Report by DTZ for

Newhaven Strategic Network:

'A Retail Strategy for Town Centre Development & Growth'

FINAL REPORT

Volume 1

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Contents

Appendices

1. **Urban Design Overview**

2. **Newhaven Town Centre – Land Use Mix**

3. **Healthcheck Summary Tables**

4. **Household Survey Results: Powerpoint Presentation**

5. **Household Survey Results: Detailed Tabulations**

6. **Key Opportunity Sites**

7. **Comparison Goods Retail Capacity Assessment: 'Baseline' Scenario**

8. **Convenience Goods Retail Capacity Assessment: 'Baseline' Scenario**

9. **Priorities and Timescales**

1 Introduction

Study Objectives

1.01 DTZ was commissioned by Newhaven Strategic Network in December 2003 to carry out a retail study of Newhaven town centre. The main objectives of the study are to:

- Provide an assessment of the existing health of the town centre, which will form a baseline for ongoing "healthchecks" in line with the advice set out in PPG6.
- Provide an assessment of the likely future capacity and market demand for retailing within the centre, taking into consideration developments elsewhere, particularly in the Drove area and the town's wider catchment.
- Provide an analysis of the retail and leisure services that Newhaven Town Centre offers in the context of the sub-regional town centre hierarchy, taking into consideration future developments proposed, and the requirements of business to sustain and expand their business.
- Provide advice on development and other investment opportunities within the town centre.

1.02 This Volume 1 report sets out DTZ's main findings and recommendations. This is underpinned by the more detailed appendices contained in Volume 2.

Background

1.03 Major changes are taking place in the development of town centres across the UK. These changes present both significant opportunities, and potential threats to the future vitality and viability of our town centres - Newhaven is no exception. The manner in which Newhaven has developed over time and the competitive pressures it faces from surrounding centres has meant that significant time, resources and expertise have been devoted to ensuring a positive future for the town.

1.04 As part of this, Newhaven Strategic Network (NSN) was established towards the end of the SRB regeneration programme for the area, with a remit to focus and co-ordinate regeneration of the town. Recognising the multi-faceted aspects to regeneration, NSN enjoys wide representation from the business, political and community areas. NSN also works closely with the District and County Councils.

1.05 The issue of how to ensure the future prosperity of seaside and coastal towns, such as Newhaven, has also recently been given prominence by the August 2003 *"Shifting Sands"* report by English Heritage and the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE). This study showcases 14 seaside towns that have regenerated themselves through different initiatives and funding, and highlights good practice as a way for other towns to benefit, such as Newhaven. This report draws on some of the key findings and recommendations of this study, as well as other research.

1.06 Both the District and County Councils, along with NSN (and it's predecessor body Newhaven Economic Partnership), have also carried out significant amounts of background work to guide the future development of Newhaven. Key strategies and plans include:

- The East Sussex Structure Plan, (adopted December 1999).
- The Lewes District Local Plan (adopted in March 2003).
- Newhaven Town Centre Strategy and Action Plan, (2001).
- Regeneration Strategy for Newhaven, (2003).

1.07 In the process of drawing up these strategies and plans significant levels of public, business and statutory consultation has taken place. Research was also commissioned in 2003 to take into account the views of young people on their requirements and aspirations. The Lewes Community Strategy (stemming from new legislative requirements) will set out an holistic social, commercial and environmental development approach across the district (including Newhaven) drawing on this and other research.

1.08 A common strand emerging from this widespread community consultation has been the desire to revitalise the town centre, offer improved shopping and environmental facilities to facilitate the attraction of new business (and employment) to the area.

Study Approach

1.09 In order to address the key objectives of the study in a robust and comprehensive manner, we have carried out the following key strands of research:

- **Changing Town Centres (Section 2)** – Describes the key planning and property market trends that have driven the changes in Britain's urban, retail and leisure landscape over the last two decades. Amongst other issues, it highlights DTZ's view on the rise of 'e-commerce' and the potential implications for the future of retailing and smaller town centres.

- **Town Centre SWOT Assessment (Sections 3 and 4)** – Summarises the economic and physical strengths and weaknesses of Newhaven town centre based on existing research, as well as new research conducted by DTZ. Key trends and common themes are identified to provide overall context and focus to the report. It also identifies the potential opportunities for growth and the likely threats to its long term vitality and viability.

- **Benchmarking Assessment (Section 5) –** This section sets out the headline findings of new research conducted by DTZ which benchmarks Newhaven's quantitative key performance indicators against comparable coastal towns in the UK, selected on the basis of their retail offer and catchment population. This highlights the potential 'gaps' in Newhaven's town centre uses, as well as identifying the key initiatives occurring in other centres to help promote their regeneration and future role.

- **Household Survey/Stakeholder Consultation (Section 6)** – Examines shopping and leisure patterns in and around Newhaven and beyond, as well as people's perceptions of the town centre as a place to live, shop, work and visit.

