



XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX  
WE MADE THAT  
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

fletcher priest architects  
london + köln + riga

prd steer

NTIA | NIGHT TIME INDUSTRIES ASSOCIATION

\* All information in this document is a work in progress and subject to development.  
© Copyright We Made That, March 2021

# **Transport, active travel & leisure workshop**

## Agenda

**1.0 Welcome and introductions (10min) - ALL**

**2.0 Introduction to the Place Plan, process & selected appraisal findings (15 mins) - WMT**

**3.0 Place Plan draft objectives (5mins) - ALL**

**4.0 Opportunity for questions (15mins)**

**5.0 Activity 1**

- Breakout discussion (10 mins)- sub-groups of 4/5
- Group feedback (10 mins)

**5.1 Activity 2**

- Breakout discussion (10 mins)- sub-groups of 4/5
- Group feedback (10 mins)

**6.0 Questions & next steps (5mins) - ALL**

# 1) WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

# 2) INTRODUCTION & EARLY FINDINGS



# Project overview

## Study area

The Place Plan is focused on a core of the Town Centre, with a wider area of context under consideration. We welcome feedback on the extent of this area of context.



KEY

□ Town Centre boundary as defined in the Adopted Local Plan 2020

▤ Extension of Town Centre study area

N 0 200m



# Our work so far

- Appraisal & evidence base report
- 1-2-1 conversations
- Workshops:
  - Business, skills & employment
  - Community & culture
  - Places, heritage and revitalisation

## 3.3 LOCAL ASSETS, LANDMARKS & USES

Land Use



Key issues:  
— Dominance of retail  
— Lack of leisure & community destinations  
— Key anchor stores are missing (such as Debenhams)  
— Lack of quality guest accommodation  
— No healthcare facilities in town centre (but the Debenham Centre has had COVID-19 vaccinations)

KEY

Food and Drink
Hotel
Leisure
Education
Offices
Residential
Healthcare
Storage
Community service
Commercial
Civic
Utility
Religious
Transport
Retail
Play space
Industrial
Vacancy (Observations)

