of the town                               | 57     |
| 15           | Maintaining environmental quality                | 45     |
| 6            | Affordable housing                               | 22     |
| 18           | Traffic  | 16     |
| 7            | Facilities for the young                         | 11     |
| 10           | Information and being heard/ fostering community | 10     |
| 38           | Parking  | 9      |
| 19           | Retail identity                                  | 9      |
|              | Balanced community                               | 8      |
| 14           | Public transport                                 | 6      |
| 1            | Improved Healthcare                              | 6      |
| 25           | Management of the environment                    | 5      |
| 2            | Jobs   | 4      |
| 2            | Tourism  | 3      |
| 1            | New library                                      | 3      |
| 10           | Pedestrian safety/ cycling                       | 2      |
| 5            | Heronden Gatehouse                               | 2      |
| 5            | Anti-social behaviour/ police                    | 1      |
| 3            | Better leisure centre                            | 1      |
| 1            | NHS dentist                                      | 1      |
| 5            | (Expansion of Homewood)                          |        |
| 1            | (Market)   |        |

## 5.17 The Environment –

What people thought were the two most important issues to them:

| Top two issues       | Number | %    |
|----------------------|--------|------|
| Growth               | 119    | 26.8 |
| Heritage             | 113    | 25.5 |
| Countryside          | 57     | 12.8 |
| Improve environment  | 50     | 11.3 |
| Gateways             | 39     | 8.8  |
| Links to countryside | 36     | 8.1  |

Number of mentions of issues in the responses to the environment questions:

### Growth issues

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Careful planning and right scale/ location of development | 70 |
| Protect countryside from encroachment                     | 47 |
| Protect environmental quality/ uniqueness                 | 29 |
| Enhance/ protect gateways                                 | 18 |
| No more housing   | 7  |
| Growth of Homewood relative to size of town               | 3  |
| Inadequate infrastructure                                 | 2  |

### Environmental Management

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Reduce clutter and inappropriate furniture/ A boards etc | 37 |
| More sensitive control on building appearance            | 25 |
| Protect and repair verges and greens                     | 23 |
| Make countryside and footpaths accessible                | 22 |
| Heronden Gateway – make it or break it                   | 21 |
| Deal with litter   | 18 |
| Improve areas of neglected land behind High St/ Lanes    | 13 |
| Area around the Leisure Centre                           | 6  |
| Repair roads and footpaths                               | 5  |
| Improve Market / Space outside Town Hall                 | 4  |
| Highbury Hall area                                       | 3  |
| More facilities for recycling                            | 2  |
| Control on chain stores                                  | 1  |

### Cycling and Walking

|                                      |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Effect of cars parked on environment | 8 |
| Clear and light footpaths            | 5 |
| Effects of traffic on environment    | 5 |
| Cycle routes                         | 3 |
| Reduce speed limits                  | 2 |

## 5.18 The local economy –

What people thought were the two most important issues to them:

| Economy - top two issues | Number | %    |
|--------------------------|--------|------|
| Tourism                  | 141    | 31.8 |
| Retail and services      | 116    | 26.1 |
| Events and accommodation | 47     | 10.6 |
| Shopping habits          | 39     | 8.8  |
| Skills and jobs          | 32     | 7.2  |
| Training                 | 30     | 6.8  |

Number of mentions of issues in the responses to the economy questions:

### Retail mix

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Support smaller businesses                           | 63 |
| Bad effect of multiples                              | 37 |
| Need for sensitive balance                           | 21 |
| Too many estate agents, charity shops, antique shops | 19 |
| More affordable clothes                              | 7  |

### Tourism

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Build on the strengths ( Railway, museum, exhibitions, townscape) | 38 |
| Stronger events programme and arts based economy needed           | 28 |
| Need more accommodation   | 6  |
| Entertainment - scope for cinema                                  | 3  |
| Better Tourist Office needed                                      | 2  |

### Market

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Good - an asset                               | 28 |
| Ought to be off the High Street               | 12 |
| Although good is untidy                       | 6  |
| Bad - detracts                                | 6  |
| Need to incorporate farmers market and crafts | 2  |

### Jobs

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Low skill jobs and low pay - need more opportunities | 16 |
| Need cheap start-up space                            | 7  |
| Use local contractors                                | 3  |

### Training and Further education

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Would like more access to FE, centrally in the town | 25 |
| Adult education good                                | 2  |

### Parking

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Parking arrangements as an economic handicap | 15 |
|--|----|

