



# APPENDIX A

PREVIOUS STUDIES,  
DEVELOPMENT MIX AND AMOUNT

The Development Framework for Ashford Town Centre produced by Urban Initiatives incorporates and builds upon a number of previous and related studies, as summarised in the table below.

A key input into the work undertaken by Urban Initiatives has been the Baseline Analysis and Options Appraisals completed in March 2004 by BDP and MVA, as examined below. The relationship between

this body of work and the present study is important, as key issues and principles of approach were identified and consulted upon.

BDP & MVA study findings		Urban Initiatives response
Analysis	<p>Constraints:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Negative landmarks</li> <li>● Visual and physical impact of Ring Road</li> <li>● Poor image created by vacant sites and surface car parking</li> <li>● Poor quality buildings</li> </ul> <p>Strengths &amp; Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Compact historic core</li> <li>● Active and vibrant High Street</li> <li>● Underutilised River Stour</li> <li>● Memorial Gardens as a key public space</li> </ul>	Findings accepted and additional considerations added
Principles	<p>Clearly defined edges</p> <p>Permeability and connectivity</p> <p>Clear &amp; legible movement patterns</p> <p>Knitting back of streets &amp; spaces</p> <p>Integration of natural environment into the urban fabric</p>	<p>Principles accepted and developed.</p> <p>Broader consideration also given to integration with key themes emerging from GADF workshops and consultation, and to macro scale urban design integration with GADF</p>
Options	<p>Key elements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Station Road restricted to bus corridor</li> <li>● Peripheral parking</li> <li>● Romney Marsh Road moved away from International Station</li> <li>● Dover Place area opened up with route to Station Road</li> <li>● Residential development along the riverside</li> <li>● Intensification of Western Gateway</li> <li>● Major public squares at both stations</li> </ul> <p>1. District Clusters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Comprehensive redevelopment of both stations</li> </ul> <p>2. Station Hub</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Elwick Road restricted to bus corridor</li> <li>● High density commercial development to North and South of Stations</li> <li>● Leisure development focused on Elwick Road</li> <li>● Clear urban structure established to north of station</li> </ul> <p>3. Gateways &amp; Boulevards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Station Road traffic calmed</li> <li>● High density commercial development around stations</li> <li>● 'grid-iron' structure created</li> <li>● Development clustered at gateways</li> <li>● Education and leisure uses focused along Elwick Road</li> </ul>	

The three options outlined opposite were reviewed by key stakeholders in a workshop format, and also by the public at an exhibition event. Comments received on the options led to the formulation of a fourth, preferred option, that draws upon selected elements of all three options. Its main principles comprise:

- Ring road downgraded, with Station Road traffic calmed, and Elwick Road made two-way
- Car parking located at key peripheral sites
- Stations comprehensively redeveloped to focus departure perception onto Town Centre
- Mixed use development within the ring road, with retail on ground floors
- Main plaza outside the Domestic Station
- Commercial development & hotel focused around stations area
- Education focus at western end of Elwick Street

Urban Initiatives took this preferred option as a key departure point for their study upon which to further test and develop the Framework.

### Development Quantum & Mix

The 3 options produced by BDP/MVA consisted of the following proposed quantum and mix of uses.

#### Option 1

<b>Residential Units</b>	<b>4,321</b>
<b>Retail (sq m)</b>	<b>130,000</b>
<b>Commercial (sq m)</b>	<b>167,000</b>
<b>Leisure (sq m)</b>	<b>107,600</b>
<b>Education (sq m)</b>	<b>51,000</b>
<b>Total Floorspace (sq m)</b>	<b>808,100</b>
<b>Total Jobs</b>	<b>18,288</b>

#### Option 2

<b>Residential Units</b>	<b>3,617</b>
<b>Retail (sq m)</b>	<b>130,000</b>
<b>Commercial (sq m)</b>	<b>207,000</b>
<b>Leisure (sq m)</b>	<b>103,800</b>
<b>Education (sq m)</b>	<b>69,600</b>
<b>Total Floorspace (sq m)</b>	<b>805,400</b>
<b>Total Jobs</b>	<b>20,583</b>

