



# PUTTING THE VILLAGE BACK IN PORTCHESTER





# A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

## Portchester is a place with a thriving village community

Many residents have lived here all their lives and will stop to chat in Portchester Village Centre while visiting the shops, community facilities and the popular Wednesday market. We believe the Centre is an important place to bring people together and would like to see that continue. We also recognise that the Village Centre will need to adapt to the changing shopping trends and the needs of local residents and visitors. We want to help ensure it remains an attractive and vibrant area for the future.

We also feel the precinct could do with a makeover, having last been updated in the early 1990s. Many local businesses and residents have told us that you would like to see the area improved. You have also said you want to keep the free parking, attract a wider range of shops but have fewer charity shops. However, it is important to highlight that all of the units in the Centre are in private ownership. Whilst we, the Council, can encourage a diverse range of shops, cafes, restaurants and uses, we cannot directly control what private owners choose to do with their own property.

We believe that an updated precinct, with some limited residential development that builds on Portchester's character, will attract more people and some investment into the area; equally there are opportunities to attract more trade to the Village Centre, for example, from people who are visiting Portchester's iconic castle.

As a Council, we need to bring together all the people who can influence the modernisation of Portchester Village Centre to create a vision for its future. We have limited control over all of the possible improvements that could be made, for example, Hampshire County Council both owns and maintains the precinct. So, we need to work together with everyone who can make lasting changes for the benefit of the local community, residents and businesses, as well as private landlords keen to safeguard their investment.

You have an important role too. If you shop, use its cafes, restaurants, services, and businesses then the Centre will flourish.

At the start of 2017, we asked residents, local businesses and landowners for feedback on our draft Vision. The draft proposals were generally very well supported. Through listening to your views we have made positive changes to our proposals such as how the Council's free public car park can be improved. By doing this, we can be confident that the final Vision reflects the needs of the whole community.

**Change cannot be achieved overnight, but with involvement from the whole community including landowners and businesses, we can ensure Portchester Village Centre continues to offer the best facilities.**

**Councillor Keith Evans**  
Executive Member for Planning and Development

"OVER THE COMING MONTHS WE ARE LOOKING FOR YOUR IDEAS FOR THE LONG-TERM REGENERATION OF PORTCHESTER."



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# PUTTING THE VILLAGE BACK IN PORTCHESTER

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# PORTCHESTER: THEN, NOW AND THE FUTURE



"PORTCHESTER'S STORY BEGINS BACK IN THE THIRD CENTURY..."

OVER  
**30,000**  
VISITORS  
PER YEAR

### The making of a historic village

Portchester's story began in the 3rd Century when the Romans built a fort here to defend the harbour. A settlement grew around the fortifications and in the 13th Century the village was granted a market.

At the heart of Portchester is the Village Centre, which is where the retail, food and community facilities are found. The pedestrianised precinct forms the core of this Village Centre and was created when the busy A27 was diverted in 1974. In 1991 environmental improvements were made but since then there has been little work to update the appearance and feel of this central pedestrian area.

### Portchester today

The two wards are on Fareham's most easterly border and stretch from the waterfront to Portsdown Hill in the north. It is home to approximately 18,000 residents and is located two miles east of Fareham Town Centre.

The Village Centre is a popular destination for local residents who not only visit the weekly Wednesday market but also the Centre's shops and services. Research has shown that the precinct is reasonably well used. The Council-owned 259-space car park located to the south of the main pedestrian precinct is always busy and is up to 90 per cent full on market days. However, the dynamics of Portchester's Village Centre have been changing and will continue to change.