## 5.19 Transport and Accessibility

What people thought were the two most important issues to them:

| Transport - top two issues | Number | %    |
|----------------------------|--------|------|
| Parking                    | 117    | 26.4 |
| Getting around the town    | 76     | 17.1 |
| Getting to and from        | 67     | 15.1 |
| Access from villages       | 44     | 9.9  |
| Getting information        | 44     | 9.9  |
| Access to services         | 33     | 7.4  |
| Safety and convenience     | 19     | 4.3  |

Number of mentions of issues in the responses to the Transport and Accessibility questions:

### Parking

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Not enough  | 38 |
| Too expensive/ pricing system wrong and off-putting | 36 |
| Ease the time restrictions                          | 23 |
| Not enough affordable long term                     | 21 |
| Stricter controls on nuisance parking               | 12 |
| Improve and move facilities for coach parking       | 4  |
| Not enough for residents                            | 3  |
| Improve facilities for Disabled                     | 3  |

(Plus 14 responses about effect of parking in local economy responses)

### Public Transport

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Difficult to reach other destinations                 | 51 |
| Should improve locally to reduce need for use of cars | 30 |
| Better liaison with rail services                     | 17 |
| Improve information                                   | 12 |
| Fares should be lower                                 | 6  |
| Difficult to get to hospital                          | 3  |
| Need accessible taxi service                          | 3  |
| Need bus shelter at St Michaels                       | 3  |

### Traffic

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Increasing congestion/ need for bypass or relief road | 23 |
| Reduce speeds/ use cameras                            | 9  |
| Traffic from schools                                  | 8  |
| Shopping scooters a menace                            | 3  |
| Golden Square ought to be cul-de-sac or one-way       | 2  |

### Cycling

|                                       |    |
|---------------------------------------|----|
| Better cycle ways needed generally    | 13 |
| St Michaels track should be completed | 12 |
| Too dangerous on main roads           | 6  |

### Walking and access

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Ease and smooth access for wheelchairs and disabled | 12 |
| Difficult to cross roads                            | 10 |
| Better footpaths needed                             | 8  |
| Dangerous narrow footpaths                          | 6  |

## 5.20 Social and Community

What people thought were the two most important issues to them:

| Social and Community - top two issues | Number | %    |
|---------------------------------------|--------|------|
| Population growth                     | 98     | 22.1 |
| Housing                               | 81     | 18.2 |
| Culture and heritage                  | 73     | 16.4 |
| Young people                          | 65     | 14.6 |
| Health needs                          | 48     | 10.8 |
| Population changes                    | 32     | 7.2  |
| Sport and leisure                     | 18     | 4.1  |

Number of mentions of issues in the responses to the Social and Community questions:

### Housing issues

|                             |    |
|-----------------------------|----|
| Need for affordable housing | 71 |
| Need for smaller units      | 9  |

### Growth issues

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Maintaining identity                    | 36 |
| Pressure on services and infrastructure | 23 |

### Needs of young people

|            |    |
|------------|----|
| Recreation | 51 |
| Generally  | 12 |

### Needs of older people

|                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Residential and sheltered housing | 6 |
| Home-care needed                  | 5 |

### Community facilities

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Expand and/or improve medical provision          | 33 |
| Access to NHS dentists                           | 28 |
| Improve the Leisure Centre                       | 21 |
| Homewood to be more accessible for community use | 13 |
| Support for sport                                | 11 |
| Better Library                                   | 7  |
| Need for Community Centre                        | 6  |
| Police coverage                                  | 6  |

### Fostering community and culture

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Fostering community & civic pride generally | 16 |
| Improving cultural provision/ festivals     | 13 |
| Improving museum and central archive        | 4  |

## 5.21 What kind of town and community would you like Tenterden to be in the future?

- themes that emerged from the responses, with the number of mentions

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Retain its charm and individuality                               | 72 |
| More equal - involve all ages - sense of community               | 44 |
| Safeguarding its urban and rural environment                     | 34 |
| High quality shops and facilities for leisure and health         | 28 |
| Providing opportunities - more focus on the needs of the young   | 28 |
| Stay small/ no change  | 22 |
| Thriving and vibrant for business and events                     | 22 |
| Accepting growth - brought up to date - not afraid of innovation | 17 |
| Determine its own future   | 13 |
| Peaceful and safe  | 10 |
| Better transport   | 5  |

