

DA5 – Eastern Road and Edward Street



Context

2.63 Eastern Road/Edward Street (ER/ES) is the main east-west corridor running from Pavilion Gardens towards Kemp Town. It is parallel to St James Street which is a busy district shopping parade. The area extends from Pavilion Gardens in the west to the Royal Sussex County Hospital in the east. It is mixed in character in terms of the scale of buildings, uses (civic buildings, employment, residential and hospital buildings) and building types. The area is dominated by a poor quality public realm and built environment and the dual carriageway.

2.64 Edward Street is dominated by the dual carriageway and by the modern civic, community and office buildings on the northern side of the road. The historic townscape, on the southern side remains but is affected by the impact of the road and the poor public realm. The area extends northwards to include the former wholesale market at Circus Street. Eastern Road has been identified in the 2007 Air Quality Detailed Assessment as exceeding the government's Air Quality Objective for Nitrogen Dioxide and is therefore included within the 2008 declared Air Quality Management Area.

2.65 The central part of the corridor is characterised by comprehensive post war residential redevelopment. The southern side is dominated by a poor quality residential built environment with a mix of very tall buildings and low rise houses, a poor public realm with little provision of open space that is car park dominated and has poor legibility. On the northern side of the road are the Gala Bingo Hall and the low rise Freshfield Business Park behind.

2.66 To the east, the townscape and public realm markedly improves as the road carriageway narrows to the original width with traditional building lines. This area is specifically identified due to the proposals for ongoing development and consolidation of regional hospital services at the Royal Sussex County Hospital.

Supporting Documents:

Sustainable Community Strategy - 2006
Refreshed Local Area Agreement - 2007
Local Transport Plan - 2006
Edward Street Quarter SPD - 2006
Circus Street Municipal Market SPD - 2006
Audit of Community Level Infrastructure - 2004
Reducing Inequality Review - 2008
Tall Buildings Study - 2004
Employment Land Study - 2006
Economic Strategy - 2005
City Wide Estates Strategy for Health & Social Care - 2007
Neighbourhood Action Plans (three local) - 2007
Urban Characterisation Study - 2007
Hotels Futures Study - 2007
Public Space Public Life Study - 2007
Air Quality Detailed Assessment - 2007
Retail Study - 2006
Infrastructure Capacity Study - 2006
Open Space Study - 2008
Strategic Flood Risk Assessment - 2008

Local Priorities

2.67 The following local priorities have been identified for the development area:

- The main priority is to improve the public realm. This will be carried out via a comprehensive design guide linked to the urban design framework for the city (see policy CP2) that would be subject to community and stakeholder consultation. It will include Eastern Road and Edward Street extending from Pavilion Gardens to Sutherland Road (where the road returns to its original width). Opportunities to transfer road carriageway into the public and pedestrian realm will be explored.
- A further priority will townscape improvement of the Essex Street/Hereford Street Area which has a discordant mix of low rise residential development and poorly designed high rise towers. Other priorities are for clearer movement through the area and to improve spaces around the buildings. This area will be a priority and have recommendations in the comprehensive design guide.
- It is important that under-used sites with good public transport access are used more efficiently in terms of levels of development. The Gala Bingo Hall and car park and the Freshfield Business Park are identified as sites that could carry a greater amount of development.
- Main development opportunities in the area are for office and employment uses in the Edward Street Quarter (Amex site), Circus Street Municipal Market and Freshfield Road Business Park.
- Help deliver health service priorities at the Royal Sussex County Hospital and for a multi-practice GPs' surgery in conjunction with meeting infrastructure needs.
- Improve sustainable transport access and the ability to move through the area therefore making it easier to walk cycle and catch the bus along with future plans for a Rapid Transport System (RTS) and help to improve local air quality.
- Explore opportunities for district heating/ combined heat and power technologies linked to new development.
- The needs of sustainable communities and reducing inequalities between neighbourhoods should be addressed by investing in open spaces, improving community safety, youth facilities, providing school places, improving links and green spaces and contributing towards a community building for Queens Park and Craven Vale Neighbourhood area (identified in the Community Infrastructure Audit).