#### Option 3

<b>Residential Units</b>	<b>3,819</b>
<b>Retail (sq m)</b>	<b>130,000</b>
<b>Commercial (sq m)</b>	<b>211,000</b>
<b>Leisure (sq m)</b>	<b>95,000</b>
<b>Education (sq m)</b>	<b>45,000</b>
<b>Total Floorspace (sq m)</b>	<b>792,500</b>
<b>Total Jobs</b>	<b>20,380</b>

#### Option 4 (post workshop)

<b>Residential Units</b>	<b>2,850</b>
<b>Retail (sq m)</b>	<b>130,600</b>
<b>Commercial (sq m)</b>	<b>71,500</b>
<b>Leisure (sq m)</b>	<b>28,300</b>
<b>Education (sq m)</b>	<b>26,600</b>
<b>Community (sq m)</b>	<b>22,400</b>
<b>Total Floorspace (sq m)</b>	<b>511,900</b>
<b>Total Jobs</b>	<b>11,568</b>

### Amount of retail development

The Ashford Retail Study (CB Richard Ellis, 2002) took the preferred option in the Halcrow report of 2002 and tested two retail scenarios, using the REASN Retail Planning Model, to calculate the existing and future capacity for further retail development in Ashford. The first was a base line scenario assuming no net increase in the market share taken by Ashford town centre, and the second scenario assumed that an improved town centre with a revised visitor and shopper offer would attract a modest additional amount of market share from other competing centres. The CBRE study regarded the second scenario as realistic. Recognising the uncertainty of long term projections, the model applied relatively low growth rates derived from ultra long term historical data for both convenience and comparison goods, in order to be as robust as possible because they cover several economic cycles and changes in retail expenditure patterns (2.20, 2.21 of the report).

The report concluded that even allowing for the ability of existing shopping floorspace to absorb some of the growth in expenditure, and allowing for the County Square extension, there would be capacity for further town centre comparison goods development at least the scale of the County Square Extension again by about 2016 (4.4 of the report) and, whilst recognising the uncertainty of longer term assessments, there should be further capacity for substantial comparison shopping goods development in the town centre by 2031. The supportable capacity for new town centre retail floorspace to 2031 under Scenario 2 was identified as 89,608 sq m net (c88,200 sq m comparison and c1,400 sq m convenience) (3.2, 3.12 and Table 3.1 of the report). All these figures were town centre figures and CBRE assessed out of centre (including Designer Outlet) figures separately.

The Study estimated that total Ashford catchment area expenditure would be expected to rise from 2003 to 2031 by 41% for convenience goods and 269% for comparison goods. However, only a small proportion (15%) of comparison goods growth to 2031 is accounted for by the 40% growth in Ashford's catchment population. By far the majority of the growth is accounted for by projected growth in per capita expenditure (2.22). In other words, Ashford's need for additional comparison retail floorspace will relate more to growing per capita expenditure than population growth.

The Town Centre Development Framework contains a total of 153,396sq m gross development area of Retail and Leisure use (incorporating A1 to A5 and D Use Classes) for the period 2005-2031. Major committed proposals are included within this figure, the most significant of which is the proposed County Square extension (plot TC02) providing an additional 20,900sq m gross floor area of retail development, and comprising 14% of the total in the Town Centre Development Framework within the 2005-2021 period. (The 2003 BDP / MVA figure, revised after consultation with a range of stakeholders, and following transport advice, set a larger preferred figure of 158,900sq m gross.) Using a net-to-gross ratio of 65%, 153,396 square metres produces a 'net sales area' equivalent of 99,707 sq m of retail and leisure. The difference between the CBRE figure of 89,608 square metres and the Town Centre Development Framework figure of 99,707 square metres is accounted for by the fact that the latter includes leisure floorspace. Consequently the retail and leisure provision in the Town Centre Development Framework is in line with the capacity estimated for 2031 in the Ashford Retail Study.





# APPENDIX B

## SPACE SYNTAX STUDY

Space Syntax were commissioned by Ashford Borough Council to assess the proposals forming part of the Ashford Town Centre Development Framework produced by Urban Initiatives. The study assessed the proposals in terms of their impact on the functioning of the town centre, in the context of economic, social and environmental objectives.

The assessment of the Development Framework produced by Space Syntax is summarised below.

