

5. East Grinstead the “Vision”

Voices

– helping to define

5.1. During the consultation, we asked people

“What kind of town do you want East Grinstead to be?”

There were a variety of responses. These focused principally around the concept of East Grinstead as: -

- ❑ A market or country and historic town;
- ❑ A safe place;
- ❑ With a good shopping centre;
- ❑ A tidy place;
- ❑ With good public transport;
- ❑ That caters for all ages
- ❑ And has a balanced population;
- ❑ That is attractive for local firms and small business growth with jobs for local people.

From all of the discussions, and from the responses to this question in the questionnaire, the summary below represents the main themes that emerged. Each theme next needs to be tied to specific actions, to turn the vision into reality.

East Grinstead

“The Vision”

A successful place, for residents and business alike - an attractive place to do business, with a vibrant economy

A place of sensitive change and development, and a place to care about

A lively place, full of opportunities for all generations; a community that is welcoming, and provides a place to meet and socialise

A place where it's safe and easy to get around

- 5.2. To some extent, the feeling was that these values reflect the kind of town East Grinstead is now, and the kind of town that people want it to continue to be. This didn't mean that no action was necessary; nothing is perfect, and usually some change is inevitable. However, as regards some of the major changes in prospect, not everybody shared the same view, and the community faces something of a dilemma.
- 5.3. Some see growth as necessary and desirable; others regard its price as too high. Many of the issues still to be resolved are about environmental and traffic impacts, but not all. Other issues come into play, such as the perceived need to address and re-balance the age balance in the town, and the effects of growth on the town centre. And the growth issues have to be seen in the broader context of the North Sussex area.
- 5.4. The "Vision" therefore is not and cannot be the solution to these issues, but can at least express an agreed set of values, as the context within which more discussion can take place. Some views expressed were that this is inevitably a place of change, but this must be acceptable to local people, and it is up to East Grinstead to make sure that this is done well.
- 5.5. Below are some of the comments raised during the consultations about each of the main themes. These are direct quotes of phrases that people used during the consultation.

A successful place, for residents and business alike - an attractive place to do business, with a vibrant economy

Vibrant

Lively

Should grow and be prosperous

Comments from public consultation:
 Lively, vital town
 One that invites shoppers and sightseers
 Should grow and be prosperous; get more shops
 Thriving organisation
 Useful tourist destination in /out of county
 Gateway to High Weald
 Bluebell Railway is needed
 Centre of the town is very important
 Room for growth in the town centre – lot to be done
 Lots of independents in the town – its USP
 Vibrant

Bluebell Railway is needed

Vital

A lively place, full of opportunities for all generations; a community that is welcoming, and provides a place to meet and socialise

Drug Free

Places for young people to go - a community centre

Sense of belonging to individual groups but also needs to encompass whole town

Comments from public consultation

Communities doing things together
A town integrated with local communities
More facilities for teenagers
Places for young people to go – a community centre
A town that encourages young people to live here
Increased sense of working together
Drug free
All ages to be catered for
A place where young people and children can afford to live and find plenty to do
A town notable for providing specialist sport
Have fun and feel relaxed
Friendly
Better facilities for residents
A cultural centre where people come to enjoy the arts
Fragmented; needs cohesion; mix of ages; strong feeling
Needs more people to be involved
Like to see a strong cultural feeling - library, Chequers Mead are important, roles need to be broadened because of lifelong learning, important to the health of the town
A place to talk and meet – important aspect
Effect of drop in children / young people in the town
Sense of belonging- to individual groups but also needs to encompass the whole town
Vision needs to include everyone
Sacrifice sectional interests
Need to complement the needs of different groups
Intergenerational vision
How do we make children want to stay/ return
Improving quality of life for everyone

A place of sensitive change and development, and a place to care about

Comments from public consultation:
Not enlarged by development to the west
Market town feel with a good central market
Much as it is now
Repair with care
Clean, sophisticated and well planned
More self-respecting
Increased sense of heritage and our part in it
Back the way it was
Go back to East Sussex
More shops
Places that constantly provide fresh experiences
Forward looking
A town with a balanced population
Dilemma that people want it to stay as it is but it needs to grow –
It has to change but this must be acceptable to local people
East Grinstead has to and will grow as a market town,
both population and shopping footfall
Part of the North Sussex/Gatwick/Crawley conurbation
Characterful
Mixture of the old and new
It is a place of change and it is up to East Grinstead to make
sure that it is done well
Needs to be stimulating, must not stagnate
Old people do not want change
Seen as an ageing community – need to revitalise
Need to do things to redress the balance
Place of strongly held views
Sustainable development
New development must link into the town – design must be good
Need to preserve / conserve the town centre

Places that constantly provide fresh experiences

It has to change but in a way acceptable to local people

~~New development must be done in a way that is acceptable to local people~~

A place where it's safe and easy to get around

*Safer and
not so
noisy*

*Accessible by
rail, road
and bus*

Comments from public consultation:

Links with Crawley

Good transport

Self contained with excellent links

A town that is accessible by rail, road and bus

Safer and not so noisy

Being inclusive – identity, sense of place, lively,
safe place

A safe place where everyone can enjoy
the town and not feel threatened

*Good
Transport*

*A safe
place...*