Preferred Option – DA5 Eastern Road and Edward Street

Secure significant improvements to the public realm and townscape making the area more attractive, accessible and safer for residents, employees and visitors and contribute towards increased business investment in the area. This will be achieved through:

1. Prioritising improvements to the public realm and poor townscape. This will involve the preparation of comprehensive design guidance for the area focusing on the dual carriageway, under-active frontages and the Essex Street/Hereford Street Area (see CP2 Urban Design).
2. Contributing towards delivering sustainable transport improvements in the area by improving the public realm to encourage walking, to transfer road carriageway to sustainable transport measures (buses and bicycles) and to help implement the Rapid Transport System.

3. Helping secure additional high quality employment floorspace in the area, to accord with the Edward Street Quarter Supplementary Planning Guidance.
4. Facilitating a high quality, sustainable mixed-use development, including employment, education and housing at the former Municipal Market on Circus Street.
5. Making more efficient use of under-used sites, like Freshfield Road Business Park and the Gala Bingo Hall.
6. Working with the health authorities to provide a multi-practice GP's surgery in the area and deliver their strategies to enlarge the Royal Sussex County Hospital whilst balancing the impact on the area in terms of sustainability, infrastructure and transport.
7. Community infrastructure priorities in the area are open space, measures to improve community safety, provide additional school places, provision of a community building and improve legibility.
8. The area will provide a minimum of 311 additional residential units over the life of the plan.

Supporting Text

2.68 The identified priority for Eastern Road and Edward Street is to improve the public realm and address the poor quality built environment. The western end of the road is under capacity allowing for the opportunity to turn the carriageway over to sustainable modes and public realm improvements which will make the area a better walking and cycling environment and address community safety and legibility. Options around narrowing the road and enlivening under-active frontages and boundaries will be developed through a comprehensive design guide prepared by the council. Funding for urban realm improvements and implementing the RTS (Edward Street/Eastern Road is the preferred route) will sought through the Local Transport Plan and developer contributions. Work will be undertaken with Brighton & Hove Bus Company and in consultation with the local community and stakeholders.

2.69 Future development in the area will be led by three main sites – Circus Street Municipal Market, the Edward Street Quarter (Amex site) and the Royal Sussex County Hospital. Circus Street and the Hospital are anticipated to be redeveloped by 2016 and will add a significant increase in floorspace on both sites. The Circus Street SPD, adopted in 2006, sets out a brief for a mixed-use development of residential, employment and education uses (including workspace for creative industry businesses, cultural organisations, artists and community groups, studios for South East Dance) together with significant urban realm improvements.

2.70 The role of the strategy will be to facilitate implementation of future plans in partnership with Amex, Brighton University, the Universities NHS Health Trust and Primary Care Trust whilst ensuring that sufficient physical, transport and community infrastructure is in place to serve the new development and surrounding communities. This will be undertaken with partners.

2.71 Making more efficient use of sites relates mainly to the Gala Bingo Site and Freshfield Business Park to provide an increased level of development in an area with good sustainable transport access and with significant scope to improve townscape. This would be taken forward with occupiers and owners of the site and through the proposed comprehensive design guide.

2.72 The main priority area for townscape improvement through the comprehensive design guide is the Essex Street and Hereford Street estate. Implementation of comprehensive improvements would be subject to two conditions – support of residents and availability of funding and would be subject to a long term plan. Smaller scale improvements around improving the public realm, linkages, community safety and providing amenity space would be undertaken through close partnership working with Housing, Community Safety Team and local communities and communities of interest.

Implementation

2.73 Development area proposals will be implemented through the following:

- Through preparation of design guidance for the area. Priorities for preparing this will be decided through preparation of the Urban Design Framework (CP2 Urban Design).
- Funding for urban realm improvements and implementing the RTS (Edward Street/Eastern Road is the preferred route) will sought through the Local Transport Plan and developer contributions.
- Development proposals for Edward Street and Circus Street will be implemented in accordance with adopted Edward Street SPD and Circus Street SPD
- Wider community priorities will be delivered in through developer contributions from major developments in the area.