Study area boundary  
Town centre area

N 0 200m

219\_Folkestone Place  
© WE MADE THAT



# Programme overview

## Engagement timescales



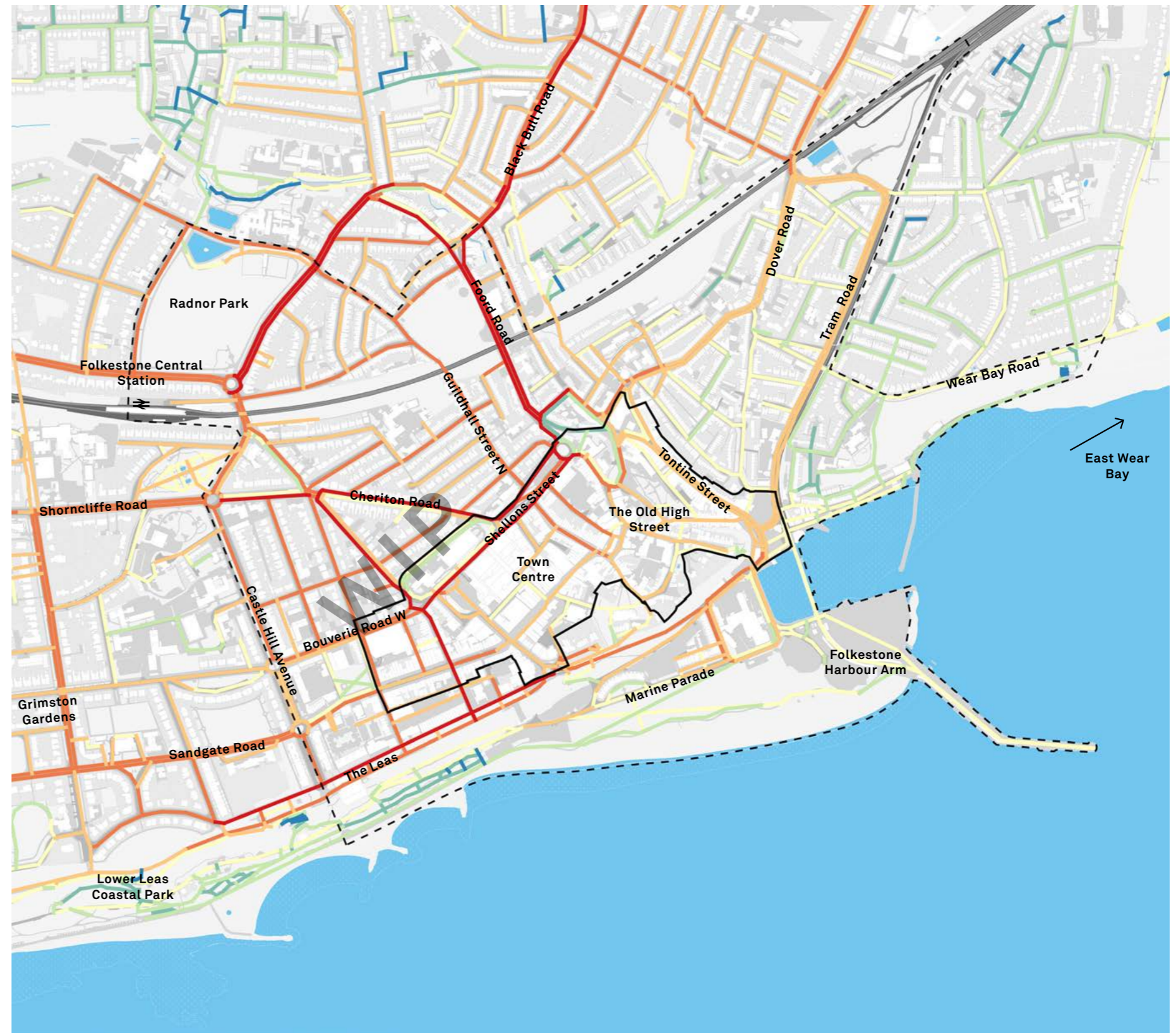
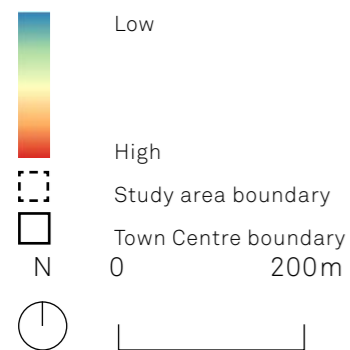


# Key findings

## Road network

- There is a complex highway network system and ring road with one-way streets that has not been updated following the closure of Folkestone's harbour.
- The ring road segregates the Station and forms a triangular loop around the Town Centre and buildings have turned their back to it.

KEY  
 Integration:  
 (Defined by how well connected a street network is, based on the number and degree of turns a pedestrian must make to reach other parts of the network.)