### What kind of town and community would you like Tenterden to be in the future? - what people actually said:

- No increase in population
- More shops
- Better transport
- A more equal community.
- There are a lot of elderly people which dominate the decisions made. Younger generations should be encouraged AND people of mixed/ different race. They would bring different, new ideas to Tenterden.
- I would like to see Tenterden escape from the shadow of Ashford as it is so special in its own right with no community of interest with the big Brother.
- It has to move with the times but retain its charm and quaintness.
- Involve the youth and gain their pride in the town.
- The growth of our surgery at Ivy Court to meet the demands of young and old for specialist medical needs.
- A strong sense of community
- Towns character kept.
- Good facilities for young and old.
- I would like Tenterden to still be the "Jewel in the Weald" in 20 years time and not surrounded by "Park Farm" style sprawl or MacArthur Glen style urban shopping malls.
- No more 3rd rate shops.
- One or two better quality clothing shops.
- A mixed community: young families, elderly, keeping our identity.
- Making use of local resources.
- Brought up to date.
- Independent small town.
- Good local shops.
- No more supermarkets.
- Good schools, sports facilities and health provision. No more chain shops.
- Tenterden is a lovely place to live in and we are largely satisfied but would not like to see any more erosion of the local environment.
- I would like Tenterden Centre to be parking free so as to make it a pleasure to visit.
- Providing jobs for local people;
- Providing low-cost housing for young people.
- Being an environmentally responsible town.
- Restricted growth to ensure Tenterden's individual character is retained.
- Low cost housing to enable young people to remain locally, rather than forced to move to cheaper areas.

## What kind of town and community would you like Tenterden to be in the future? - what people actually said, continued:

- A balanced community maintaining its current strengths and while accepting that some growth is inevitable ensuring that this does not spoil its special character.
- Crime free, old fashioned image, privately owned shops - Upmarket "feel"
- Working together.
- A small town that retains its rural charm and historic heritage.
- Controlled growth planned in consultation with the community.
- Shops which really meet the needs of the community.
- Retain status quo. Any more buildings be in keeping; not ugly and factory like as in Oakes Road, or too big for site.
- A balanced community that keeps the best characteristics of Tenterden as it is (its beauty, architecture etc) but is not afraid of innovation to attract younger people to come and live here.
- To keep its historic case and stop imitating towns. There are plenty of towns nearby for those who want "modern" living.
- I would like the town to retain its individuality and not become a suburb
- A thriving market town with lots of cafes, restaurants, small shops, improved leisure centre, more clubs for children and teenagers.
- Very safe with youngsters off the streets and busy pursuing their hobbies.
- Peaceful surroundings
- Continuing to be vibrant community with plenty of organisations such as TODS.
- Churches, as now, working together and members involved in all facets of town life.
- More publicity for opportunities for voluntary work
- Lessening big lorries and no more building
- Kept more or less as it is but with more effective policing.
- A thriving town. No more expansion at Homewood School. Site not large enough.
- No parking of cars on the green sideways and no riding of bicycles on the footpaths or pavements.
- A very mixed aged community allowing all to live and work together and not to feel cramped by A.B.C.
- Not to grow too much
- Affordable housing, good schools, NHS dentist, a pleasant town continuing
- Would like Tenterden to retain its unique and historic character.
- Friendly and safe. Local policeman on High Street.
- An annual street carnival in summer months.
- Need for park like facilities/ landscaped garden.
- Need for adequate parking provision and safe pick up facilities for Homewood School and provision for residents safe passage to and from houses at Silverhill (path is on opposite side of road). Parking for residents in this area
- Not to change. I love its small compact size. Do not let there be any more development on greenfield sites. Ashford is the place for more estates.
- I would like it to stay a small market town noted for its excellent stopping facilities where something different is on offer.
- I would like to see a return of "Community" where people care for each other, have the opportunity to support each other and look around themselves to improve their environment.
- Try to encourage everyone to put rubbish in the bins provided or take it home.
- I'd like it to remain with the character it has now. Any new building to be kept "in keeping" with the town.
- Tenterden seems to work quite well and has many activities that appeal to all age groups. More of these would be an advantage
- Bustling, lively, characterful, but small market town. Preserve its beautiful character and identity - very little change needed.
- A vibrant town with controlled long term development.
- A small market town.
- Attempt to resist urbanisation and take care to keep Tenterden a pleasant rural country town.
- More pride in our surroundings.
- Preserve the character but add the new on outer periphery.
- Preferably nothing modern,. Expansion could ruin it. It is a delicate flower.