- **Market Demand for Retail (Section 7)** – Reviews the demand for new retail space in the town and attraction to key businesses, in the context of national and regional trends.

- **Town Centre Opportunity Sites (Section 8)** – Drawing on the market demand and retail capacity assessments, DTZ has examined the development potential of a number of town centre opportunity sites identified in conjunction with the client.

- **Retail Capacity Assessment (Section 9)** – Assesses the potential capacity for new convenience and comparison goods retailing in the town and wider catchment up to 2016.

- **Town Centre Futures (Section 10) –** Sets out our findings and recommendations for robust and market-facing strategy to help deliver the future renaissance and growth of Newhaven town centre.

1.10 The appendices set out in Volume 2 comprise the more detailed supporting evidence underpinning DTZ's findings and recommendations. This includes the full household survey tabulations, the *Re:Map* retail capacity tables and a summary of priorities and timescales.

2 Changing Town Centres

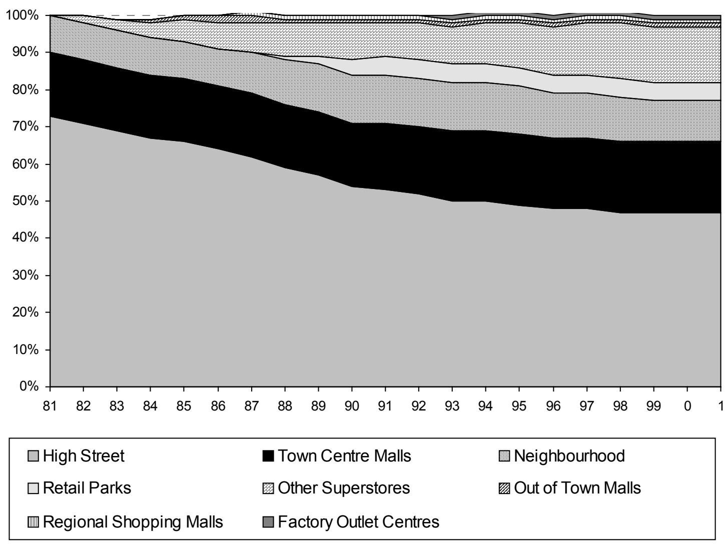
2.01 This section describes the dynamic changes in the urban, retail and leisure landscape over the last two decades and how this is impacting on the vitality and viability of the UK's town and city centres.

The rise of out-of-centre shopping & leisure facilities

2.02 At the beginning of the 1980s town centres were the focus for most retail and leisure activity and the dominance of the high street went largely unchallenged. However, by the dawn of the new millennium there has been a profound shift in the geography of new retail and leisure development, such that town centres are now no longer the first choice for a range of shopping, leisure, entertainment and employment activities.

2.03 This shift in investment and spend away from town centres to out-of-centre locations has been driven by a combination of dynamic economic, social, demographic and property market trends. Investors and occupiers responded to (and fuelled) these changes through the 'four waves' of retail decentralisation, beginning with food superstores and retail warehouses in the 1980s, followed by freestanding regional shopping centres and factory outlets during the 1990s. DTZ research shows that the High Street's market share of total UK retail floorspace fell from 73% to 47% between 1981 and 2001 (see Figure 2.1). Currently it is estimated that out-of-centre shopping facilities account for over one-third of all UK retail spend.

Figure 2.1: Total UK Retail Space – Market Share (%)



2.04 Over the last decade the commercial leisure industry has also been one of the fastest growing sectors of the UK property market. This growth has been underpinned by the dramatic growth in leisure spend and fuelled by a select number of leisure activities, particularly multiplex cinemas and the health and fitness industry. As with the 'four waves' of retailing, most of this new commercial leisure development has been in predominantly out-of-centre locations. New formats and attractions have also emerged that combine a mix of leisure, A3 and retail uses and draw visitors from a much wider catchment area. Examples include Star City in Birmingham, Festival Leisure Park in Basildon and Xscape in Milton Keynes.

2.05 The rise of these new retail and leisure destinations over the last two decades has largely been paralleled by the decline of many of Britain's town and city centres. The poor investment, management and marketing of the traditional high street, has further "pushed" consumers, investors, businesses and occupiers to out-of-centre locations.

The Urban Renaissance

2.06 Against this background of town centre decline and out-of-centre expansion, there was a significant shift in Government thinking and policy in the 1990s. The planning system has been strengthened, particularly through the publication of a series of Planning Policy Guidance Notes – PPG1 (*'General Policy & Principles'*, 1997), PPG6 (*'Town Centres & Retail Development'*, 1996), PPG13 (*'Transport'*, 2001) and most recently draft Planning Policy Statement 6 (*'Planning for Town Centres'*).