### The Ring Road

The Urban Initiatives masterplan significantly improves accessibility along and around the ring road. The attractiveness of this area will further be improved by locating new generators / attractors of movement along the ring road, including retail, cultural and educational uses, especially along Stations Road and to the north of Park Mall. In this way a 'loop' of live uses, such as retail, A3 and other central facilities and services, will begin to emerge (High Street – Bank Street – Elwick Road – Station Road), starting the process of transforming the ring road into a major new centre of activity.

The proposed improvement / widening of the Elwick Road footbridge is a very positive move. Currently, the visibility from and to the bridge is poor, due to the design of the approaches and the fact that the bridge is not aligned with the main north-south routes channelling pedestrian movement towards the bridge: Bank Street in the north and Jemmett Road in the south. The new, wider and more direct bridge will encourage pedestrians to walk across the railway and help integration of the town centre with its surroundings.

However, the continuity of the live loop is affected somewhat negatively by the proposed leisure and educational uses in Elwick Road, which have a different attraction pattern (i.e. tend to generate movement at particular times of the day only). It is therefore suggested that more retail / A3 / central services be introduced in the mix at this location. At the same time the retail uses 'straying off' the loop - along Beaver Road and south of the footbridge - should be scaled down to include essential local services and convenience retail only.

Integrating the Stations with the Town Centre

The Station Embankment area will have a completely new grid system and accommodate a mixture of offices on upper floors and retail on ground floors,

with some cultural uses along Tannery Lane. The proposed location of retail in this area is sensible, as the highest levels of activity are expected along its edges – along Station Road and opposite the train station. However, the cultural uses located along Tannery Lane may benefit from further improvements to the links between Station Road and the area to the east of the Civic Centre and the additional activity this would bring to the Station Embankment area.

The pedestrian accessibility of the area between the railway stations and the Designer Outlets has not improved in UI plans and its potential to become a significant new town centre expansion area remains unexplored. It is therefore suggested that major improvements to the connections between this area and the existing town centre, location of more active ground floor uses and creation of a smaller block structure be considered by UI.

### Living in the town

The masterplan envisages development of 3,000 to 3,500 new residential units within the town centre. These new homes will be important in securing activity and safety in the public realm throughout the day and week. However, it is important that new residential uses of sufficient density are introduced not only in the new developments but also in the areas currently forming part of the live centre. This could be achieved by developing the smaller, infill sites or converting the vacant commercial properties on upper floors of existing buildings into residential use.

### Pedestrian accessibility

The assessment by Space Syntax of the Development Framework proposals provides an overall assessment of pedestrian accessibility. This relates directly to one of the core aims of the Development Framework, to establish a clear and legible urban structure that encourages pedestrian movement throughout the expanded town centre area, particularly across the existing 'ring road'. The accessibility of Elwick Road and the north-south route linking the area to the south of the railway lines with the town centre (via the footbridge) will be most significantly improved, increasing their potential to attract pedestrian activity. The improved crossings along the ring road will increase its accessibility and its potential to become an attractive and vibrant route through the expanded town centre. This will be an

important element of plans to locate new 'live' uses along the ring road.

### Recommendations

The Space Syntax report provides recommendations for enhancing the Development Framework. These recommendations, and the response taken to them by Urban Initiatives is outlined below.

1. Recommendation: Improving pedestrian activity and changing the nature of the area between the stations and the Designer Outlets, to connect effectively the two existing retail cores and create a more attractive and enjoyable pedestrian environment.

Response: The environment between the Designer Outlet Centre and the town centre will be improved through the development of areas around the international station and the removal of surface car parking. This will provide clearer and safer routes for pedestrians to connect with the Designer Outlet Centre.

The proposed route of the 'Green Necklace' linear park has not been considered as a pedestrian corridor in the Space Syntax work. This high quality pedestrian environment will provide clear links between the town centre and the Design Outlet Centre. Where connections across the river within the park are required to contribute to the wider network of routes, pedestrian bridges will need to be provided.

2. Recommendation: Adding more live uses along Elwick Road, strengthening the emerging retail / live loop.

Response: Strengthen retail and leisure use focus on Elwick Road

3. Recommendation: Locating new retail anchors along Station Road to counter-balance the effect of the existing and proposed anchors in the west

Response: The amount and type of retail use proposed on Station Road is of a different nature to that of Elwick Road, where larger floorplate stores are proposed. Other uses attracting significant pedestrian movements such as arts and culture are proposed at Memorial Square which will provide a different vibrancy to the area. Retail uses are not the only model for attracting activity within the town.





