Henfield Neighbourhood Plan
2017 - 2031

Local Economy Focus Group Report

28TH May 2019

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Henfield Neighbourhood Plan
Local Economy Focus Group

Final Report

The vision for the Henfield Economy

1. By 2031 Henfield has a successful, sustainable and prosperous economy, for business and visitors alike, which is technologically outward-facing and innovative
2. There is a strong retail economy in a physical form on the High Street, acting as a focal point for residents and visitors and forming a social presence in an ever-increasing digital world
3. Entrepreneurship is actively encouraged, with the provision of pop-up shops and start-up units being seen as important facilitators to achieving this goal
4. There are new business premises to accommodate these businesses and to replace any Business Parks lost to housing development
5. Our current mixed economy continues and our local economy is not dependent on one sector or one employer
6. There is a good pool of skilled labour, with a strong provision for the future, by having strong links with training and apprenticeship providers
7. All businesses, including home businesses, are connected to ultrafast full-fibre broadband
8. The inclusion of employment land in the vicinity of the Henfield Business Park and Hollands Lane Business Centre will be supported.

Work undertaken by the Focus Group

Care was taken in the formulation of the Focus Group. It included people who were new to Henfield as well as those who have been here for a considerable period. Participants included active as well as retired business representatives, and also people from the public sector. Both manufacturing and service sector experience was incorporated into the Group, giving the widest range of experience possible.

The Group met on a number of occasions to consider and present draft documents to the public representing the group's views of the vision as well as the perceived strengths and weaknesses, the opportunities available to us and the threats that we might face.

These were presented to the public at two open meetings, and comment, criticism, and ideas invited from the public. The feedback received at the open meetings, both verbal and written, and also subsequently was summarized and incorporated into the vision, and the perceptions of our local economy.

Further, a business survey was conducted. Business were surveyed by email and also via hand delivered questionnaires which were collected individually. The feedback was collated and incorporated into the vision and perceptions of the economy.

Following attendance at a Neighbourhood Plan Development Sites meeting, focus group members have been liaising with a Horsham District Council Asset Manager regarding possible new development sites for businesses in Henfield. The results of this research will be known after the submission of this report but will be reported to the steering group.

Policy and General Recommendations of the Focus Group

1. Encourage a wide mix of independent businesses in the High Street, so as to maintain the individual look and feel of the village
2. Encourage the development of informal physical and virtual business networks to explore common agendas and foster mutual support
3. Develop and maintain a sustainable visitor economy to encourage visitors to Henfield
4. Develop and maintain a series of 'events in the village' such as the Christmas evening, Piazza Italia and street food events.
5. Press for the improvement in public transport links east/west to railway links between London and Brighton

Annex A

SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) Analysis
November 2017 after consultation

Strengths

1. Diverse High Street with some specialist shops which attract visitors from outside the village
2. Places to meet and socialise while shopping or visiting
3. Plentiful supply of parking
4. Presence of financial institutions in the village currently
5. North/South public transport is good with ½ hourly bus service
6. Road links generally good.
7. Diverse base of businesses, not dependent on any one employer or industry
8. Easy access to the Business Parks
9. Village layout and footpath network encourage pedestrian access to retail
10. Many high quality businesses, including some media and digital businesses
11. Several businesses not in Business Parks are easy to access for employees
12. Bus schedules permit employees to get to their employment sites relatively easily in daytime

Weaknesses

1. The visitor economy is not sufficiently promoted
2. East/West public transport links to rail services remain weak
3. Few of our retailers have an active on-line presence
4. Retail offering not attractive to under 25 year olds
5. Lack of start-up premises for budding entrepreneurs
6. Need to develop a village focal point promoted by some residents -but not seen as necessary by all
7. There is no Business Association to represent the interests of the mainly small business community in this area

8. There is a lack of information about the vitality and robustness of the small business economy, particularly for home-based businesses in the area
9. Business Parks and premises are generally ageing
10. Insufficient premises suitable for low cost start-up initiatives