2.07 The 2000 Urban White Paper entitled *'Our Towns and Cities: The Future – Delivering an Urban Renaissance'* also sets out the Government's plans for urban renewal over the next decade and provides another explicit statement of their intent to reverse town centre decline. Towns and cities are now central to delivering the Government's main policy objectives of sustainable development and high quality urban design, particularly through the mixing of land uses.

2.08 At the heart of the guidance in both PPG6 and PPG13 are the 'need' and 'sequential' approaches, which have significantly curbed the growth of new out-of-centre retail and leisure developments over recent years.

- Retail **'need'**, as distinct from capacity, inevitably involves a subjective assessment. Whilst there is no clear definition of what precisely constitutes need for the purposes of PPG6, subsequent Ministerial Statements and Inquiry decisions do provide some guidance. In this context need is generally held to include growth in expenditure and quantitative capacity (ie. quantitative need); the quality and range of existing facilities (ie. qualitative need); customer choice; the need for a town to be competitive with alternative retail destinations; a related absence of harm to interests of acknowledged importance; and broad compliance with recognised planning objectives (e.g. sustainability).

- PPG6 states that adopting a **sequential approach** means that the first preference should be for town centre sites, *"…followed by edge-of-centre sites, district and local centres and only then out-of-centre sites in locations that are accessible by a choice of means of transport"* (para 1.11). Both PPG6 and PPG13 place the onus on developers to demonstrate that all potential town centre options have been assessed if edge-of-centre or out-of-centre locations are being proposed for new development. In his February 1999 speech Mr. Richard Caborn confirmed that a sequential approach to identify suitable sites should only be carried out if 'need' has been established. He added that: *"…if there is no need for further developments, there will be no requirement to identify additional sites"*.

2.09 The Deputy Prime Minister issued a Parliamentary Statement in April 2003 to help clarify the Government's policy for town centres and retail developments. In terms of need, the first Secretary of State accepted that need can be expressed in quantitative and qualitative terms but considered that the *"…evidence presented on need is becoming increasingly and unnecessarily complicated"*. He therefore places greater weight on quantitative need for new retail provision and the sequential test. The statement also notes that whilst the contribution a proposed development might make to the regeneration of a site could be a material consideration to be taken into account in the determination of a planning application, regeneration and employment benefits are not an element of retail need.

2.10 In January 2004 the government issued a draft Planning Policy Statement 6 (PPS6), *"Planning for Town Centres"* for consultation. Although it should not be afforded much weight at this stage, it does confirm the Government's longstanding commitment to town centres. Nevertheless, it also recognises that out-of-town retailing is an established part of the urban and retail landscape and affords retailers slightly more flexibility with regard to extensions of existing out-of-centre stores. The Government also calls on local authorities to be more proactive in planning for the future growth of their town centres. For example, local authorities are required to assess its network of town centres, ensuring that larger centres do not over dominate. Specific reference is also made to planning positively for the evening economy. Local authorities are also required to take a more proactive role in promoting sites for development in town centres, working in partnership with the private sector.

2.11 Nevertheless, although there is new optimism, new visions and new designs for town centre, research shows that there is increasing polarisation in investment and market shares between the top shopping locations and the smaller towns and centres. For example, the top 100 shopping locations in the UK account for approximately half of the total floorspace in the pipeline and they are also the main focus for market demand.

The Renaissance of Coastal Towns

2.13 At a national level, the issue of how to ensure the future prosperity of seaside cities and towns such as Newhaven has recently been given prominence by the publication of the *"Shifting Sands"* report by English Heritage and the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) in August 2003. This study showcased 14 seaside towns that have regenerated themselves and highlights good practice as a way for other towns to benefit (the research has not led to additional funding streams).

2.14 The research highlighted the need for partnership-working and a range of measures are identified as key factors if, for twelve months of the year, seaside towns are to be successful. It also commented on a lack of strong retail focus to many of the study towns. The measures seen as key include:

- Good/improved transport connections
- Key visitor attractions
- (Safe) evening economy
- Clean beaches and water
- Opportunities for new business and creation of real jobs
- Opportunities for affordable housing

2.15 In the examples highlighted there was usually one significant factor that either has, or could lead to improvements to prosperity. For example:

- **Bexhill – the de La War pavilion**. Once restored it operates as an iconic architectural tourist destination.

- **Morecombe** – Creation of new breakwaters. Led to new natural resource for birds/flaura/fauna and increased tourist potential. Focus on seafront is leading to increased retail and leisure opportunities.

- **St Ives – Tate St Ives**. Creation of renowned gallery, leading to increased artistic tourism opportunities and an anticipated artistic and heritage renaissance.

- **Whitby Abbey** – Creation of visitor centre to exploit strong geographical and historical selling points.

2.16 The main approaches recommended to other towns wishing to reflect the rising fortunes of these 14 examples include:

- A strong master-planning process
- A series of zoned plans and foci for future development
- Working with designers to generate ideas
- Adapting policies and practices to promote design quality.