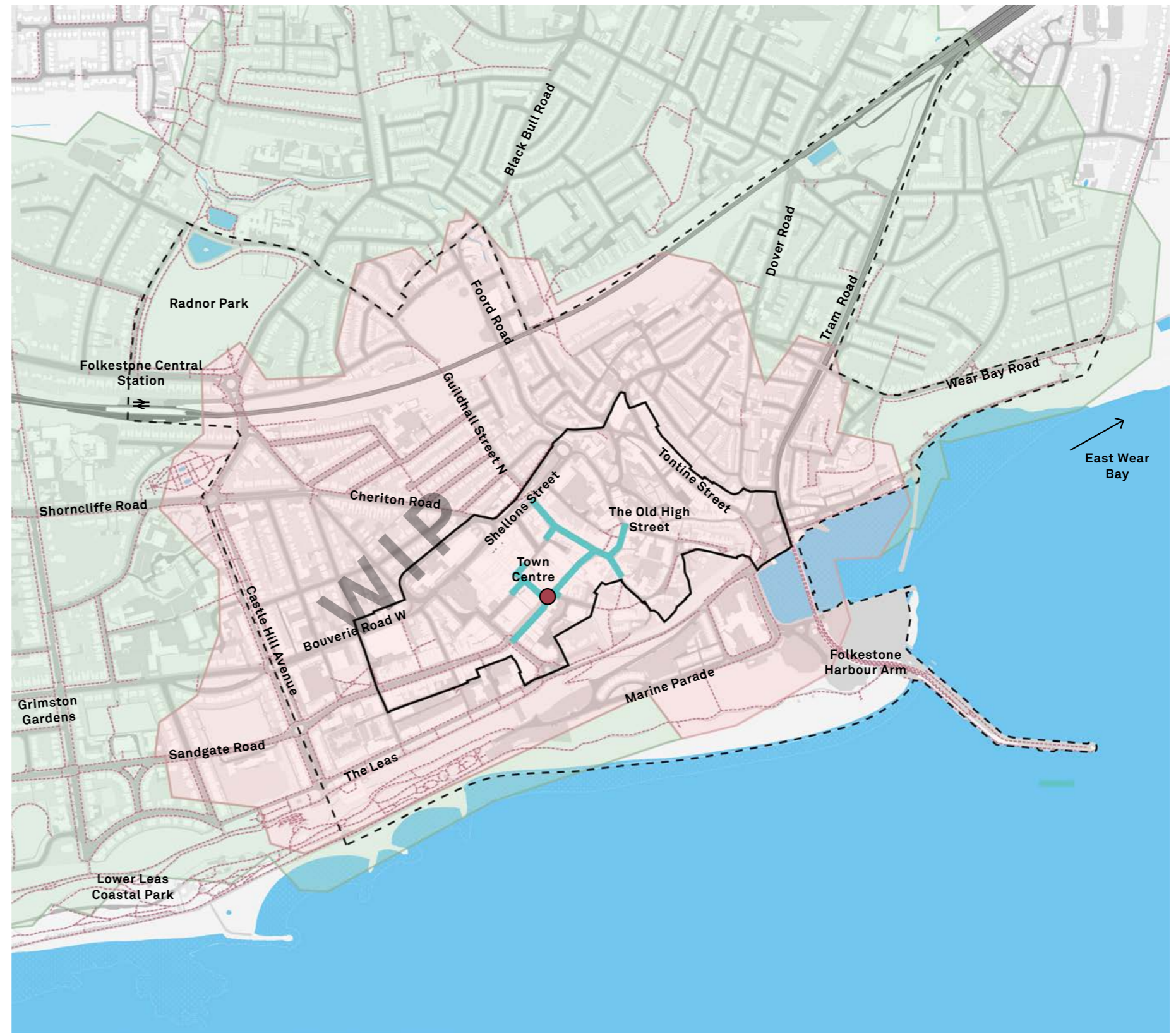
# Key findings

## Pedestrian network

- The pedestrian network is predominantly on-street, generally with moderate-sized blocks resulting in a high density of junctions.
- This means the town centre feels compact and highly walkable.
- The majority of the area falls within a 10 minute walking time for an able-bodied person.
- One of the main exceptions is the area south of The Leas due to a combination of terrain and limited connection.

### KEY

- 0 - 10 min walking distance (SWECCO)
  - 10 - 20 min walking distance (SWECCO)
  - Starting point: Sandgate Road/Alexandra Grds.
  - Shared access
  - Footpath
  - Study area boundary
  - Town Centre boundary
  - N
  - 0 200m
- 