Opportunities

1. Continue to support the Traders Association to coordinate a robust retail strategy
2. Promote the visitor economy
3. Ultrafast fibre broadband speeds to improve retail and Business to Business capability
4. Networking Clubs could bring more cohesion to this diverse business spread
5. Update the 2012 business survey of the local economy
6. Promote Henfield as a 'good place to locate your business'
7. Support for business development to be prioritised in the High Street/village centre over housing
8. Growth of Gatwick could fuel more growth in the local economy
9. Develop local sustainable energy sources to benefit the business community

Threats

1. Continued growth of on-line shopping
2. Lack of access to ultrafast broadband for all village locations (if priority given to urban areas)
3. Further Bank or Post Office closures would threaten the service provision for local businesses
4. Further retail closures in the High Street could lead to a less obviously vibrant local economy and affect community feel
5. Local area still prone to power failures/floods and power outages
6. Rural economy continues to get lower priority than urban and coastal economies
7. Change of use of High Street retail premises reducing social as well as business opportunities
8. Business Parks in neighbouring towns could attract local businesses unless additional provision is made for suitable premises within our area
9. A major large-scale development in the area (e.g. Mayfield) will have an unknown but significant impact on the local economy

Annex B – Stakeholder Communications Strategy Grid

Stakeholder	Medium used for communication	Frequency of communication	Person/Group responsible for communication	What information can we get back from stakeholder
Residents	Henfield Hub and other websites	On-going	Focus Group	Ratification and original views
	Open sessions	As required by NP process		The important issues for residents of the area for the Local Economy
	Local publications e.g. BN5 and Parish Magazine	Monthly		
	Henfield Neighbourhood Plan survey summary	Once November 2017	Parish Council	Current residents views and priorities and the % change in residents' views and priorities from 2014 to current time
Retail Businesses	Henfield Hub	On-going	Focus Group	As above
	Email	As required		
	Open sessions	NP process		
	Business Survey (delivered and collected in person			
	Business Survey (Survey monkey)			
Self-employed/sole traders	Henfield Hub	On-going	Focus Group	As above
	Open evenings	NP process		
	Business Survey (delivered and collected in person			

	Business Survey (Survey Monkey)			
Commercial Sector	Henfield Hub	On-going	Focus Group	As above
	Letters to Organisations?	Not yet defined		
Small Dole Group	Email via coordinator and through steering group	As needed	Focus Group Chair	Feedback
Infrastructure group	Email via coordinator	As needed	Focus Group Chair	Feedback
Steering Group	Emails, represented at meetings	As required	Focus Group Chair	Quality assurance of reports
Other Focus Groups who have a joint interest in a policy (Transport and Travel Focus Group on Community Infrastructure and Facilities Focus Group)	Emails, meetings, through Steering Group	As required	Focus Group Chair	Comments on Policy that this Focus Group leads

Annex C – Activity Log

Date	Activity and Salient Points
dd mmm yyyy	**ACTIVITY, WITH WHOM.** How many attended, outcome, salient features, decisions made etc
14/09/2017	Focus Group meeting : discussed ToR, scope, proposed methods for the focus group work and what evidence we already have, how to obtain further evidence
29/09/2017	Focus Group meeting :, Vision for Business (Retail and other businesses discussed separately) in Henfield, based on current information and through reviewing previous data/Vision
5/10/2017	Focus Group meeting: Discussed and refined Strengths, Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats document from current information and research. Decided on representative to feedback to Steering Group
26/10/2018	Focus Group meeting- Progress Check
2/11/2017	Focus Group working party to get displays on Local Economy mounted ready for Open Event
4/11/2017	Open meeting 1- One member of the Focus Group manned the Local Economy stand, met the public, sought their views and distributed response forms
08/11/2017	Open Meeting 2 Two members of Focus Group manned the Local Economy Stand, met the public, sought their views and distributed response forms
12/11/2017	Steering Group sent a Progress Report from Local Economy group
During November 2017	Business Survey conducted on line and face to face
During November 2017	Responses to Open Event analyzed an d summarized (Appendix F) also Focus group Considered document 'What is important to Henfield' in light of Local Economy (see Annex E)
4/1/2018	Focus Group meeting: start to review the Vision and submission to Neighbourhood Plan in light of business survey results and open event feedback.
11/1/2018	Focus Group meeting: consider the first draft of Final submission to Neighbourhood Plan in light of