2.17 Given the focus of the commissioning bodies (design, heritage, etc) the suggested approaches are aligned closely to those areas. Our SWOT and benchmarking analysis of Newhaven, as described in Section 3 and 4, clearly indicates that many of the "ingredients for success" are there already, or (if not) could be put in place.

2.18 As part of the work involved in preparing the Regional Spatial Strategy, the South East England Regional Assembly (SEERA) also commissioned a "Sussex Coastal Towns Strategy" stemming from current Regional Planning Guidance (RPG9). Thisrport, (completed in May 2004) identified the Sussex Coastal Towns Priority Areas for Economic Regeneration. The aim of this work is to determine whether distinct policies should be prepared to further guide economic regeneration in these areas. The report highlights the tightening physical and environmental constraints which limit development potential. This will require investment and development for economic regeneration to be given priority. The report concludes that clear special policy treatment is required to address significant economic opportunities which will arise. This report aims to provide a strong policy basis for regeneration efforts for towns, such as Newhaven, and a strategic evidence base from which to attract funding.

The Growth of E-Commerce

2.19 Over the last five years the growth of the Internet has had a significant impact on the way people live, work and shop. Not surprisingly there are many different views and forecasts as to the potential impact of the Internet and 'e-commerce' on the High Street and also, ultimately, on how we shop as a nation. The following provides DTZ's view, based on a synthesis of our own and other research, as to the potential impact of 'e-commerce' on the retail and leisure landscape. The research indicates that:

- The UK has the largest number of active adult Internet users in Europe.
- This usage is forecast to increase to 60% by 2005.
- Some 14.4 million people shopped online in Britain during 2002, spending £8bn (equivalent to a 4% market share of total UK retail spend).
- Although forecasts differ, online sales in the UK are predicted to reach between 10% - 12.5% of total consumer spend by the end of the decade.

2.20 The potential impact on the retail and leisure sectors, and more specifically on the vitality and viability of Britain's High Street, is difficult to predict. Nevertheless, the research would seem to indicate that over the short to medium term the future of the high street is not under significant pressure. The reasoning is that the Internet cannot fulfil the leisure and social needs of retailing and therefore its impact is unlikely to threaten the future of town centres.

2.21 Nevertheless, in a rapidly changing marketplace, it is important to plan for potential change, as the impact over the long term could be significant. Thus the better managed and marketed the centre is, the less vulnerable it will be to the growth of the Internet. The best way to ensure against any impact is to offer a range of complementary, non-retail attractions. Smaller and medium-sized centres, that offer a high level of convenient shopping facilities, supported by niche goods, leisure and tourist attractions are likely to be more resilient to these technological changes. Inevitably, there will be increasing polarisation of prime and secondary property within centres and between towns. Therefore centres need to diversify their role in order to be resilient to changing future circumstances.

2.22 In conclusion, it is hard to accurately assess the extent to which 'e-commerce' will impact on the high street, as no clear trends have emerged. Nevertheless, it has already impacted on the business strategies of key retailers and sectors, and in certain cases this has manifested itself on the high street by speeding up the trend towards the closure of banks, travel agencies and post offices. Planning and managing change on the high street due to the impact of the Internet and new technological advances represents a major challenge to all town centres in the future. The role of town centre management will become ever important, as it will be necessary to build even closer partnerships between key stakeholders to meet the challenges ahead and to identify opportunities for using the new technology to promote and market town centres in more innovative ways.

Summary

2.22 The retail and leisure markets have experienced some profound changes over recent years. The mix of social and economic conditions which prevailed in the 1980s has triggered the arrival of a much more mobile and discerning consumer seeking not just value for money, but also increased choice in terms of goods, shopping and leisure environments and experiences.

2.23 These conditions continue to impinge on the nature and location of today's retail and leisure provision. Consumer loyalty has become a vital ingredient in the success of town centres, retailers and leisure operators. Increasingly, shopping locations have to be able to fulfil the role of a destination location. This means providing a wide range of shopping and leisure facilities able to attract and retain the interest of the entire family. In return such schemes benefit not only from much wider catchment areas, but also increased footfall, spend and substantially longer shopping trips.

2.24 It is evident, however, that whilst town centre development has increased over the last twenty years, the successive waves of out-of-centre investment have squeezed the market share of the traditional high street. There is also growing evidence of polarisation between centres in regions, with the larger more dominant centres benefiting from increased investment. There is also growing evidence of polarisation between prime and secondary/tertiary locations on the High Street. As a result, the larger cities and towns have continued to outperform the smaller and medium-sized centres in terms of average rental growth.

2.25 The emergence of 'e-commerce' over recent years also represents a major challenge to the future vitality and viability of the high street. Town centres will increasingly need to adapt and diversify their roles and activities to differentiate themselves from the 'physical' and 'virtual' competition.