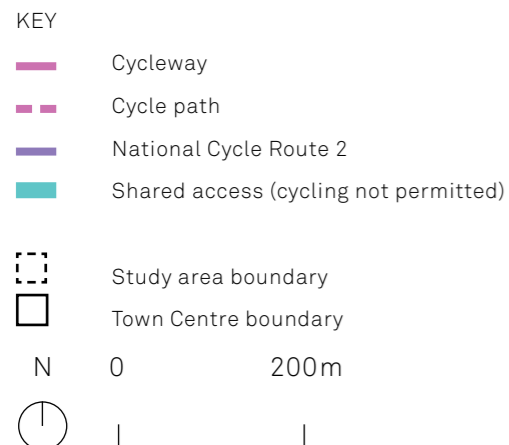




# Key findings

## Active travel

- Within the town centre cyclists are banned from using Sandgate Road, meaning cyclists wishing to travel east-west through the town centre are would need to take a more convoluted route.
- The major road infrastructure such as the gyratory networks are uncomfortable for cyclists to use, and act as barriers to less confident cyclists.

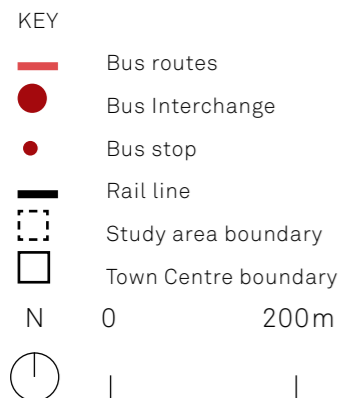




# Key findings

## Public transport

- The high speed rail connection has been an important factor in attracting visitors and opportunities for work.
- The bus network is very well used throughout the day for both local trips and connections to nearby towns, and is an important function for the town centre.





# Key findings

## Severance

- Steep vertical distances have contributed to the fact that the retail and historic heart has become separated from the coastline. Opportunities for large scale growth are hindered by the geographic situation.
- Alleyways, stairs and cut-throughs are important assets that give Folkestone its character but provide problems with accessibility.



KEY

- Problematic inactive frontage
- ↔ Existing links across railways
- M Severance due to road
- Λ Severance due rail
- Λ Severance due to natural barriers
- ⋯ Study area boundary
- Town Centre boundary

N 0 200m

# Key findings

## Transport & movement

**The over-engineered, largely obsolete road network should be seen as an opportunity for radical change.**

**Pedestrian & cycle environment and connections are poor.**

**Public transport systems are good and well used.**

**Changes in topography provides physical barriers but brings character and opportunity.**

Explore opportunities to remodel parts of this network to create exemplar people friendly public spaces, streets and routes.

Provision for sustainable modes of transport, such as the cycling infrastructure, must be improved and encouraged.