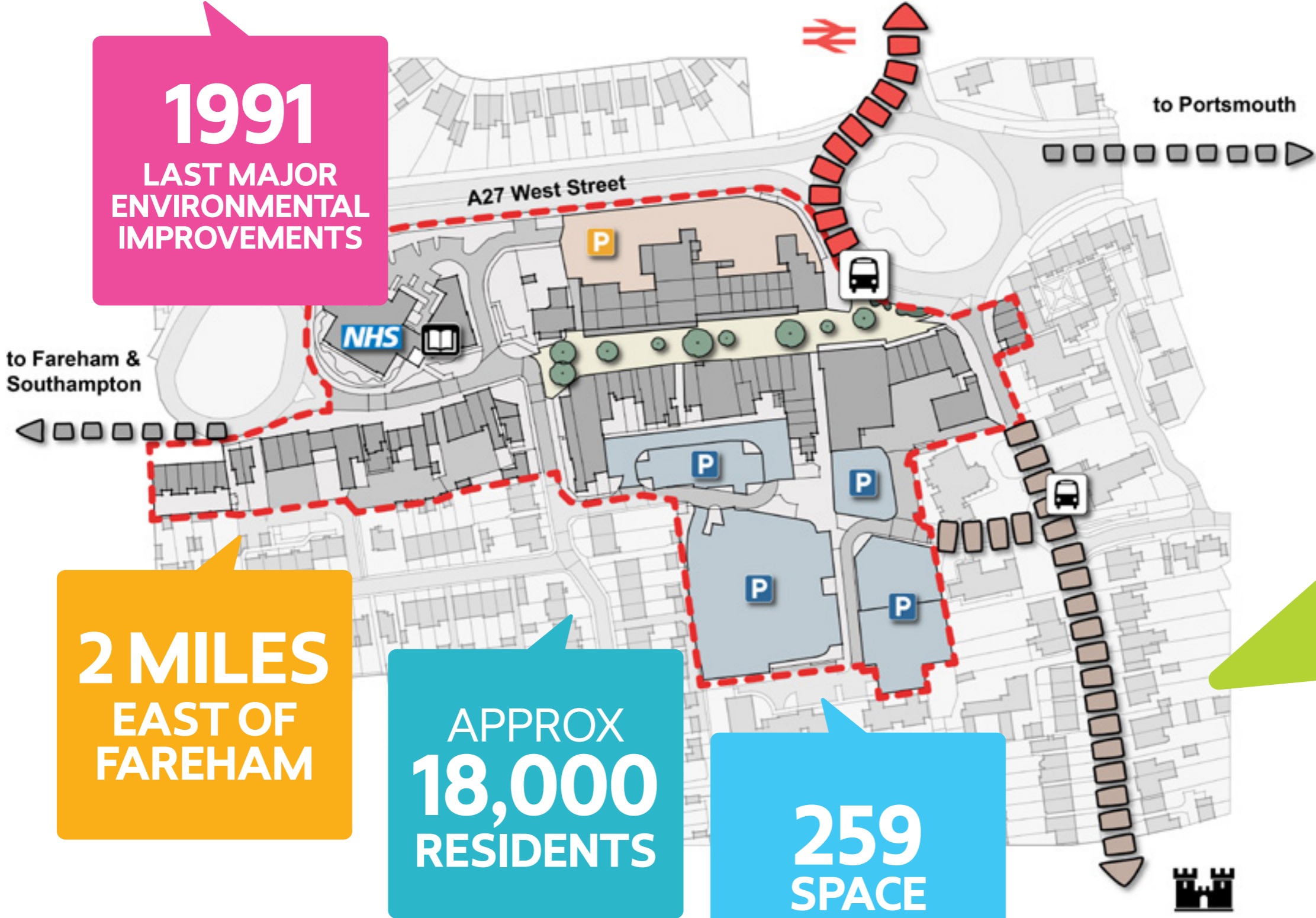
Portchester Castle has now become a popular tourist attraction with more than 30,000 people visiting the Castle every year. However feedback from local traders suggests that visitors to the Castle do not visit the Village Centre.

PUTTING THE VILLAGE  
BACK IN PORTCHESTER



# PORTCHESTER VILLAGE CENTRE

**1991**  
LAST MAJOR  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
IMPROVEMENTS



**2 MILES**  
EAST OF  
FAREHAM

APPROX  
**18,000**  
RESIDENTS

**259**  
SPACE  
CAR PARK

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"THE TIMING IS RIGHT FOR  
A REGENERATION VISION FOR  
PORTCHESTER..."

### **Adapting to a competitive market**

Portchester, Fareham and the wider region are experiencing the effects of growing populations, changing lifestyles and pressures on the household purse. There is greater competition between retailers and people are changing the way they shop, saving time and money by purchasing online and having goods delivered to their door.