2.26 It will be demonstrated in Sections 3 and 4 that Newhaven Town Centre is facing increased competition from larger neighbouring centres, such as Eastbourne, Brighton and Lewes.

3 Newhaven Town Centre: Economic SWOT Assessment

3.01 This section examines the relative economic strengths and weaknesses of Newhaven town centre and is based, where possible, on the key performance indicators (KPIs) set out in Figure 1 of PPG6. It will also help to identify any potential threats to the continued vitality and viability of the town centre and/or opportunities for potential growth.

3.02 The following SWOT synthesises the results of previous and ongoing research conducted in and around town centre, and is supplemented where appropriate by DTZ's own research. The key findings are as follows: -

Newhaven Town Centre: A Brief Overview

- Newhaven is the smallest town in the District of Lewes (after Lewes) with a population of just over 11,000 residents. The town owes its present day characteristics to its continued importance as a port and has a relatively strong employment base.

- Newhaven enjoys a rich natural setting between the sea and the Sussex Downs AONB/Proposed National Park and these factors, combined with good communications with the rest of Lewes, and beyond, has led the local authority to identify it as capable for sustaining large-scale new housing development.

- Although Newhaven is the second largest of the district's four principal shopping destinations it faces significant and growing competition from the higher order centres of Brighton and Eastbourne outside the District, which are both around ten to fifteen minutes drive away. Newhaven is home to one of East Sussex's major tourist attractions – The Fort - and has established itself as a yachting and boating destination with the creation of a marina area.

- Newhaven town centre consists of a tight core of small unit shops/business premises with four national multiples, (see Appendix 2). The entire town centre is encircled by a one-way road system with vehicular access to the town centre restricted to just three points. Although the High Street itself is pedestrianised, links for pedestrians into the town centre can be difficult and potentially dangerous, having to cross the busy one way system. Works have been undertaken to improve these linkages, and further works are programmed to improve the situation for pedestrians.

- The largest retailer in the town centre is Somerfield, adjacent to a large multi-storey car park. Opened in 1980 this store anchors the Newhaven Square extension to the main High Street. Mackays, Boots, Woolworths and Peacocks occupy the majority of the other larger units around the centre of the High Street. Apart from the development of Newhaven Square around Somerfield, there appears to have been little redevelopment of significance to other units in the town centre. The town centre is currently the subject of a phased streetscape/environmental/safety programme, aiming to improve pedestrian permeability and safety.

- Other non shopping 'draws' to the town centre include the Seahaven Leisure Centre (adjacent to Somerfield) several public houses/cafes and the library. However, the library is perceived to be under-utilised and is housed in outmoded and unsuitable premises.

- Approximately 500m to the east of the town centre lies Newhaven Retail Park at the Drove. This is a four unit retail park as well as McDonalds drive-through restaurant. Immediately east of the town centre, across the River Ouse, lies the port and associated industrial facilities and the Dieppe-Newhaven ferry terminal, as well as Newhaven Town Railway Station. To the west lies the largely residential area of Newhaven while to the south can be found the marina, the Fort tourist attraction and beach. North lies the Denton Island business area and the Sussex Downs AONB, while to the north east lies the Denton residential area and all main roads linking Newhaven to Brighton, Eastbourne, Seaford, Lewes and beyond.

- Major developments have recently been completed outside the town centre. These include the retail area at The Drove and the revitalisation of Denton Island as a business/commercial area.

- Recently Newhaven has been the subject of two major planning applications which may have implications for the town centre. The first, which is the subject of an appeal, is a new out of town 1,272sq. m Lidl foodstore. The second for an 18 storey office, residential and retail scheme at Bridge Street in the town centre was refused by the local authority in 2003.

- In terms of its demographic profile, there are proportionally more persons aged 65 and over compared to the national average, and proportionally less persons aged 20-39. Most other age categories mirror national trends.

- In terms of ACORN [(1)] 'lifestyle' groups, the area has double the average *'wealthy achievers'* and 80% more of those classified as *'prosperous pensioners, retirement areas',* which fits in with the age profile of the local population. The town also has proportionally more 'skilled workers' and 'new home owners' and proportionally less people in the lower income, higher unemployment categories. However, Newhaven also contains some of the most deprived wards in the county and England (e.g Newhaven Meeching and Newhaven Valley), this, combined with a younger than average population impacts in terms of potential disposal income which could be directed towards the town.

- A positive indicator of the relative attraction of Newhaven as a popular place to live is evidenced by Halifax research into coastal towns, which shows a 47% increase in house prices between 2001 and 2003, outperforming neighbouring Brighton, Eastbourne and Peacehaven.