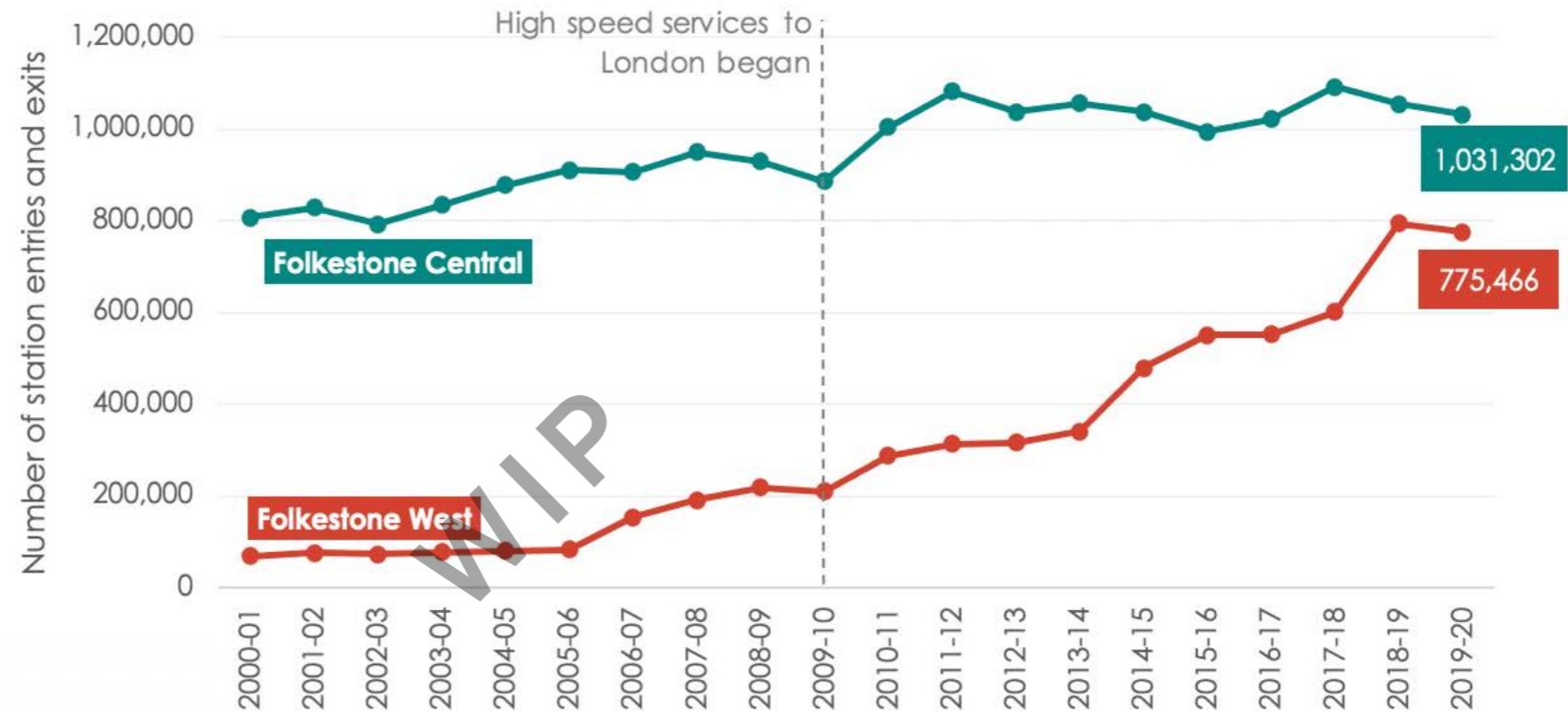
Improve connections to the train station. Capitalise on the existing bus network and consider public realm interventions that support this. Consider relocating the bus station if it can improve the passenger experience and maintain good access to the town centre, without adversely impacting on bus operations.

Accessibility must be considered to overcome barriers to movement.

# Key findings

## Visiting Folkestone

- Beautiful beaches, strong heritage and excellent train & road links to London and Europe have supported a growing visitor economy in recent years.
- Station usage data, with over 1.8 million entries and exits made at the two stations in the town in 2019/2020, shows a 19% increase on 2015 levels and a 65% increase on 2010.