## What kind of town and community would you like Tenterden to be in the future? - what people actually said, continued:

- I would be very happy to see this town keep its character but prosper financially. I would also like to see the same young and old living together as I believe this is what makes this town unique. I do however, believe that we should do more for the young, perhaps set up a rugby club like Cranbrook.
- Self sufficient for everyday and weekly needs with good community values. Distinct and identifiable as Tenterden. Not just another south east town.
- Retain its history, more community events in the town i.e. hold a May Fair and other processional events.
- A community to suit all ages and pockets.
- To be a thriving community it should give opportunities for advance in a civilised way to all.
- As it is.
- More involvement by everybody in the town's affairs
- Not much
- PARKING - why have a whole car park for the few coaches we have - plenty of room at back of Leisure Centre
- To keep the town different - remaining the jewel in the Weald
- To keep its identity
- Not to be spoiled as so many towns have been
- Vandalism has been a problem in the town - maybe an extra policemen or a presence in the town in the evening - I know they are trying
- We would not like Tenterden turned into a ghost town where people move away and businesses go downhill and close down.
- Close knit with a good centre and the best facilities.
- Stay the same.
- No bigger.
- Development of cultural facilities and recreational facilities for the young.
- More families moving in.
- Safe - develop sense of belonging and unity.
- Rustic and rural. Replacements only.
- That Tenterden doesn't grow too much and lose its character.
- To continue as a more rural community and to encourage a balance of young and old to do this. It needs to be a mixed community, age wise and socially/ economically.
- Provision for different groups.
- A community centre that can be used by local clubs and for meetings etc. At present there is no large modern building.
- Remain as it is but grass areas improved.
- Avoid it becoming a support town for Ashford's development.
- A Thriving town with plenty of young people and places for them to go.
- More cultural events
- A town centre for a RURAL town with mix of facilities for residents and visitors - tourists and people from nearby villages
- I would like to see a community centre built which would accommodate many activities for young and old alike
- Remain a centre for rural community
- We need to build up a vibrant High St capable of surviving the ups and downs of retail business.
- It would help to have lower (or no) parking charges so that we can compete with places like Cranbrook on equal terms.
- Continuing the same pattern and maintaining the current approach.
- I would like to see a community centre with facilities for varied interests, possibly the inclusion of a library more suited to the Tenterden population than the charming but inadequate present building.
- I would like to see our Town Council have a stronger voice in the affairs of Tenterden. Residents pay the same basic rate plus a local rate, as Ashford. We do not, however, have a fair share of the investment of this.
- A market town which attracts visitors and caters for the local community.
- Fewer estate agents /banks/ building societies/ charity shops.
- High value landscape preserved.
- Old buildings in the High St preserved.

## What kind of town and community would you like Tenterden to be in the future? - what people actually said, continued:

- Recreation Ground left as an open space never to be built on.
- East Cross Gardens to remain; trees to remain.
- People that live in Tenterden to be working in Tenterden, not commuters.
- Food grown locally supplied to shops.
- New retail units on Brownfield sites.
- CCTV at Cranbrook Rd cemetery.
- A nice market town without the snobbery of the well heeled people who move in a take over.
- Keep Tenterden unique. Return Tenterden to the control of Tenterden Town Council.
- Tenterden must retain its character but its facilities must be publicised much more.
- Homewood must be persuaded to come out of isolation and publicise events weekly.
- As it is now a flourishing town of small businesses and shops independent of multi stores (any more than now) keeping its identity and uniqueness which will attract young people who value history and character and not see to make Tenterden a clone of most other towns in the country and certainly not an acolyte of Ashford.
- Stay a rural market town.
- Regular maintenance and cleaning of areas on and off the High Street. The area behind The Vines, with the public lavatories and shops is usually filthy and smelly - the first port of call for coach visitors.
- Small town full of character and individuality - more small and specialist shops
- I see Tenterden as a stable, well managed community. Too many people with energy and vision are being frustrated by second-rate time servers with petty personal prejudices. The town needs dynamic, visionary leaders to form a consensus, work to a plan and take the town forward.
- Nothing major.
- New coach park is key then put market into old one, complete the cycle ways, perhaps make a relief road between Tescos and Appledore Rd.
- Some controlled growth where new buildings are constructed then a more modern approach to architecture should be adopted with all the latest energy saving and generating features. Links with a similar town in the Netherlands. The Dutch appear to be our most numerous foreign visitors.
- Townscape very important - with new parking regimes are we to be visually polluted with yellow lines and signing?
- High St looks tatty at the Co-op end, painting the railings black would improve.
- Much the same as it is now!
- A place where my own children will be happy to live and work.
- Keep its traditional elements but have less specialised shops, more shops and attraction that pull visitors in on their own merits rather than visitors that are passing by.
- Hope to see the economy improve and that reflected in the community.
- Keep it the same.
- One that looks after its community.
- Continue to be a service and cultural centre.
- Any expansion by replacement and infilling
- Return to being a country town, and get back its identity
- A town that is kept clean, tidy and attractive to appeal to tourists.
- Keeping a vibrant working town atmosphere with a good mix of people.
- Not going down the "heritage at all costs" snobby route. We've got it just right now, but need to encourage young people to come (and work) here by keeping rents etc down.
- Leave it alone.
- Moderate growth with greater scrutiny on planning applications.
- Much the same as it is now - while we have to move with the times, being individual is makes it special and draws in visitors
- To stay as unique and beautiful without becoming run down.
- To value its reputation as the Jewel of the Weald
- To continue to be a supportive and busy community with a real heart to the town.
- I want it to develop as a thriving market town while retaining its atmosphere of peace and tranquillity - so that it can become an oasis for relaxation and refreshment for those in the frenetic rat race.
- We would like Tenterden to retain its unique charm but continue to improve the community facilities.