# APPENDIX C

## CONSULTATION

The Ashford Town Centre Development Framework has been informed by a series of public consultation events and workshops, as outlined below.

### March 2004 Workshop

A stakeholder workshop was held on the 19th March 2004 by BDP/MVA, consultants who began the process of producing a Development Framework for Ashford Town Centre. The event took place at the Julie Rose Stadium, and 170 politicians, stakeholders, and members of the public were in attendance.

3 options (as outlined in Appendix 1 of this document) were presented, and attendees then broke into groups of ten to discuss views on each option.

A number of key points arose from the session:

- Public spaces should be supported by an evening economy
- Concern regarding too much commercial development
- Need for hotel / conference facilities
- Residential development along the riverfront encouraged
- Stronger links between retail and leisure should be established
- Stations should be integrated
- Strong support for Victoria Road connection
- Importance of education stressed
- Green environment important
- Ashford's cultural history should be celebrated
- Children's play facilities should be provided

Of the 3 options, option 3 gained most support from the attendees, and was progressed in a modified form. This has formed the starting point for the Urban Initiatives work.

### March 2004 Public Exhibition

A public exhibition was held on Bank Street on Saturday 24th March 2004.

Integration with the GADF process – consultation

A series of consultation and engagement events were held as part of the GADF process, many of which explored issues regarding the Town Centre. The following events were held:

### April 2004 Strategic Growth Model Workshop

A 4 day workshop at Eastwell Manor examined

options for the Strategic Growth of Ashford, using an interactive Strategic Growth Model Game. The input gained from this workshop informed the production of 3 Growth Scenarios.

### May 2004 Public Consultation Event – Ashford Town Centre

On the 22nd May an event was held in the County Square Shopping Centre, where members of the public were invited to play the growth model game using Scenario 3, the Compact Growth Model.

### July 2004 Strategic Concept Plan Workshop

Between the 12-16th July 2004 a stakeholder workshop was held to revisit the Strategic Growth Model Options. The Compact Growth Model option, focusing on development within existing urban areas was heavily endorsed as the preferred option.

### April 2005 – Town Centre Workshop

A full day workshop was held at Charter House on the 21st April 2005, and was attended by 140 people. The session was led and chaired by Kevin Murray. The Draft Development Framework produced by the Urban Initiatives led team was presented to the participants by Kelvin Campbell of UI, and Malcolm Turner of ABA.

Participants were divided into 12 tables and discussed the proposals based upon the following themes:

- Movement & transport
- Public realm & open space
- Economy
- Design & Character

Participants were asked to comment on whether the proposals improved each of these elements.

During the afternoon session, the salient issues emerging from the morning session were explored in more detail, with a view to providing solutions that could inform the Development Framework. The group divided into 12 tables, from which the following issues were recorded.

### 1. Public Transport Network

- massive investment in public transport needed; thinking must be more radical.

- lose traffic controls; get rid of signs – “fewer signs, more sense”; cut traffic speeds to 15/20 mph
- Smart Link bus right across town including hospitals
- green travel options – no fossil fuel vehicles permitted in the town centre, only electric or fuel cell vehicles
- model town centre on Krakow in Poland with its distinctive green space
- make Station Road a wide boulevard with two-way traffic
- extend the orbital right round Ashford

### 2. Victoria Way

Most participants agreed that Victoria Way, whatever the chosen route, was crucial to reducing traffic around the town centre. People around the table, including members of the residents' association, were preoccupied about the necessity of a new road and the number of houses to be demolished.

The involved parties agreed to hold a special workshop in the near future to clarify issues. Whatever route is chosen for Victoria Way, fears were expressed that the existing school could become isolated. A new pedestrian/cycle bridge over the railway line near Powergen was welcomed.