Date	Activity and Salient Points
	business survey results and open event feedback.
18/1/2-18	Focus Group meeting to finalise the final submission
30/1/2018	Meeting with Carol Mazgay from Horsham DC to consider ideas for possible new business premises location/s in Henfield
1/2/2018	Reporting back outcomes and /or recommendations of the meeting with Horsham DC Asset manager to steering group

Annex D - Sources of Key Evidence Used.

List of documents, bodies, groups, individuals etc consulted

1. Consumer Survey- Access to services January 2011 Abacus Research
2. Henfield Business Sector analysis – looking at the businesses in an area 5miles radius of Henfield March 2012 – June 2012 Simpson Consulting
3. Henfield Business Survey Jun 2012 Simpson Consulting
4. HCP parking surveys ongoing Henfield Community Partnership
5. Henfield Economic Data On-going Henfield Community Partnership
6. Skills and Enterprise in Rural West Sussex Sept 2010 Simpson Consulting for WSCC
7. Gender Profile of West Sussex's Labour Market. Sept 2004 GELLM unit Sheffield Hallam University
8. Support for Market Towns in West Sussex: Henfield Business Base Analysis February 2012 (West Sussex County Council)
9. Neighbourhood Plan Business Survey Report : Henfield Parish published by Action for Rural Sussex December 2017
10. West Sussex County Council website, www.westsussex-betterconnected.org.uk and newspaper West Sussex Connections October 2017 regarding ultrafast fibre broadband pilot in West Sussex
11. Summary document November 2017 'What is Important ' Neighbourhood Plan Survey Report comparing September 2017 data and June 2014 State of the Parish Report

Annex E – Other Evidence/Information.

A Focus Group member has been following up links with an officer from Horsham DC in regard to possible new for business development in Henfield sites in Hollands Lane and this will be followed up with a further meeting in January 2018.

Henfield Residents' Feedback – '**What Is Important Index'**
Information taken from the September 2017 Neighbourhood Plan Survey Report and June 2014 State of the Parish Report. All percentages have been rounded up or down to the nearest 1%

Also focus group members further engaged with updates, views and local opinion by

- Attending Open meeting of Henfield Community Partnership 14/9/2017 including discussion of current economic / business data and parking surveys
- Attending two Neighbourhood Plan meetings on Development Site proposals in autumn 2017

Annex F- Analysis of Feedback from Drop-In Events

As well as verbal feedback at the two Open Meetings, 22 respondents completed a feedback sheet, summarized below:

Henfield Residents: Yes 23 No 0 Employed in the Parish: Yes 4 No 14 (used to be before retired 1) (retired 17)

Operating a Business in Henfield? Yes 3 No 14 Comments: 1 Self Employed (form 1), 1 Used to (form 3),

Key to shading **Colour of highlight**	**Type**	**Number of comments**
	Business comments	10
	Retail/High Street comments	11
	Employment comments	6
	Leisure /visitor economy comments	8
	Transport and Public Transport comments	11
	Broadband and phone connectivity comments	4
	Community comment s	9
	Expressing broad agreement	7
	Parking	2
	Development issues	7
None	Not coded includes cycle ways (1) Media Presence (1)	2

Ranking of number of responses in each broad area of comments	
Retail / High Street	11
Transport and Public Transport	1
Business	10
Community	9
Leisure and Visitor economy	8
Development	7
Employment	6
Broadband/phone connectivity	4
Parking	2
Cycling	1
Media presence	1