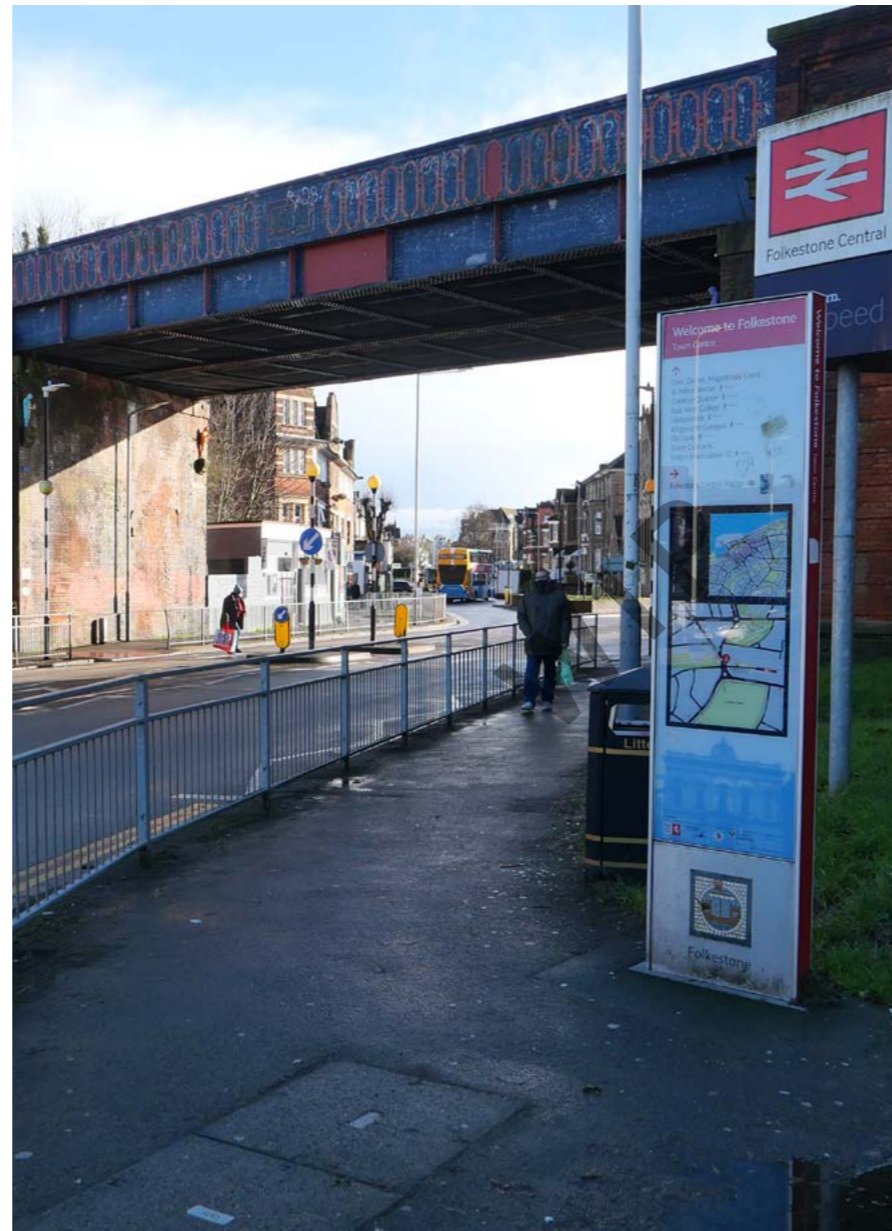
Graph produced by PRD  
Source: Station Usage Estimates, 2019/2020, Office of Rail and Road



# Key findings

## Visiting Folkestone

- Arrival from the station is disconnected and lacks wayfinding to the Town Centre and local assets.
- Bouverie Place is a clearly visible landmark of arrival into the Town Centre but has poor visual appeal.
- There is no central public square or welcoming entrance.



↑ Signage on arrival from the station and view toward Cheriton Street



↑ The environment immediately outside the station is dominated by road



↑ Crossing to Cheriton Street from the station is not intuitive



# Key findings

## Footfall

- Footfall has fallen 16% in the past 4 years according to the Folkestone visitor insight Baseline Report.
- The Turner Bates Study in 2019 highlighted leakage to neighbouring towns such as Ashford due to leisure offer.
- With approximately 10,000sqm of new commercial space planned in the seafront development, this problem could be exacerbated and also increase the perception of a ‘town of two halves’.



Total visit change by month (%) Dec 2019 - Dec 2020



Footfall levels (Dec 2017 - Dec 2020)



Dwell time (Dec 2017 - Dec 2020)



Visits per annum (Dec 2017 - Dec 2020)



Number of indoor places visited per trip (Dec 2017 - Dec 2020)



↑ Town Centre Footfall Visitor Behaviours over a 12 month period (Dec 2019 - Dec 2020)

Source: Folkestone visitor insight Baseline Report December 2019 - 2020



Average visits by hour (Dec 2017 - Dec 2020), source: Folkestone visitor insight Baseline Report December 2019 - 2020



# Key findings

## Destinations, landmarks & leisure

- The seafront, Cultural Quarter and the harbour areas are landmark attractions but are not well connected.
- As a coastal gateway to Europe, a harbour location with historic significance and an existing seaside destination, this character is not necessarily apparent in all parts of the town centre.