In Portchester, the majority of people visit the Village Centre for short periods of time to top up their purchases rather than carry out a larger weekly shop. Those larger shopping trips are now often to bigger supermarkets, such as those found at Fareham Town Centre, Whiteley, Portsmouth and Southampton. This trend is set to continue as city and out of town shopping centres market themselves as destinations. The new Lidl store which opened towards the end of 2016 may further impact the Village Centre.

For all these reasons, the timing is right for a Regeneration Vision for Portchester that will encourage everyone to work together to ensure it continues to provide the best facilities to serve the local community.



# WHAT YOU TOLD US

Understanding the needs of the community is critical to ensuring we have the best plans for influencing the future of Portchester Village Centre. This is why we held a range of engagement activities with residents and local businesses between summer 2016 and spring 2017:

- Interviews with local traders, businesses and landlords
- Small group discussions with residents
- A breakfast event with local businesses
- Consultation display next to the Library
- Events at the Wednesday Market and Portchester Community Centre

Over 450 people attended these engagement events and around 465 people completed a survey about our draft Vision.

During this work a number of strong messages emerged from the community. These have helped shape our proposals.

**MORE COMMUNITY EVENTS IN THE PRECINCT WANTED**

**WOULD LIKE A WIDER RANGE OF MARKET STALLS**

**VISUAL IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

**MORE FREE PARKING IS KEY TO THE CENTRE'S SUCCESS**

**PARENT AND CHILD AND DISABLED PARKING CLOSE TO THE PRECINCT REQUIRED**

**A LIMITED AMOUNT OF HOUSING COULD HELP MAKE THE CENTRE MORE VIBRANT**

**MORE SIGNAGE TO PROMOTE THE CENTRE**

**MORE CAFÉ STYLE OUTDOOR SEATING WOULD MAKE THE PRECINCT MORE LIVELY**

**NEW CANOPIES WOULD HELP IMPROVE THE LOOK OF THE PRECINCT**



# OUR VISION FOR PORTCHESTER VILLAGE CENTRE

## Finding a way forward

A joined up approach is needed for modernising Portchester Village Centre. Our Vision has been developed by working with the local community and key partners as well as Hampshire County Council, which owns and is responsible for the pedestrian precinct and surrounding roads.

We also need to work with developers to deliver some limited but appropriate development in the Centre which will bring investment into the area. In times of financial pressures and budget constraints there is little funding available to deliver these changes.

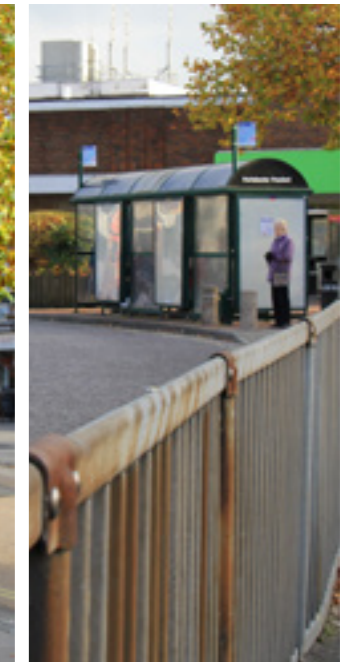
Most importantly we need the support and involvement of the community.

## A shared Vision for Portchester

Our Vision is to build upon the strengths of the Village Centre to create a clear community driven identity. We will continue to work with the community and key partners to improve the attractiveness and visual appearance of the precinct. We want to look at ways we can encourage more vibrant and active public areas that are easy to navigate.

Apart from the Council car park, we do not own the land or buildings so our power to make changes on our own is limited.

With all this in mind, our Vision sets out our ambitions for delivering positive change for Portchester Village Centre.





## What we are trying to achieve and how

We have worked with the community to identify five key areas that will collectively improve Portchester Village Centre.