In broad agreement (coded pink)
7 comments

VISION for the Local Economy – Feedback Please note: Each cell of text refers to one comment, and the numbers in brackets show which response form is being quoted		
What do you think is good about	**What is not so good**	**Areas of Interest/Comments**
Provision of more low cost small units for self-employed small businesses (1)	Where would these business parks go? Loss of green field sites- NOT so good (1)	Public Transport to Brighton in the evening (4)
Agree strongly with Vision (8)	Growth of Gatwick won't impact on Henfield Economy. Gatwick workers don't live or shop here (1)	Priority to be given to locals when developing new or expanding business. (22)
Agree (10)	Public Transport (East/West) (4)	Connection with the railway (Hassocks) required as a regular schedule. (4)
In agreement (11)	Not an attractive offer of shops for under 25s? What under 25 year old would be bothered about shopping in Henfield? Focus on older people with higher incomes (5)	Connection to Worthing and Southlands Hospitals (although The Link is much appreciated) (4)
Close knit community groups to join (12)	High Street Shops- too many offices and coffee shops (12)	Better mobile phone signal (6)
Excellent points. Must support High Street and local businesses. (14)	Need more Business Parks (14)	If we do not attract young people with housing and jobs we will die! (7)
Superfast broadband essential (14)	Loss of existing sites for local employment within the village by building housing on brownfield sites- these should be retained rather than create out of village employment parks (17)	Let's keep the social side of the centre (10)
People- community, countryside, sports centre, youth club, shops, leisure activities (19)	Overdevelopment (19)	Re Parking- are employees and employers working in Henfield High Street provided with parking permits? (11)

Village looking High Street (20)	Lack of evening buses (19)	As much focus as possible on the integration of Henfield life to the 'online community (18)
Good and Clear overall (22)	Nothing (20)	Evening buses for young people to get out of Henfield (19)
	Focus on new business parks which by their nature will be out of town. Focus should be to retain existing with houses outside (21)	Employment-maybe apprenticeships (19)
		Footpaths, common, wildlife, museum – Must not keep losing farmland (19)
		Keep shops as they are- perhaps more seats outside shops (20)

SWOT : STRENGTHS WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES and THREAT S- Feedback **Please note: Each cell of text refers to one comment, and the numbers in brackets show which response form is being quoted**		
What do you think is good about	**What is not so good**	**Areas of Interest/Comments**
Can't park all day! on a one-off (3)	Closures of Banks and Post Office (3)	BUS SERVICE for commuting purpose e.g. to Hassocks or Three Bridges (2)
High Street: reasonable variety of shops, but….(4)	Men's outfitter's needed (again!) Ladies Clothes shops also needed. Important that at least one Bank and Post Office are retained (4)	Make rent cheaper for start-up businesses to encourage trial businesses. (5)
Variety of Shops (3)	No 6: Weaknesses Now: Query 'no strong village focal point. Consider village hall to be village focal point. Good attendance at meetings re neighbourhood plan and other meetings and social events-pantomime/film etc, etc (8)	-What about pop up shops? This could encourage people to spend more- limited edition items that are unique (5)
In agreement (11)	We need to make a bit more excitement for visitors (10)	Village Hall could possibly be developed more during the day although community meetings and self-help group(8)
Presentation boards capture the salient and relevant points (15)	Public Transport (12)	More Vegetarian options in eating out. Cafés to stay open later Sunday breakfast option (9)
ID (Identity) a central theme which can be used consistently by interested parties to 'sell 'the village to	Not enough jobs (12)	Let's improve what we've got to attract (10)