SWOT Assessment: Headline Results

(i) Physical

- Whilst benefiting from a rich natural backdrop (Sussex Downs and the coast) the actual physical appearance of the town centre, especially it's key 'gateways' suffers from the negative effects of the ring-road encircling the town and the

[(1)] ACORN is a demographic classifier developed by CACI Ltd using 2001 census data. Census Enumeration Districts are classified into 56 types, whch can be grouped into 17 groups or 5 categories. The five key categories are: "affluent achievers", "urban prosperity", "comfortably off", "modest means" and "hard pressed."

industrialised areas north and south of The Drove. In recognition of this issue, the district and county councils have over recent years (and currently are) undertaking progressive streetscape improvements to the town centre which will result in an improved and more attractive environment and lead to better links into the town centre from the surrounding residential areas. Considerable work over the medium to longer term will be required to manage and enable key sites (such as Newhaven Square) to make a positive contribution to ensuring a more legible and welcoming town centre.

- A key attribute of the town is it's beach – the only sandy one on this stretch of the coast and seen by many locals as a "hidden gem". Although not extensive, it is hugely popular in the summer months but suffers from poor linkages to the town centre and a lack of quality complementary facilities (e.g. toilets). The potential to market/develop this attribute more widely should be explored.

- The town centre is separated from both Newhaven Town Railway Station and the port/ferry terminal by the River Ouse. Whilst the physical barrier of the river cannot be avoided, the cumulative effect of this, the swing bridge and the ring road around the town centre clearly make the town centre a difficult choice of destination for travellers. This requires clear signage and high quality information boards about what the town centre can offer if visitors are to be attracted.

- The compact nature of the town centre means that there are few public open spaces. What spaces exist are harsh, part of the urban grain (e.g. North Lane car park) and are lacking in soft landscaping. The war memorial garden area represents the only 'green' space within the confines of the town centre, and its location next to South Way, on the periphery of the town centre as well as its size is not sufficient to ameliorate the overall harsh urban experience. Redevelopment schemes, such as Newhaven Square/Somerfield should be used as an opportunity to encourage the introduction of landscaping schemes to deliver some relief to this urban feel, both for pedestrians within the town centre and those driving round the town centre.

(ii) Retail

- Newhaven has a varied retail offer spread over a traditional linear high street and an out-of-centre retail offer at The Drove. The draw of the multiples in the town centre, particularly the Somerfield supermarket, is threatened by easy access to the The Drove retail area and the major shopping destinations of Brighton and Eastbourne, and to a lesser extent Lewes. In addition, neighbouring towns and cities such as Brighton and Eastbourne are subject of active attempts to boost their profile and attractiveness to residents and visitors. For example, we are aware Allders are seeking new stores in both centres. This is further analysed in later sections of this report.

- Newhaven's current vacancy rate is below the national average, although some retail units (Use Class A1) units are being replaced by other uses such as restaurant/takeaways and a dentist. Although the scale of replacement is small, it may be an indication of a small contraction in the main A1 retail offer. The few vacancies that do exist are illustrated in Appendix 2.

- The street market is currently held twice a week and attracts significant additional footfall to the town, although concern was expressed at the stakeholders consultations regarding the quality of its offer. The traffic order in force currently would allow for anyone to apply to operate a market on a third day.

- Proposals to build a new out-of centre Lidl supermarket near The Drove, are to be determined at a Public Inquiry scheduled this July. The Secretary of State will determine the planning application, as it may conflict with national retail planning policy. Whilst the physical regeneration effects of developing on a brownfield site would be welcome, the proposed retail use at this location may pose a threat to the vitality and viability of Newhaven Town centre. This is considered in more detail later in this report.

(iii) Investment

- There have been few signs of significant investment in town centre properties recently. However, the planning application at Bridge Street to create an 18 storey office/residential tower, which was refused last year, elicited strong local opinions both for and against. The site and street can be viewed as a key landmark gateway for the town occupying a prominent location. Whether the street's compactness and ambience should be reinforced by encouraging the mixed, commercial/restaurant/residential to continue, or whether a bold land-mark building is appropriate, warrants further investigation and consultation.

- The only other sign of major investment in the town centre is the proposal to reconfigure/remodel the Somerfield store and it's immediate surroundings. We understand that revisions to the scheme suggested by Officers in October 2003 are still being considered by the applicant. DTZ consider that this proposal represents an opportunity to modernise the retail offer and improve the streetscape in this part of the centre.

(iv) Residential

- Areas around the town centre have been identified as capable of accommodating some 700 dwellings. Research by Halifax indicates that there is strong demand for housing in the Newhaven area, with a 47% increase in average prices, outperforming both Brighton and Peacehaven. The physical impact of this growth will be managed through the local plan allocations and detailed planning policies (such as those relating to design). This represents a major increase in potential household expenditure for the area and the town centre itself.

- Residential development in the town centre has most recently been confined to small-scale conversion of commercial units' upper floors. This 'living above the shop' factor has long been supported by government (central and local) and represents an opportunity to extend pedestrian activity outside of traditional shopping hours, combined with stimulating the evening economy and also introducing better surveillance to the town centre area. Further residential development, as long as it is not at the expense of the prime retail area, should increase this effect.

