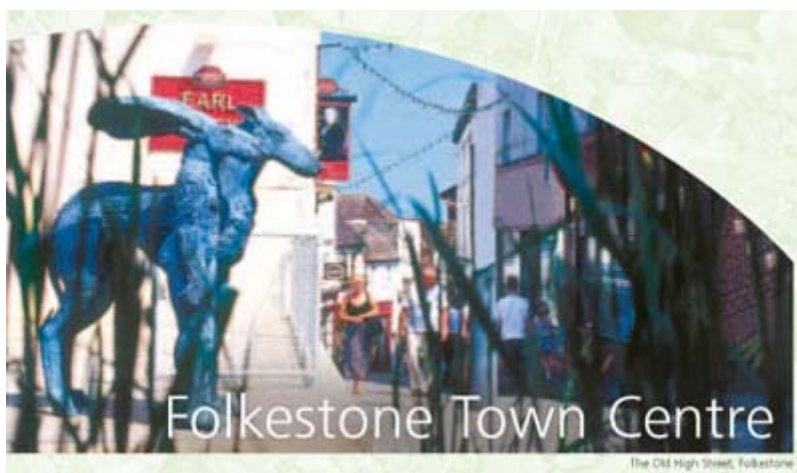


FOLKESTONE TOWN CENTRE



Introduction

13.1 Folkestone is a major retail and commercial centre which benefits from good road access to London and the south-east via the M20, the A20 and the A259, and regular rail services to London. The town has a population of approximately 45,000 and the town centre has a potential catchment population of over 100,000. The coastal location of the town and its cross-channel role also make it a focus for tourists. The centre benefits from an architectural heritage spanning the 12th to the 20th centuries with narrow picturesque streets linking the harbour with the main shopping area, and the Victorian grandeur of the Leas and the west end of town.

13.2 Folkestone has suffered from several decades of economic decline. It has been affected by changing tourism patterns; particularly the increased opportunities for people to travel abroad for their holidays. The local economic situation has been made worse in recent years with ferry related jobs lost as the ferry companies have restructured to meet the challenge created by the Channel Tunnel, and further job losses resulting from the ending of duty free shopping. The town centre is facing increased competition from neighbouring shopping centres with leakage of trade to Canterbury and Ashford.

13.3 The town centre is of key importance to the District's future. There are a number of important development opportunities within and close to the town centre which could dramatically improve the town's function as a major centre for retail, commerce and tourism. This chapter concentrates on how these sites should be developed to maximise this potential.

Town Centre aim and objective

13.4 The broad aim of the Plan for Folkestone Town Centre is:-

1. To improve the economic vitality and physical environment of Folkestone Town Centre and Seafrost.

13.5 The objectives of the Plan for Folkestone Town Centre are:-

1. To regenerate the town centre retail function by the development of a major new comparison based shopping centre, and protect the shopping frontages by restricting the amount of non-retail use and maintaining variety.
2. To promote the comprehensive redevelopment of the Folkestone seafrost and Harbour area for residential, commerce and leisure uses.
3. To support the improvement and enhancement of the physical environment of the town centre, and provide improved integration of town centre uses through upgrading, pedestrian and vehicular links and enhancing the physical environment.

Folkestone Town Centre redevelopment site – Bouverie Place

13.6 This site is identified as an opportunity to provide Folkestone with a modern purpose built shopping

environment. This will extend the quality and range of units available to attract new comparison goods retailers not currently represented in the town. Planning permission has been granted for a scheme which will provide approximately 19,850 sq. metres (213,700 sq. feet) of retail floorspace, a shopmobility scheme, public conveniences, 570 car parking spaces, and offices for Town Centre Management. The Council will seek a high standard of design of buildings and public spaces at Bouverie Place, that will enhance the quality of the townscape, the vitality of the town centre and its sense of place. A design statement will be required in accordance with Policy BE1. The District Council is convinced that the approved scheme is the best means of ensuring that Folkestone has a future as a shopping centre.

13.7 In 1999 the District Council appointed consultants to undertake a study of the town centre and the need for additional retail floorspace within the period of the Plan and this, with more recent updates, has been used as a basis for the Folkestone town centre retail policy. For future vitality and viability, particularly for comparison goods, the proposed Bouverie Place shopping scheme is essential to enable Folkestone Town Centre to maintain and enhance its current market share and turnover. There is no identified quantitative capacity or qualitative need for additional retail warehouse floorspace beyond existing commitments.