SWOT : STRENGTHS WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES and THREAT S- Feedback Please note: Each cell of text refers to one comment, and the numbers in brackets show which response form is being quoted		
What do you think is good about	**What is not so good**	**Areas of Interest/Comments**
visitors. Scenery/heritage are a draw. (18)		
About right (22)	Too much building (12)	Wildlife- footpaths, Henfield Common and Museum (12)
	Public Transport to Horsham, Brighton, Burgess Hill may be acceptable during the day, but evening access and access to Worthing are virtually non-existent (13)	Nothing further except Indoor Swimming Pool! (15)
	There is no pedestrian/cycle access to the Industrial Estate. (13)	Bus prices- too expensive- not good for young people/low income families. (16)
	Pressure for housing seems to take precedence over business premises which will inevitably increase community and create 'dead 'estates (13)	Better media presence (16)
	Nothing further to add (15)	Events! More to draw in people /interest (16)
	Threat: large companies coming in and reducing local feel of High Street. Promote local trades and their businesses (16)	Village walks tied to community events (18)
	Lack of public transport (19)	Local job board for Recruitment (22)
	Leisure –good (19)	Your strengths 3, 5 contradict/ are opposite to those of the Transport and Travel focus group!! (22)
	Overdevelopment (19)	
	Lack of jobs (19)	
	Strengths: Pubs, ironmongers, clothes shop, post office etc. Weaknesses; None Threats: the closing of shops (20)	There are plenty of small empty units tucked away off farm tracks in the locality. They just need tapping into! (21)
	Weakness 7 is not needed- plenty available online (22)	As much business as possible should be retained in the centre of the village for ease of access. Also you can't get a haircut whilst your car's in the garage if the garage is out of town. (21)

Annex G

Summary of Business Survey December 2017 to local businesses and residents who are self-employed

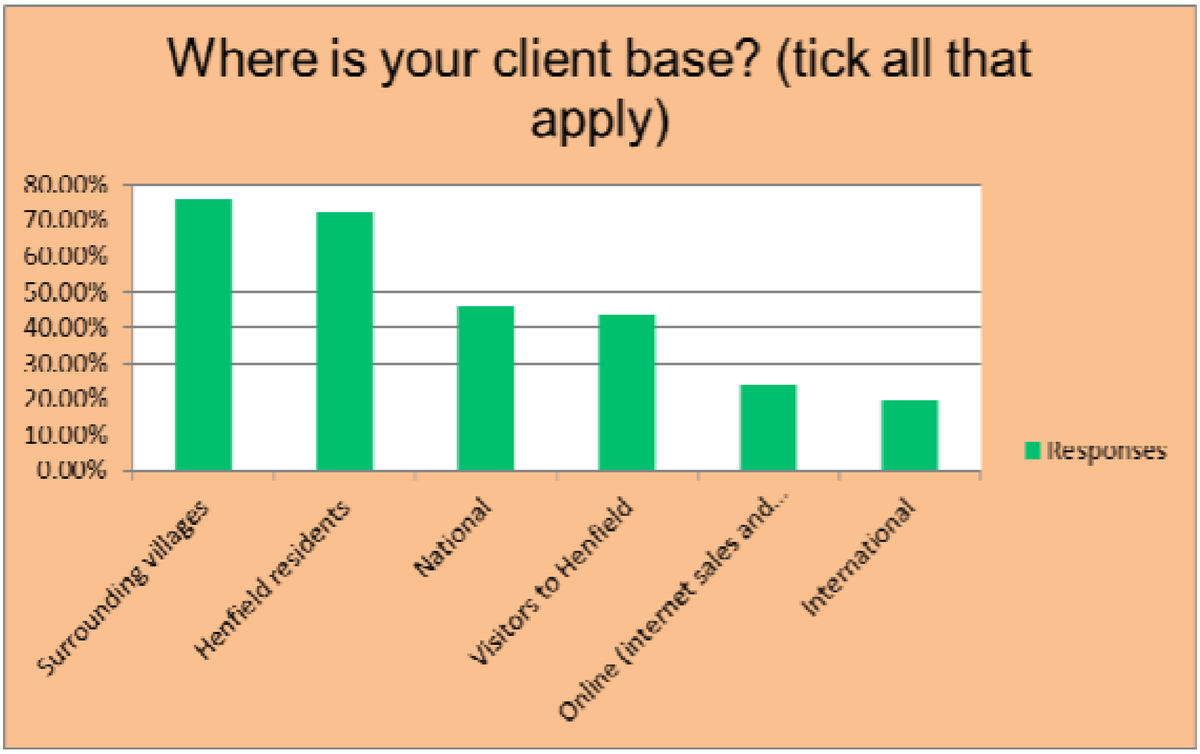
This consultation exercise was developed and undertaken by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee and Henfield Parish Council working in conjunction with Action in Rural Sussex.