### CAR PARKING

Ensure the Council's free car parks meet the needs of shoppers and other key users of the centre

### EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

Strengthen the Wednesday market, and encourage business and community events within the precinct

### REINVIGORATING THE VILLAGE CENTRE

Encourage redevelopment proposals that will improve the look and vibrancy of the precinct

### SHOPPING EXPERIENCE

Encourage local traders to improve their shop fronts

### VISUAL APPEARANCE

Work with Hampshire County Council, who own and manage the precinct, to make it more attractive

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IMPROVEMENT 1:

# CAR PARKING

**The council's car park has a total of 259 free car parking spaces**

A clear message from the community is the importance of preserving the free parking, much of which is provided to the south of the precinct in the Council owned car park.

There is also a privately owned car park to the north, however we do not have any authority to make changes there ourselves.

"FREE AND ACCESSIBLE PARKING IS VITAL TO ATTRACTING USERS TO PORTCHESTER. WE WANT TO ENSURE THAT WE PROVIDE THE RIGHT AMOUNT OF FREE PARKING TO MATCH THE NEEDS OF THE VILLAGE CENTRE AND COMMUNITY."

1





In June 2016 we carried out a survey in the Council's car park to find out how they are used and whether there is adequate free parking to meet the needs of people using the precinct.

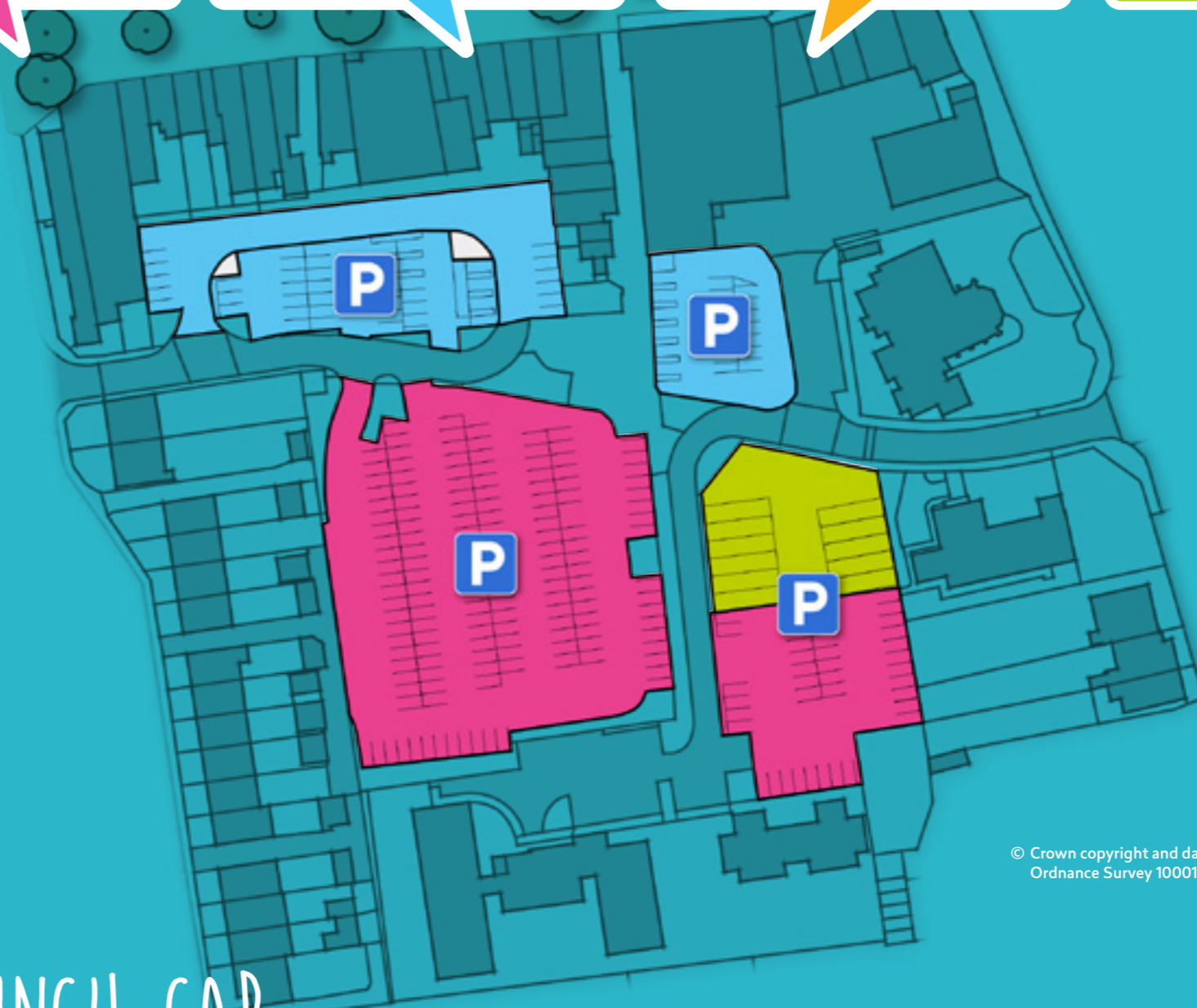
Survey work showed the Council car park is well used, particularly on market days. Most people park for less than three hours, yet most spaces in the car park are designated as long stay. Our proposed changes to the car parking better reflect the way it is currently used.