### KEY

- Museums, galleries and art centres
- Cinemas, theatres and dance venues
- Music related venues
- Gyms, leisure centres and sports facilities
- Skate-parks
- Beach activities
- Beach

- Study area boundary
- Town centre area

N 0 200m




- Some local destinations and historical landmarks:
1. Folkestone Beach
  2. Folkestone Creative Quarter/ Old High Street
  3. The Leas Club
  4. Lower Leas Ampitheatre
  5. William Harvey memorial statue
  6. Leas Cliff bandstand
  7. Foord Road Viaduct
  8. Marine Crescent
  9. The Folkestone Leas Lift
  10. St Mary and St Eanswythe
  11. Folkestone Museum




# Key findings

## Evening economy

- The evening economy is limited: few businesses are open into the evening and many close before 7pm.
- There is a lack of quality guest accommodation & hotels in the core Town Centre which limits options for overnight stays.

### KEY

- Restaurants/Takeaways
  - Bars/Pubs
  - Beauty
  - Leisure
  - Retail
  - Transport
  - Study area boundary
  - Town centre area
- N 0 200m
- 





# Key findings

## Cultural quarter

- The quarter has created new jobs & the creative economy is becoming increasingly recognised locally and nationally, but the creative sector is still showing up as a relatively small sector in the economy in the data.
- With the opening of new high end restaurants such as Rocksalt, the cafe and restaurant offer is becoming a reason to travel to Folkestone.
- Developing new sectors, such as the music industry, would help to support an evening economy. It has recently been announced that Folkestone will be the World's First Music Town.

**KEY**

- Bars/ drinking establishments
- Museums, galleries and art centres
- Cinemas, theatres and dance venues
- Music related venues
- ▨ Creative Quarter

**Art walks:**

- Walk A - The Pent Valley and the Railway
- Walk B - The Historic Centre
- Walk C - Waterfront and Harbour
- Walk D - West End

- Town centre area
- ▭ Study area boundary





# Key findings

## Population

- People living in Folkestone Central and East Wards are some of the most deprived in the country.
- In Folkestone Central and Harbour wards, 30% of children live in low income households compared to 20% across FHD and 18% nationally.
- This contrasts to communities in the south-west who are some of the least deprived nationally.
- The disparity in health, wellbeing & quality of life outcomes contributes to the sense of an increasingly divided town.



KEY

### Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2019

<span style="color: red;">■</span> Top 10% most deprived	<span style="color: lightgreen;">■</span> 60-70%
<span style="color: orange;">■</span> 20-30%	<span style="color: green;">■</span> 70-80%
<span style="color: yellow;">■</span> 30-40%	<span style="color: teal;">■</span> 80-90%
<span style="color: lightyellow;">■</span> 40-50%	<span style="color: blue;">■</span> Top 10% least deprived
<span style="color: yellow;">■</span> 50-60%	
<span style="color: grey;">—</span> Railway	
<span style="color: green;">—</span> Motorway	

Source: Data from ONS 2019, map produced by PRD

\*Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right 2021

# Key findings

## Visiting Folkestone

**Folkestone is already an attractive place to visit.**

Better pedestrian links and public realm around the town centre area will help to stitch under-used areas back together, placing an emphasis away from the Cultural Quarter.

**Folkestone has good transport links but lacks a sense of arrival.**

Improving connectivity and wayfinding to the Station area will improve footfall in the Town Centre area. Addressing connectivity & accessibility challenges will also help to support Covid-19 recovery.

**Natural assets are within close proximity.**

Seek opportunities to improve links from the town centre to natural assets - especially the coastline from Sandgate Street. Make better use of underutilised green assets such as Leas Cliff, to create improved connections.

**Access to the coast should be stitched through to the Town Centre.**

Explore opportunities to connect other parts of the town centre to the coast and coastal heritage, whether physically or through activities and uses.