The survey was conducted in late 2017, using a questionnaire consisting of both closed and open-ended questions. This mix allows questions to focus on obtaining specific pieces of information tailored at responding to certain issues or themes (closed questions), whilst allowing a degree of freedom in the responses which people provide (open questions).
It was prepared and delivered both in hard copies to businesses along the High street as well as via an electronic system (survey monkey) to those email addresses provided for this purpose and to other business who preferred to respond online.

Key Findings
In relation to the length of business operation,

• the majority of respondents to the question 31 (representing 63.27%) out of the 50 responses have been operation for 10+ years. • followed by seven each (representing 14.29% each) operating within six months to three years (seven businesses) and six years to 10 years (seven businesses)
• three businesses (representing 6.12%) have operated within three to five years and
• Only one business being new (under six months)

With regards to the sector businesses fall into. There was an even spread with the exceptions of Arts & Entertainment, Tourism, Transport and Wholesale Trade where none of the respondents businesses fell into.
• The most out of the 50 respondents (13) indicated their businesses fell into the Retail category.
• The two second most (10 businesses) were in the Business/professional Services.
• Five businesses were in the Financial/Insurance sector
• Four businesses were in the manufacturing sector
• Three were in the Construction sector.
• Two each in the Health and Social Care, Scientific/Technical, Hotels and Food and Education & Training
• This was closely followed by the Financial/Insurance and Scientific/Technical with two each.
• There was one business each in the Agricultural and IT Services



The majority of respondents to the survey 46 (representing 92%) were not home based businesses with only four (representing 8%) indicating they are home based. Of those home based businesses (four) the elements of a home-working support that would be of most interest to them are:

- Business meeting space - two
- Access to high band with internet - two
- Co-working and collaboration space – one
- Storage - one

In response to the question; is it your plan to expand your business beyond your domestic space and might you require a small workshop and/or office space,

- the majority of respondents to the question 27 (representing 84.4%) indicated that they had no expansion planned
- however, four respondents (representing 12.5%) of the 32 that responded to the question indicated they may to do so in the next one to two years

In response to the question; If not home based, which of the following calendar events and activities benefit businesses in Henfield?

- Henfield Christmas Late Night Shopping was the most identified with 27 ticks
- Henfield Open Gardens and Arts Weekend followed very closely with 22
- The Bi annual Summer Fayre has 13 ticks • Horsham District Piazza Italia had 11
- Horsham District Food & Drink Festival had seven and Horsham MicroBiz had three

Just over of the respondents, 25 out of the 49 that responded to the social media question (representing 51%) felt they would benefit from a social media networking group centred on the Henfield area with 24 respondents (representing 49%) suggesting it would not benefit them

In response to how many people are employed by the responding businesses;
• 18 of the businesses employs between two to five people
• 11 of the businesses are sole-traders/one self employed
• 11 other businesses employs between 6-10 people
• Four of the businesses employs between 11-20 people
• Four of the businesses employs 50+ people
• Two businesses employs between 20-50 people

Of the staff employed by the businesses that responded to the survey;
• 24 businesses have between 0 - 20% of their staff living in Henfield
• 11 businesses have between 80 - 100% of their staff living in Henfield
• Seven of the businesses have between 21-40% of their staff living in Henfield
• Four businesses have between 41- 60 % of their staff living in Henfield and
• Four businesses have between 61-80% of their staff living in Henfield

In relation to the client base of businesses (businesses were asked to tick al that applied to them);
• 38 of the businesses had clients from surrounding villages
• 36 of the businesses had Henfield residents as clients
• 23 of the responding businesses responded to have a national client base
• 22 of the businesses indicated visitors to Henfield
• 12 businesses indicated online sales/services and
• 10 of the businesses had international clients

The main advantages of running a business in Henfield in terms of categories were the community, good transport links and parking, location and the High street.

The challenges of running a business in Henfield fell into the following categories; transport and travel, staff related challenges, footfall and the internet and mobile phones.

(Please see full report from Action in Rural Sussex for more