### 3. Parking

- ensure no loss of parking at station; town parking close to shops
- buses need to link to town centre. People want to arrive right in the centre
- bus hubs in Vicarage Lane and at the station
- safe cycle routes and secure cycle parking
- difficult to persuade people to use public transport. Consider quality and frequency of transport and fares

### 4. The River

- create wider areas of water space along river with habitats for wildlife
- open up both sides of river for walkways; more footbridges at judicious points to create water/bridge features
- Victoria Way alongside river does not optimise wetland feature

- create café style frontages along north side of Great Stour between the station and Tannery Lane
- new road to connect Henwood roundabout via Mill Court to Station Plaza to encourage more river use
- create more access to river including diagonal link across Memorial Gardens.
- reappraise tree planting

### 5. Squares and Plazas

- connect plazas physically and visually; link green spaces with designated green corridors
- spaces for young people
- clear ownership of small, open spaces
- landscape with trees, some in containers where necessary
- distant views to countryside must be safeguarded
- memorable landmark entrances for the Station Plaza, the Memorial Gardens and other town entrances
- maintain quality of design over long period

### 6. Pedestrianisation

- Bank Street – totally pedestrianised
- too much car and disabled access; must be more flexible such as time limited; drop-off points; disabled parking on edges
- clearly define pedestrian areas with gateways
- pedestrian demand crossings
- Station Plaza – clear drop-off points and pedestrian areas

### 7. Adaptable Buildings

- cost of adapting a building
- looking at whole life costings
- changing world - cultural and social
- the future Ashford without petrol

### 8. Landmarks

- landmarks, both large and small, to act as navigators and be seen from train or M20
- location important and should include high points and significant spaces.
- should clearly reflect aspirations of Ashford
- first phase of development should include exemplars

- each quarter to have different scales and densities as a way of defining that quarter; a variety of housing types
- not necessarily a building but could be an example of high quality engineering such as bridge or windmill
- Station Plaza – quality of arrival. A drop-off zone with well defined public space but not a huge car park

### 9. Historic & New Buildings

- keep the best of what we've got
- design contemporary buildings, not pastiche
- how to avoid buildings becoming out of date?
- consider importance of views in and out of the town
- height must not be prescriptive; balance with quality of space and surroundings
- respect the intimacy and character of the historic core, yet create a living town centre
- mixed use building - office, flats and leisure

### 10. Economy with a Cultural Dimension

- Ashford's unique selling points – conference facilities; specialisations
- vibrant mixed use town centre to encourage diverse activities
- underline importance of sub-regional transport hub; IT investment; green core/ renewal; university links
- create awareness of what we do already

### 11. Retail & Shopping

- supermarket in town centre essential
- lunchtime economy
- Old town - smaller, specialised shops; right mix of housing; affordable units; accessibility; mixed use development
- encourage diversity of shops, creating areas like the Shambles

### 12. Employment

- Branding/identity needs defining.
- Identifying existing 'stock' resources – skills and entrepreneurial approach
- Updating skills essential
- Consider European University or other further/

higher education links

- Decide whether Ashford will be a dormitory or vibrant town
- Financial deliverability
- Pump primer or organic growth – decide?

### Summary issues:

- Identity/branding of town needs clarification. What makes Ashford special?
- Exploit Ashford's strategic location as a regional transport hub
- Importance of hotel and conference facilities near station
- Favourable reaction to an imaginative Station Plaza
- Support for Victoria Way to relieve town centre traffic
- Moving town centre south towards station
- Strong need to develop river frontage and green spaces; support for Memorial Gardens scheme
- Retaining the existing buildings of quality and demolishing some of the town's uglier buildings, notably Charter House. Contemporary architecture, not pastiche
- Partial or full pedestrianisation of Bank Street; pedestrian areas should be marked with distinctive gateways
- Public realm – skyline needs to be more varied with different heights and scale
- Environmental and health advantages of being a town in the country
- Safeguard views to countryside and also those of the church
- Historic core – smaller, specialised shops; vibrant mixed use and a diversity of housing; central supermarket, quality outdoor market.
- Design and quality control; draw up a set of codes/ guidelines
- Spiritual element, the social heart must not be ignored

**Response to the feedback raised during the April 2005 workshop**

The participants in the workshop provided feedback on the Draft Proposals that broadly supports and endorses the overall approach and principles. Many of the comments received covered issues that are already embedded within the Development Framework, but were not clearly communicated, or require further amplification.

The primary area of concern arising from the workshop relates to the proposed Victoria Way, and the potential demolition of residential properties. Concerns were also raised regarding the existing school at the western end of Victoria Road, and the potential impact on this facility.

These issues will be examined further in the Victoria Way Corridor Study to commence in August 2005. The recommendations of this study will then inform how the Town Centre Development Framework is transformed by Ashford Borough Council into an Area Action Plan.