**194**  
ARE  
LONG STAY  
PARKING

**51**  
ARE  
SHORT STAY  
PARKING

**14**  
ARE  
RESERVED  
FOR BLUE  
BADGE  
HOLDERS

**11**  
ARE  
RESERVED  
FOR HEAVY  
GOODS  
VEHICLES



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"...THE COUNCIL CAR  
PARK IS WELL USED..."



# 279 CAR PARKING SPACES

SHORT STAY NORTH

37

SPACES TOTAL  
INCLUDING  
5 PARENT & CHILD BAYS  
17 DISABLED BAYS  
MOTORCYCLE PARKING

POTENTIAL  
REDEVELOPMENT

SHORT STAY  
SOUTH

149

SPACES TOTAL

PLUS  
7 LGV BAYS  
(SHORT STAY SOUTH)

LONG STAY

86

SPACES TOTAL  
INCLUDING  
2 DISABLED BAYS

You have told us that you want free and accessible parking to meet the needs of local residents and the users of the Village Centre, including young families. You also want Light Goods Vehicle parking that is positioned away from people's homes to ensure that they do not cause noise or disruption.

To do this, we intend to:

- **Change the layout of the car park** to provide more short stay spaces and fewer long stay spaces to match the needs of users
- **Introduce parent and child parking bays** for those families with young children. These spaces and any disabled parking spaces will be located in the area closest to the pedestrian precinct
- **Convert the existing lorry park into car parking spaces** and combine it with the parking immediately to the south. This will create up to 30 new car parking spaces. Lorries and Heavy Goods Vehicles will still be able to park in the car park overnight
- **Provide six dedicated larger parking spaces** for Light Goods Vehicles. A 'Traffic Regulation Order' will give preference to market traders on Market days.
- **Improve the signage** to the free Council owned car park.

We are keen to continue including the community to ensure these proposals work successfully. To do this we are looking to consult later in 2017 on our more detailed parking proposals. We want to make sure that any works that go ahead done with minimal disruption.



IMPROVEMENT 2:

# REINVIGORATING THE VILLAGE CENTRE

New shops, businesses and housing can all generate increased investment and further improvements to the appearance of buildings. Development can also help in meeting the need for new housing in Portchester.

Like similar centres, footfall is declining in Portchester in the face of competition from out of town retailing and the internet. We need to address this.

# 2



## Adapting to change

While some retailers are adapting to the change, others are not. This has led to shop units becoming empty.

Where shops become empty in the main pedestrian area, the Council is proposing new planning policies to encourage alternative commercial, leisure or community uses, such as cafés and restaurants, offices, training centres or community spaces.

Outside of the precinct the Council is proposing that vacant shops could convert to homes if well designed.



"SOME RETAILERS ARE ADAPTING TO THE CHANGE IN THEIR CUSTOMERS' SHOPPING HABITS"



## Redevelopment opportunities

We can provide up to 20 new modern sized parking spaces by making a few changes. This would release the area at the back of the Co-op store for potential redevelopment. This might be some commercial space with flats above.

Feedback from the community is that the public toilet, bottle bank and bin area is a priority, and we are looking to address this.