### What kind of town and community would you like Tenterden to be in the future? - what people actually said, continued:

- Much as now always providing it remains balanced.
- A country town with good variety of shops, clean and well maintained.
- Retain historic character. No large housing developments or ugly buildings such as the Homewood School development.
- Own Town Council separate from Ashford.
- Thriving distinctive community looking after all its age groups and its town and rural heritage.
- It seems perfect as it is.
- A close knit accessible market town.
- Keep the centre part as it is more cultural facilities
- One in which all local groups special interest, sport or leisure can thrive as many do now
- I visualise a more liberal approach for young people with a more harmonious relationship with older people.
- A retail shopping community with local business owners and no need to travel to Ashford, Maidstone etc.
- A town where people from outlying villages come to shop and wander without the pressure from a traffic warden.
- To remain a small country town. Second home ownership to be discouraged because of environmental impact and because it tends to put house ownership out of reach for poorer local people.
- Preservation of the buildings of character that make Tenterden attractive.
- Retain the green and wooded areas that bring the heart of the countryside into the heart of the town.
- Remain as it is but for smaller independent shops to return. Also more areas of protected land for wildlife.
- Too much has happened over the last ten years and I would like to see the town stabilised with restrictions on lorries passing through and the market set up on a permanent basis on the edge of the Recreation Ground.
- A self contained community with housing and employment opportunities for all residents and appropriate facilities for visitors.
- To continue as a rural community.
- The town must maintain its character which is its greatest asset but it must grow with careful controls on housing and business growth.
- A positive approach to transport structure.
- Maintain its attractive character and strengthen its community activities and involvement.
- A unique and popular place to live with a good mix of facilities for all age groups.
- Tenterden to maintain its county and market town reputation.
- A place where families feel proud to live, safe, well policed, full of lovely flowers.
- Very little should change, that is its attraction.
- Not too different - no TV style makeover please.
- I would like young people to be better occupied at night time in a youth club.
- Retain rural atmosphere.
- Increase leisure facilities for all age groups.
- Not become an Ashford suburb.
- A cinema.
- Tenterden has, for many years, been a town to which people retire, but all towns need professional and younger people to give some sort of balance.
- More mixed community.
- Very similar to today, although inevitably larger, although this should be controlled.
- I would like to see the town retain its character.
- To be kept as the pleasant country town that it is now without unsightly buildings.
- I would like to see more organised activities for teenagers and for these to be more visible and advertised.
- I would like pavements to be maintained.
- I would also like to see roundabouts at intersections and limits on the number of houses with one exit to the main road.
- I would like to have a cinema in town.
- More for teenagers and younger generation.
- Better transport for villages.
- Affordable housing.
- A market town community.