~~**POLICY FTC1** Planning permission will be granted for retail development for the [Bouverie Place](#) site, as shown on the Proposals Map, where the scheme incorporates the following elements:-~~

- ~~a) A minimum retail floorspace of 16,000 sqm (172,000 sq ft);~~
- ~~b) At least one retail unit of more than 2,500 sqm (27,000 sq ft);~~
- ~~c) A new Bus Interchange and 425 car parking spaces;~~
- ~~d) A shopmobility scheme and a town centre management office;~~
- ~~e) Public conveniences, including baby changing and disabled facilities;~~
- ~~f) A high standard of design of proposed buildings and public spaces, supported by an appropriate design statement.~~

Payers Park

13.8 This site between Tontine Street and Rendezvous Street on the eastern fringe of the town centre is currently in use as a public car park. Planning permission has been granted for a development of 135 residential flats with 246 car parking spaces for public and private use. The site is located between the harbour area and the rest of the town and therefore has a potential role as an intermediate destination point and link between the Harbour/Tontine Street area and the town centre. The site is suitable for a mixed use development of residential, retail, business and leisure uses, with pedestrian orientated links to Tontine Street, Rendezvous Street and the Old High Street. Development proposals should preferably incorporate sites fronting Tontine Street and the Old High Street to enhance the entrances to the scheme, which will form 'gateways'.

POLICY FTC2 Planning permission will be granted for the development of the [Payers Park Car Park](#) and adjoining land, as shown on the Proposals Map, for mixed use where proposals meet the following criteria: -

- a) Comprehensive approach to development of the site;
- b) The creation of strong, attractive pedestrian links with Tontine Street, Old High Street and Rendezvous Street;
- c) Built development is mainly residential use. Active frontages at ground level incorporating retail, business and leisure uses would be acceptable;
- d) Provision of 100 public car parking spaces;
- e) Provision of any car parking required by the development within the site/building complex or below ground level.
- f) The site of 29-33 Old High Street to be redeveloped with retail on the ground floor and residential or office use above.

Ingles Manor/Jointon Road

13.9 This site is located on the corner of Castle Hill Avenue, Shorncliffe Road and Jointon Road. It is currently occupied by a mixture of uses including offices, workshops and a garden centre. The 18th century Ingles Manor and adjoining buildings are grade II listed, and part of the site is within the Leas and Bayle Conservation Area. The site has potential for more intensive development consistent with its location on the fringe of the town centre, but any proposals need to be sensitive to the Conservation Area and the listed buildings and their settings and compatible with the retention of the existing attractive landscape character of the site. The existing garden centre is a viable economic use which provides employment and makes a valuable contribution to the character of the area. Any development should be of high quality design and materials, and will be carried out in accordance with a development brief to be prepared by the District Council.

POLICY FTCS3 Applications for infill development or redevelopment of the [Ingles Manor/Jointon Road site](#), as shown on the Proposals Map, will be permitted where the proposal meets all of the following criteria: -

- a) The retention of the listed buildings, with any development sensitive to the need to protect their character and setting;
- b) The proposal includes a landscaping scheme which retains a substantial amount of the existing tree cover including those trees protected by a tree preservation order, and any groups or individual trees important to the appearance of the site;
- c) The scale, layout, design and bulk of any new buildings are sympathetic to the characteristics of the predominant building form of adjacent buildings and spaces, and respect the character of the Conservation Area;
- d) A high quality design which enhances the character and appearance of the area;
- e) Area A to be developed for high quality residential, to include flats or apartments, with Area B to be retained or developed for employment uses within Use Class B1

Folkestone seafont development sites

13.10 This group of sites includes the Port and Harbour area and the seafont, south of the town centre below the Leas Cliff and between the Port and Lower Leas Coastal Park. The area is currently a mixture of public car parking, residential, commercial, leisure and tourism uses with port terminals occupying a large part of the eastern end of the area. In 1998 the District Council and the South East England Development Agency commissioned consultants Tibbalds TM2 to produce a Comprehensive Development Framework to help promote and guide the redevelopment of this part of Folkestone. Their work culminated in the preparation of two Masterplan Concepts for the area which were subsequently subject to an extensive public consultation exercise in summer 2000. The consultants' conclusions and results of consultation form the main basis for the District Council's proposals for the area which aim to bring about a high quality cohesive development which will form an integral part of the regeneration of the town.

Port of Folkestone

13.11 Since the publication of the Comprehensive Development Framework ferry operations have ceased at the port. However the Council wishes to protect the potential for a cross Channel passenger ferry link with the town of Boulogne: -

1. As a gateway to and from mainland Europe;
2. As a service and an attraction to holiday-makers;
3. For the local employment it provides;
4. As a source of activity on the seafont.

13.12 The Council, however, recognises that the recreational use of the Port and surrounding area could be significantly enhanced and that the area provides a unique opportunity to contribute towards the creation of a new mixed use urban quarter and destination in its own right, capitalising on its maritime location. Successful redevelopment will however require some rationalisation / re-organisation of the area previously used for port

activities.

13.13 A range of redevelopment options for different locations within and around the Port area, including Folkestone Harbour and the Rotunda Fairground / adjoining car parks, are identified to significantly improve its recreational use, vibrancy and appearance. In addition to criteria listed in Policies FTC5 and FTC6, redevelopment proposals affecting the Port area should also be consistent with a number of common objectives.

POLICY FTC4 Planning Permission will be granted for redevelopment of the [Folkestone Port](#) area, as shown on the Proposals Map, where proposals are consistent with the following objectives:

- a) Any necessary rationalisation of port operations maintains the potential for the continuation of passenger ferries in the interests of tourism;
- b) Provision of new employment opportunities to replace losses as a result of curtailment of port activities;
- c) Retention and enhanced public use of the Folkestone Harbour Rail Station.