SPACE ABOVE  
SHOPS CAN  
SOMETIMES  
BE CONVERTED  
INTO FLATS



" ..MORE COMMERCIAL SPACE COULD  
BE CREATED ON THE GROUND FLOOR. "



IMPROVEMENT 3:

# VISUAL APPEARANCE

# 3

When you visit Portchester Village Centre it can be difficult to know you've arrived.



## How the Village Centre looks today

The majority of roads and pavements in and around Portchester Village Centre are owned and managed by Hampshire County Council.

The surfacing in the Centre is starting to look tired and worn.

The condition of the surfacing in the precinct is not helped by the trees that have grown to a size where the roots are starting to push through. This is causing trip hazards. As they continue to grow, this problem will get worse. The size of the trees also blocks the view of CCTV cameras.

There is a lack of signage directing people to the precinct and Council car parks. Large planters to the east obscure views into the precinct.

There are railings around the Village Centre. Some are needed for safety reasons, while others are not. Most are in poor condition and beginning to rust.

The lighting columns in the precinct are not particularly attractive or well arranged.

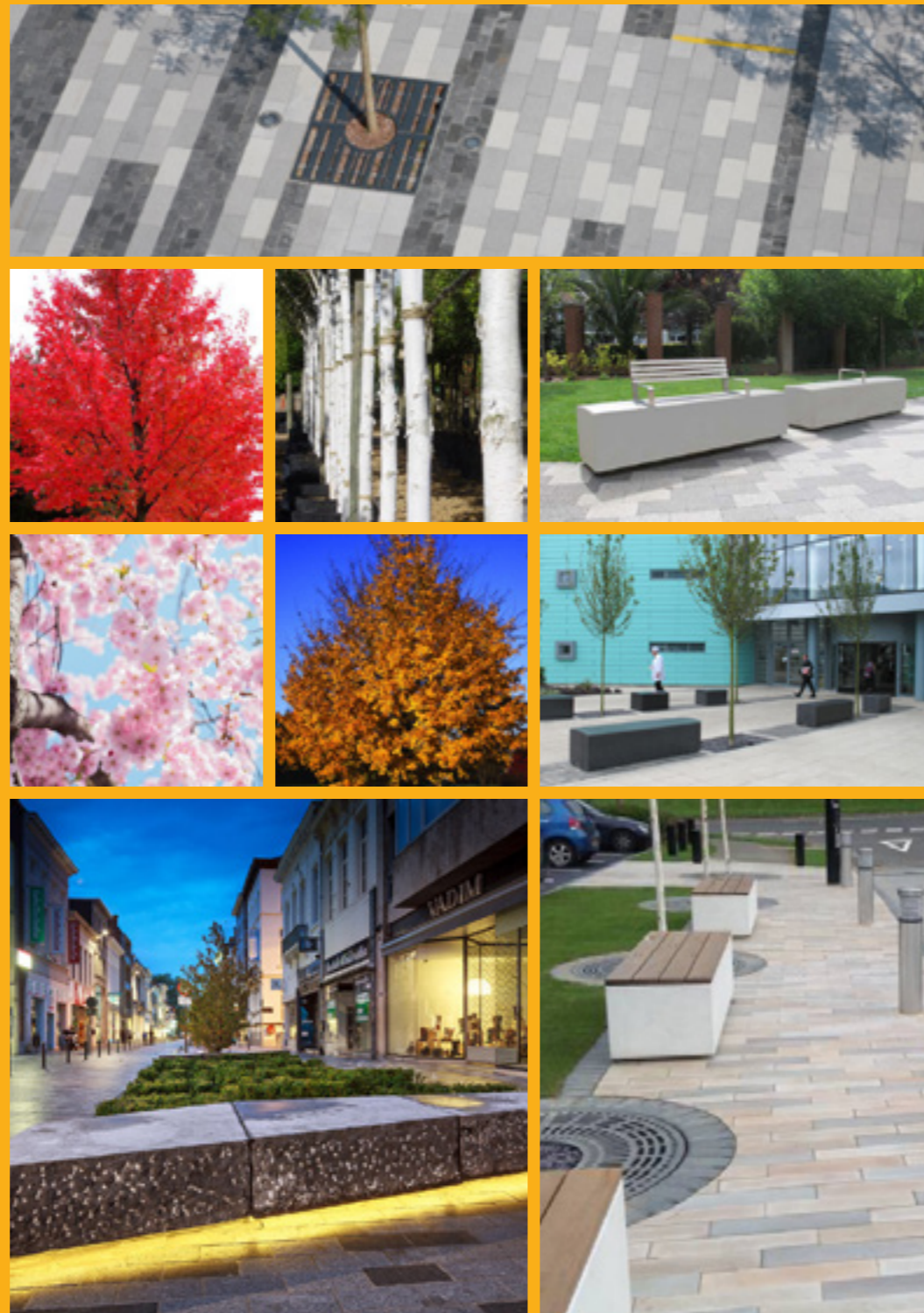
"...THE ROOTS ARE STARTING TO PUSH THROUGH PARTS OF THE PAVING..."