### What kind of town and community would you like Tenterden to be in the future? - what people actually said, continued:

- Try to cater for mixed age groups in terms of housing, leisure and care.
- Tenterden will, and should, change as it always has done. What it doesn't need is to become much bigger and sprawl.
- More tolerant society and more for the young people to do in the evenings - The Co-op changed back to a cinema.
- A fast food outlet - mainly for the youngsters - with lots of litter bins!
- A town more in charge of its own destiny, free from a remote ABC who have more than enough to think about with the proposed expansion of Ashford.
- More diversity of business and shops.
- Just to get even better but no bigger.
- I would like to see Tenterden as a happy community where people have the opportunity to lead fulfilled and satisfying lives.
- Maintain rural identity.
- Minimal change to the present.
- Welcome tourists to fund town economy and sensitive development - slow them down, give them parking so they stay and spend.
- Not to be swallowed up by Ashford.
- A small and distinctive market town with its heritage preserved intact, attracting visitors who contribute to the economy. An integrated community with regular events and activities which involve residents of all ages, enabling them to interact and encouraging community spirit. This would require the development of an events programme, supported by the Town Council, tourism organisations, the business community and local societies.
- Would like to see 'Heritage' aspect retained but allied to more up-to-date commercial attitudes.
- Better cultural resources would be welcome and would add to the attractions of the town in the winter months.
- To remain as a traditional, cultural entity.
- I would like to see Tenterden remain a medium size market town with jobs and housing available to younger people.
- A more encompassing community with children (especially teens) involved more rather than having to go to Ashford for entertainment.
- Don't make it bigger. Don't make it become like Tunbridge Wells. Keep it upmarket.
- I am very happy with it - facilities for leisure side could be expanded.
- I would like to see the people of Tenterden take more interest in the appearance of the town and take part in the activities provided.
- I would also like to see the local authority maintain the town to a much higher standard.
- I would like to see an arts festival in Tenterden.
- A more integrated community with both general and social /affordable housing intermixed.
- We have a nice friendly town and we need to ensure that this is not spoiled by growth. Any growth must be met by an improvement in facilities and infrastructure that creates a good balanced well served community.
- Independent retailers working together to secure the town's future.
- A vibrant town with good facilities for all.
- Healthy, well supported local businesses employing local people.
- Controlled growth which reflects this lovely area.
- Not a lot different from now. It will become larger but hopefully with more young families.
- Clean, thriving shops, mixed community, all ages.
- Respect and safe.
- Would be spoiled if got any bigger
- A visually attractive, vibrant, economically diverse and happy town
- A mixed community of young and old, with the town providing at least 75% of living needs
- One in which the environment is protected whilst keeping a balanced community without which there is no future

5.22 Best and worst - the questionnaire asked “What are the best things about Tenterden, and what are the things that aren’t so good”

### Shops and facilities

| Good                         |    |
|------------------------------|----|
| Variety of shops and service | 43 |
| Friday market                | 6  |
| Number of national retailers | 1  |

| Not good                                 |    |
|--|----|
| Loss of small, individual retailers      | 34 |
| Too many estate agents and charity shops | 21 |
| Number of national retailers             | 26 |
| Street clutter and some shop fronts      | 15 |
| Poor variety of shops and service        | 8  |
| Friday market                            | 5  |

### Leisure and community

| Good                                      |    |
|---|----|
| Good sense of community                   | 37 |
| Leisure opportunities for adults          | 16 |
| Feeling safe                              | 7  |
| Library                                   | 2  |
| Information about amenities and transport | 1  |

| Not good  |    |
|---|----|
| Vandalism and yobbish behaviour                                   | 17 |
| Leisure opportunities for adults - leisure centre needs improving | 12 |
| More police presence needed                                       | 11 |
| Library too small   | 9  |
| Leisure opportunities for young people lacking                    | 7  |
| Information about amenities and transport                         | 3  |

### Things about the town

| Good                        |    |
|-----------------------------|----|
| Attractiveness of buildings | 55 |
| Access to countryside       | 48 |
| The Greens                  | 26 |
| Amenities in town generally | 18 |
| Individual and unique town  | 6  |
| Convenience of location     | 5  |
| Heronden Gatehouse          | 3  |

| Not good                                 |    |
|--|----|
| Town becoming run down/ litter generally | 11 |
| The Greens - Need maintaining            | 2  |
| Heronden Gatehouse                       | 1  |

### Transport - related:

| Good               |   |
|--------------------|---|
| Parking facilities | 6 |
| Public Transport   | 2 |

| Not good                                       |    |
|--|----|
| Volume and speed of traffic                    | 43 |
| Parking charges                                | 32 |
| Parking facilities                             | 27 |
| Parking in residential areas and on the greens | 14 |
| Public Transport                               | 10 |
| School run                                     | 5  |