# Key findings

## Town Centre uses

**Footfall has fallen in the Town Centre.**

The Place Plan should create a clear strategy for uses in the town centre that complements activity in the Creative Quarter, harbour area and seafront.

**Otterpool Park should attract more footfall.**

Proposals and strategies should take into consideration the potentially increased footfall from this future populations and aim to provide services and opportunities accordingly.

**Visual perception of the Town Centre is poor.**

There is opportunity to soften the pedestrian environment by increasing greening and seating.

Develop a long term vision for spaces to the north of Sandgate Street and connections to the north.

# Key findings

## Town Centre uses & population

**The evening economy is limited.**

Introducing complementary new uses, markets, leisure and events will help expand the 24 hour economy. Longer opening times and hotel provision will support evening activation but should remain family friendly.

**The Cultural Quarter and developing food culture is putting Folkestone on the map.**

The Place Plan should build on the success of Creative Folkestone's investment in programmes & events, helping to promote this strong offer. Diversity and accessibility of offer is important.

**Central & north-eastern Folkestone has pockets of severe deprivation.**

Focussing short term physical improvements in the tightly deprived geography could act as positive precursor to longer term improvements. Build on the success of the Folkestone Community Works programme and ensure continued support beyond the end of the project in 2022.



# 3) PLACE PLAN DRAFT OBJECTIVES

## Place Plan draft objectives

Make the most of Folkestone's best assets: its coastline, its communities, its heritage and its creativity, to attract visitors and enhance the lives of residents.

Reinvigorate and re-integrate the Town Centre core by identifying opportunities for a new range of uses, community services and employment opportunities in a broad range of sectors.

Identify opportunities for support, skills and training that compliment physical development potential.

Work with the people of Folkestone to develop proposals that are meaningful to all.

Create an environment that encourages walking and cycling, and better connects all parts of the Town Centre and its surroundings.

Champion Folkestone's future potential to secure the support of all partners who will be needed to deliver on the ambitions of the Place Plan.



4)

**DO YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS?**

**5)**  
**ACTIVITY 1**  
**COMMUNITY & CULTURE**  
**IN FOLKESTONE**



# Activity 1

## Transport, active travel & leisure in Folkestone

Station usage data shows over 1.8 million entries and exits made at Folkestone Central & Folkestone West in 2019/2020, which is a 19% increase on 2015 levels and a 65% increase on 2010. However, much of this growth has been driven by rising passenger numbers at Folkestone West.

Folkestone has good transport links but lacks a sense of arrival. Pedestrian & cycle environments and connections could be improved.

There is a complex highway network and gyratory system which creates a barrier to pedestrian movement and supports a preference for travelling into Folkestone by car.

How do we strengthen the role of Folkestone Central in relation to the town centre to safeguard its future and vitality?

Where should pedestrian links & public realm improvements be prioritised to help connect from the station through to the coast?

How do we encourage active travel choices to support more sustainable futures?

What are the opportunities for a radical new vision?

**5)**  
**ACTIVITY 2**  
**FOLKESTONE'S TOWN CENTRE**



## Activity 2

### Folkestone's Town Centre

Visitor numbers to Folkestone have been increasing but footfall in the town centre has fallen 16% in the past 4 years. The Turner Bates Study in 2019 highlighted leakage to neighbouring towns such as Ashford due to leisure offer.

High vacancy rates within parts of the Town Centre (14.9 %), in line with UK wide trends the decline of the traditional high street & restructuring of the economy around new sectors, though independents retailers and businesses seem to be doing well.

The combination of limited connections, steep gradients, and routes that require the use of steps affect pedestrian access to the harbour and seafront.

What are your ambitions & priorities for the Town Centre?

What is Folkestone town centre for now?  
How can the Town Centre maximise the opportunities of the Otterpool and Seafront developments?

Has this changed? If not, what could be done about it?

# 6) QUESTIONS & NEXT STEPS