(v) Complimentary Facilities

- At a national level, libraries have always been viewed as an important community asset. Recently, the role of the library has expanded to offer IT, training facilities and wider community services. Recent examples where this has occurred include Peckham Library in south London and a new library as part of the development of a new Community College in Hackney, east London.

- In Newhaven, the library occupies a prominent High Street location. However its irregular opening times and less than ideal accommodation mean that it is unable to offer a modern, accessible service. An upgraded library facility, perhaps at another town centre location could increase footfall and potentially act as a catalyst for physical regeneration. Unfortunately county funds are not prioritised to enable major improvements to Newhaven's library at present. Other potential sources of funding, perhaps through major mixed use developments (an indicative plan submitted as part of the recent Bridge Street planning application showed a potential library use) could be pursued.

- The views and perceptions of Newhaven's young people are important – they represent Newhaven's future residential and commercial base. In response to extensive consultation, improvements to leisure facilities have already taken place, and are continuing (such as Fort Road recreation area).

- In addition the leisure centre in the town centre acts as a strong draw. However it is clear from the consultation that further work is required if Newhaven is to remain attractive to this sector of the population.

- The Fort and Paradise Park, the two major attractions to the area, lie outside the main town centre. The Fort is open from March to December and represents an under-utilised asset. West Quay (Marina/restaurants) and Denton Island (business/childcare) represent more recent developments which should benefit the town centre. These two developments, both of which are ongoing, are extremely important not just from the positive physical regeneration viewpoint but also from the point of community cohesion and morale. Both cases represent true partnership working, bringing together the private and public sector, with strong resident and business 'ownership.' This points the way to future opportunities for delivering renewal. This recent track record in delivering regeneration projects can be used as a positive marketing tool, highlighting what has been, and can be achieved in Newhaven.

(vi) General Issues

- Another perceived threat to the town's image are proposals to site a waste treatment facility in or nearby Newhaven. Whilst no proposal has been formally approved, the outcome of a public inquiry into one of the proposals is awaited and the town's residents and businesses face considerable uncertainty. Recent research concluded that there is no substantive evidence that such a proposal would have an adverse impact on onward investment opportunities and house prices. Nevertheless, there is a widespread perception amongst the local community that this is not an appropriate location for such a facility.

- The relationship between the ferry terminal and the town deserves particular attention. The constant thoroughfare of ferry traffic represents potential expenditure. A recent survey indicated that some ferry users perceived

Newhaven to be dirty, not interesting or attractive. Consequently overall visits and spend by ferry-travellers in the town centre is low. On the positive side, the development of West Quay was highlighted as positive. Ferry traffic could be a major opportunity for the town. However DTZ consider that links between the terminal area and the provision of adequate information and facilities to attract users to the town centre require more detailed attention.

- Previous studies have highlighted the under-provision of quality tourist and visitor accommodation. Additional work has been commissioned by Newhaven Strategic Network to investigate this issue further. The largest facility – The Travel Inn at the Drove – operates at high occupancy rates, although its core market is business not visitor. Less than 3% of ferry users stay overnight in the Newhaven area. DTZ consider that ferry traffic, combined with visitors to Newhaven's two major tourist attractions, represent a significant opportunity to retain expenditure through the provision of quality accommodation. With the only major hotel operator operating at capacity the need to provide additional facilities for visitors and business should be addressed.

- A town centre manager was employed to address issues affecting the town centre raised by business and residents. At a national level the benefits of establishing such a post are well recognised. At a local level, the manager was seen to bring about real change and the absence of a such a post (or similar) to focus business and residents minds purely on the town centre is a significant factor as the town tries to raise it's profile.

(vii) Crime/disorder issues

- Whilst incidences of major crime are relatively low in Newhaven, the perception or fear of crime, particularly anti-social behaviour (vandalism, graffiti and alcohol related incidents) are major issues for local people (and visitors), who can be dissuaded from undertaking visits to the centre if theses issues are prevalent. A visible police presence in the town centre is an attendant issue and one which is being addressed by measures such as the introduction of police Community Support Officers. Additional measures such as the introduction of Street Wardens or town 'ambassadors' have been implemented elsewhere in the county, (e.g. Hastings), and found to be successful. Similar measures could be of benefit to Newhaven, if funding and backing from other agencies such as the police and the local authority could be secured.

- Planning policies advise developers to 'design out' crime. At a national level the issue has received increased prominence with the publication of the "Safer Places – the Planning System" document by the Home Office and the Office for the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM). This provides useful case studies of towns and centres which have taken an integrated approach to this issue. Points which are of relevance to Newhaven include the use of new development (including residential) to introduce better natural surveillance, lighting improvements and the use of environmental improvements to inhibit criminal activity.