**5.23 Results of the Business Survey, sent to 550 businesses – There were 46 responses (22 returned by Freepost, 12 Town Hall, 9 Library, 2 Exhibition, 2 paid post, 1 St Michaels):**

**1. Which of the following most closely describes the sector where your business operates?**

|                                      |    |
|--------------------------------------|----|
| Construction                         | 4  |
| Financial, business and ICT services | 7  |
| Health & social care                 | 2  |
| Land-based                           | 4  |
| Manufacturing                        | 4  |
| Tourism & hospitality                | 6  |
| Transport and distribution           | 1  |
| Retail and wholesale                 | 11 |
| Other                                | 6  |

**2. Is this a locally owned business or part of a larger group?**

|                              |    |
|------------------------------|----|
| Locally owned; only site     | 35 |
| Locally owned; several sites | 7  |
| Part of national chain       | 4  |

**3. How many people are employed by your business at this site?**

|               |    |
|---------------|----|
| Sole operator | 4  |
| 1 to 4        | 19 |
| 5 to 9        | 7  |
| 10 to 49      | 14 |
| 50+           | 2  |

**4. Have you tried to recruit any staff in the last 12 months?**

|     |    |
|-----|----|
| Yes | 28 |
| No  | 18 |

**5. If you have tried to recruit, was it because**

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Our business is growing                                | 12 |
| Our business is diversifying                           | 3  |
| Our business has returned to profitability             | 1  |
| To meet demand for a specific new customer contract    | 1  |
| To free up my time and allow me to manage the business | 4  |
| We needed specific skills that we didn't have in-house | 3  |
| We needed to replace staff that we were losing         | 18 |

**6. Did you experience any difficulties in recruiting suitable staff?**

|     |    |
|-----|----|
| Yes | 14 |
| No  | 14 |

**7. If so, what do you think were causes of these difficulties?**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Not able to offer an attractive enough package | 2 |
| Lack of applicants with the right skills       | 9 |
| Quality of applicants was poor                 | 4 |
| Lack of affordable housing in the area         | 3 |
| Poor image of the area                         | 0 |
| Poor image of our industry or occupation       | 2 |
| Some other factor?                             | 3 |

## Results of the Business Survey continued

### 8. What are the main reasons for you not recruiting staff in the past 12 months?

|  |    |
|--|----|
| We are not looking to grow   | 10 |
| We have all the staff we need for the short term   | 7  |
| We look to bring in staff on short term contracts when need arises                         | 2  |
| We prefer to train up the staff we have got at the moment                                  | 1  |
| Uncertainty of the sector we are in  | 2  |
| We are not winning enough new customers/ orders  | 2  |
| I am looking to sell the business  | 1  |
| We can't pay the going rate for the work that needs to be done                             | 0  |
| We have tried recruiting in the past but have found that they didn't have the right skills | 1  |

### 9. Do you see yourselves needing to recruit in the NEXT 12 months?

|     |    |
|-----|----|
| Yes | 14 |
| No  | 26 |

| <i>10. Here are some statements that have been made relating to skills, business success and premises. For each statement please indicate whether you agree or disagree, using a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is agree and 5 is disagree</i> | 1. Agree strongly | 2. Agree | 3. Neither agree nor disagree | 4. Disagree | 5. Disagree strongly |
|---|-------------------|----------|-------------------------------|-------------|----------------------|
| <b>Skills</b>   |                   |          |                               |             |                      |
| I have all the skills and knowledge I need to run this business successfully  | 20                | 17       | 8                             | 0           | 0                    |
| My staff have all the skills and knowledge they need for this business to succeed   | 10                | 20       | 10                            | 2           | 0                    |
| I find it difficult to find the right staff with the right skills for my business   | 5                 | 14       | 7                             | 11          | 1                    |
| If my staff need additional training, I can provide it in-house   | 3                 | 17       | 10                            | 8           | 2                    |
| I find it easy to find the right training courses to provide myself and my staff with the right skills for my business  | 5                 | 12       | 13                            | 4           | 3                    |
| If I or my staff need external training for new skills, I know where to go  | 6                 | 21       | 5                             | 4           | 0                    |
| <b>Business Success</b>   |                   |          |                               |             |                      |
| If I need external advice to improve my business, I know where to go  | 7                 | 30       | 4                             | 2           | 1                    |
| I could benefit from a strong well run local business organisation  | 2                 | 11       | 22                            | 3           | 2                    |
| I could benefit from more active promotion of the town  | 12                | 10       | 16                            | 3           | 1                    |
| I am confident of the future for my business  | 5                 | 26       | 9                             | 3           | 1                    |
| I am confident of the future for my industry or business sector   | 5                 | 18       | 9                             | 5           | 1                    |
| Tenterden is a good location for my business  | 16                | 18       | 7                             | 2           | 0                    |
| <b>Premises</b>   |                   |          |                               |             |                      |
| My premises are adequate for my needs   | 9                 | 28       | 2                             | 5           | 1                    |
| If I want to grow the business, they would still be adequate  | 3                 | 16       | 6                             | 12          | 6                    |
| If I needed different premises, I could find them in Tenterden  | 1                 | 7        | 12                            | 12          | 8                    |