"MOST RAILINGS ARE IN POOR CONDITION AND BEGINNING TO RUST"



# How can the appearance of the Village Centre be improved?



Above images for illustration purposes only

## We asked you to tell us your priorities for improving the appearance of the precinct. You said:

- **Improve the precinct surfaces** and footpaths, especially where the trees are causing trip hazards and replace trees where necessary.
- **Better safe and attractive lighting** in the precinct.
- **New seating and street furniture** with some form of children's play equipment in the area.
- **Upgrade railings** where needed for health and safety purposes and remove others.
- **Improve signage** in and around centre.

**We will look at enhancing entrances to the precinct to raise its profile.**



# 4

IMPROVEMENT 4:

## EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

One of Portchester's strongest draws is the Wednesday market. There are opportunities to build upon its success throughout the week.



"MORE EFFICIENT USE OF THE PRECINCT SPACE WILL GIVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO ATTRACT A WIDER SELECTION OF STALLS."

### How might Portchester's market success be built upon?

As proposals to improve the visual appearance of the precinct and remove the larger trees come forward more space is likely to be created for market traders.

Community groups and organisations will be encouraged to use the precinct on non-market days making it easier to hold events.





IMPROVEMENT 5:

# SHOPPING EXPERIENCE

# 5

Many of the shop fronts in Portchester precinct and along the main pedestrian walkways look outdated.



## The precinct shopping experience today

The shop canopies in particular look old fashioned. If these were replaced with new modern ones we think this would have a positive impact on the appearance and perception of the precinct.

Whilst some businesses have a few tables and chairs outside, more could be done to create a café culture and add to the vibrancy of the area.



"...MORE COULD BE DONE TO  
CREATE A CAFÉ CULTURE."



"...IMPROVE THE VISUAL APPEARANCE OF THE SHOPS AND ATTRACT A GREATER LEVEL OF VIBRANCY AND INTERACTION ALONG THE PEDESTRIANISED AREA."

### How can the shopping experience be improved?

We have spoken to many local businesses and traders in and around the precinct. We will need to work together to see any tangible changes to the precinct. However, most have limited funds to assist with any improvements and some do not own the buildings.

We will continue to engage with key partners to look at how the shop fronts and canopies can be updated to modernise the appearance. Some new housing could help improve the visual appearance of these shop fronts.

More outdoor seating, tables and chairs will also make it more vibrant.





# NEXT STEPS

There has been strong support from the local community to improve Portchester Village Centre. To help achieve this we are proposing to:

## AUTUMN 2017

Consult on Fareham. This will include planning policies to support our Vision.

## THROUGHOUT 2018

Work with Hampshire County Council and consult with local residents on any potential phased visual improvements identified in our Vision.

## EARLY 2018

Consult on a detailed layout for the Council Car Park. If works go ahead we would ensure minimal disruption to users.

2017

2018

2019



You can find out more about the Vision for Portchester Village Centre and what progress we are making in realising this Vision, as well as the new Local Plan on our website:

[www.fareham.gov.uk](http://www.fareham.gov.uk)

Alternatively, if you would like to see how you can get involved or would like any further information please contact us:

[planningpolicy@fareham.gov.uk](mailto:planningpolicy@fareham.gov.uk)

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