- In addition, the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) scheme "Secured by Design" provides support and advice to local planning authorities in tackling this issue. In Sussex, this support includes the services of a Crime Prevention Design

Advisor who is consulted on major planning applications submitted in the town (and wider county).

- The police support the managed introduction of evening economy uses such as restaurants and cafes to town centres as they increase natural surveillance and give towns visible 'presence.' In addition measures such as better quality street lighting and extensions of the town's CCTV system (e.g. to include the multi-storey car-park) are also supported.

Out-of-Centre Retailing

3.04 Newhaven Retail Park at the Drove is the only major out-of-town retail warehouse park in Newhaven and comprises a B&Q store, Harveys, Carpetright, McDonalds and Halfords. There are a further three units in the park occupied by Cash Bases, a cash drawer manufacturer and one of the town's largest employers. Outside Newhaven Retail Park, there is also a solus unit on Denton Island trading under the name of Fludes Carpets.

3.05 Analysis of the household survey shows that Newhaven Retail Park unsurprisingly has a substantial inflow of "bulky goods" spend from the core catchment area. However the survey also confirms that there is a significant "outflow" of "bulky goods" spend to retail warehouse schemes in Brighton, Eastbourne, Hove and Lewes drawing a large proportion of shopper and "bulky goods" spend.

3.06 Newhaven's food offer is largely dominated by the J.Sainsbury store at The Drove. The store has recently been redeveloped and extended to comprise a 5459 sq. m gross store.

3.07 The household survey indicates that the Sainsbury store draws a large proportion of shoppers from the core catchment, but a smaller proportion from the outer catchment. This is due to the fact that there are a number of larger competing foodstores in the outer catchment, including the Asda at Brighton Marina in Brighton, Tesco in Lewes and the Safeway in Seaford.

Retail & Leisure Investment

3.08 There has been relatively little major new floorspace development in Newhaven town centre over recent years. In contrast the major competing centres of Brighton and Eastbourne, as well as the nearby towns of Peacehaven, Seaford, and Lewes all have a distinct retail and leisure offer. The table and commentary below summarises this:

Competing Centres

Centre	In Town Floorspace (sq ft)	Out of Town Floorspace (sq ft)	Key Town Centre Anchors
Brighton	1,618,000	814,000	Debenhams, M&S
Eastbourne	1,082,000	330,000	Debenhams, M&S
Lewes	409,000	N/A	Woolworths, Safeways
Seaford	300,800	N/A	Woolworths, Safeway, Co-op
Newhaven	117,200	60,400	Woolworths

- **Brighton**'s primary catchment area encompasses the built-up areas of Brighton, Hove and Shoreham-by-Sea. The centre's retail floorspace is estimated to be 147,000 sq. m (1.58 million sq. ft) and its retail offer is extensive. The city is well represented in terms of multiples and there are a large number of specialty and up-market retailers. Brighton is looking to boost its retail and commercial profile with requirements from Allders, House of Fraser and Holiday Inn. There is also a high level of service provision, particularly restaurants and fast-food outlets. Brighton's retail offer also comprises five foodstores and a number of retail warehouse parks. This accounts for the substantial trade draw from Newhaven. The centre also figures as the top destination for an evening out according to the household survey, particularly for cinema visits.

- **Eastbourne**'s retail floorspace is estimated to be 98,500 sq. m (1.06 million sq ft). A large proportion of this floorspace is accounted for in the centre's one major shopping centre – The Arndale Centre. The town has representation of major multiples, including Marks & Spencer, BhS, and Littlewoods, as well as a Debenhams and a Co-op Department store. Its retail offer also includes six foodstores and three retail warehouse parks. In addition, we are aware that Allders, Nike and TK Maxx are seeking representation in Eastbourne, indicating further aspirations to improve its retail offer. Analysis of the household survey indicates that Eastbourne is the third popular destination for an evening out.

- **Lewes** is a historic centre set in the Sussex Downs. The historic nature of the centre is a major tourist and visitor draw. Most of the town centre caters for the local catchment, although the household survey has revealed that the centre is the second most popular destination for an evening out. The centre's retail offer also includes two foodstores and one DIY store.

- **Seaford** is also a historic centre set in the Sussex Downs and is fronted by a Heritage Coast line. The centre serves its local area but also acts as a draw from the core catchment in terms of its convenience retail offer (Safeway) and potentially as a destination for an evening out (higher than Newhaven itself).

3.09 Newhaven's proximity to centres with a better retail offer and/or other attractions, has led to a substantial proportion of the market share being drawn to these competing centres. Strong retailer requirements from the likes of Allders and House of Fraser in neighbouring centres will place increased pressure on Newhaven town centre and its retail offer. Newhaven will therefore need to carefully plan new development/ redevelopment to ensure that existing market shares are maintained and enhanced to prevent the increased 'leakage' of shoppers and spend to neighbouring centres in the region.