## Results of the Business Survey continued

**11(a) Which of the following skill areas within your business do you foresee as being in short supply ?**

|                                      |    |
|--------------------------------------|----|
| General Management                   | 4  |
| Strategic Senior Management          | 3  |
| Basic skills e.g. Literacy, numeracy | 1  |
| I.T. skills                          | 4  |
| Sales / Marketing skills             | 5  |
| People skills / customer service     | 8  |
| Engineering skills                   | 3  |
| Communication skills                 | 4  |
| None                                 | 13 |
| Other (Please specify)               | 1  |

**11(b) In which of these have you had difficulty in finding appropriate and convenient training?**

|                                      |    |
|--------------------------------------|----|
| Administrative                       | 4  |
| Technical                            | 4  |
| Financial                            | 1  |
| Supervisory                          | 3  |
| People Management                    | 2  |
| General Management                   | 2  |
| Strategic Senior Management          | 1  |
| Basic skills e.g. Literacy, numeracy | 1  |
| I.T. skills                          | 4  |
| Sales / Marketing skills             | 5  |
| People skills / customer service     | 3  |
| Engineering skills                   | 1  |
| Communication skills                 | 3  |
| None                                 | 12 |

**12. Have you looked for new premises in Tenterden,?**

|     |    |
|-----|----|
| Yes | 9  |
| No  | 32 |

**and did you find what you were looking for?**

|     |   |
|-----|---|
| Yes | 2 |
| No  | 6 |

**12. Does your company have and use:**

|                           |    |
|---------------------------|----|
| Email                     | 40 |
| Broadband                 | 26 |
| Internet/ADSL             | 18 |
| ISDN Line                 | 14 |
| Online Purchasing         | 13 |
| Its own website           | 27 |
| Space on the Town website | 8  |

**13. Are you a member of a trade network or organisation? If so, which one(s)?**

6 Tenterden Chamber of Commerce

1 Ashford Chamber of Commerce

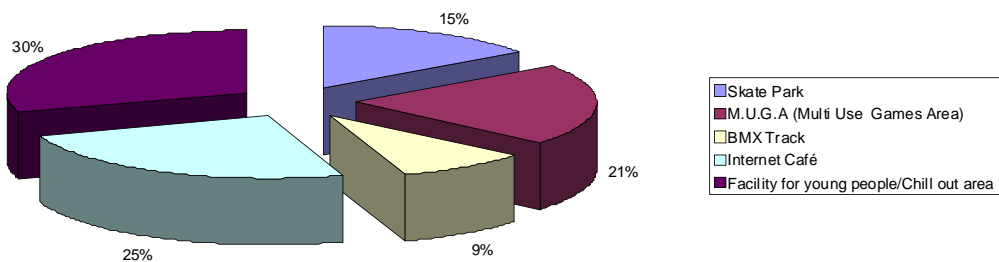
2 Wealden Business Group

21 other – trade and professional organisations

## 5.24 Homewood Survey of Young People What young people would like to see in Tenterden

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Skate Park                               | 15% |
| M.U.G.A (Multi Use Games Area)           | 21% |
| BMX Track                                | 9%  |
| Internet Café                            | 25% |
| Facility for young people/Chill out area | 30% |

What young people would like to see in Tenterden



| What young people would like to see in a facility |     |
|---|-----|
| Computer Lounge                                   | 11% |
| Coffee Bar/food                                   | 12% |
| Decks / M.C.ing Mixing                            | 8%  |
| Computer games / Playstation                      | 9%  |
| Music   | 9%  |
| Information and Advice                            | 3%  |
| Digital Photography/ Movie Making                 | 10% |
| T.V Lounge  | 7%  |
| Area to meet / talk                               | 7%  |
| Pool Table  | 9%  |
| Music practice area                               | 5%  |
| Arts and crafts                                   | 5%  |