Marina and South Quay

13.14 Folkestone Harbour provides valuable facilities for the local fishing industry and for recreation, including use by the Folkestone Yacht and Motorboat Club. The area is a focus for visitors to the resort. Folkestone is well placed for yachtsmen cruising the South-East coast. Use by visiting yachtsmen and scope for additional permanent berth holders is significantly constrained however in the absence of adequate mooring / associated facilities and the tidal nature of the harbour. The Council considers that there is potential to provide a new marina facility at Folkestone Harbour incorporating the following:

- 1. Moorings on Pontoons for up to 120 berths;
- 2. Dredging of the harbour, retention of existing harbour arm and provision of an additional breakwater to give shelter from the east and south east;
- 3. Mooring, landing and associated facilities for Folkestone's fishing community;
- 4. Facilities for small pleasure craft including new slipway and boat trailer parking (also see Policy FTC11);
- 5. Relocation of the existing Yacht Club from North Street to a more prominent site.

13.15 Land at South Quay, adjoining the inner harbour, presents a redevelopment opportunity to complement marina proposals. Development should provide an attractive visual barrier to any rationalised port operations. New buildings should reflect in a contemporary manner the urban design qualities of the Stade on the opposite side of the harbour and incorporate a harbourside promenade and dedicated surface parking. A mixture of uses will be appropriate and could incorporate residential, shops, business uses, and food and drink establishments. There is also an opportunity to provide a new landmark yacht club building at the eastern end of the site or alternatively on land at the Stade (also see Policy FTC11).

POLICY FTC5 Planning permission will be granted for the redevelopment of the [Harbour](#) area, as shown on the Proposals Map, where proposals are consistent with the following objectives:

- a) Increases the potential usage of the harbour by pleasure craft through the provision of a new marina and associated facilities whilst protecting the interests of the Folkestone Fishing Fleet;
- b) A mix of uses along South Quay including residential and active frontages at ground level incorporating uses falling within Classes A1, A2, A3 and B1 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987. A new yacht club may also be acceptable;

In order to be acceptable, particular proposals will need to: -

- i. Provide a high quality environment
- ii. Support (or be supported by) the proposed marina
- iii. Not detrimentally impact on the vitality and viability of the town centre.

c) High quality development along South Quay reflecting in a contemporary manner the urban design qualities of the Stade area on the opposite side of the harbour;

d) Provision of a harbourside promenade and operational parking in connection with the local fishing industry and business use. Residential parking should be provided on the basis of a maximum of 1.5 off-street spaces per dwelling.

Folkestone seafront (south of Marine Parade)

13.16 The Folkestone Seafront area affords dramatic views across the Channel and has an attractive setting against the Leas Cliff and Coastal Park. Land south of Marine Parade is identified as a significant opportunity for new mixed-use residential, leisure and tourism development with potential to contribute to the wider regeneration of Folkestone and create an attractive link between the harbour and Coastal Park. The area contains a number of existing uses including part of the Port area, the Rotunda Amusement Park, several car parks and other tourism uses. Many parts of this site, including the expansive surface parking areas, currently fail to provide a positive image or welcoming access for visitors or residents to the seafront.

Leisure zone

13.17 The western part of the Port area and part of the Rotunda Amusement Park is considered as suitable for a new Leisure Zone based around a pedestrianised area linking the Tram Road/Beach Street area with a seafront promenade. There is potential to incorporate a range of leisure facilities such as hotels, casino, health & fitness centre, major indoor leisure attractions (eg cinema, ten-pin bowling, Family Entertainment Centre) etc. An area towards the southern end of Tontine Street and The Old High Street is identified as suitable for new amusement centres (see Policy LR15).

13.18 An appropriate mixture of complementary uses could be incorporated into leisure development, including some or all of the following: residential, shops, food and drink establishments and, financial and professional services. To ensure a co-ordinated approach to development of the Leisure Zone and minimise potential conflicts with neighbouring port uses, it is important that a continuous Leisure Zone is created, distinct from any operations within the adjoining port area.

Seafront residential area

13.19 Land to the west of the Rotunda building is identified as suitable for a new residential area. Development should be in the form of blocks designed to maximise sea views, which could include open ended block development at the seafront edge. A varied residential built form will be required, incorporating differing building heights, enabling the provision of terraced town houses as well as apartments. A mixture of public and private courtyards should be incorporated to encourage north/south pedestrian movement and mixed uses at the ground floor. Complementary restaurant, café and retail uses should be encouraged along the seafront in order to promote a vibrant area during both day and evening. It is important to provide a safe and attractive public walkway along the seafront edge from the Coastal Park to the proposed Leisure Zone.

13.20 Resident's car parking should be positioned to the rear of the residential blocks or in covered communal areas at ground floor level, to enable the creation of a pedestrian friendly environment at the front. Informal and visitors car parking areas should be incorporated within the public courtyards and on-street. In order to achieve the holistic vision for the seafront area and in particular, secure an appropriate balance, nature and quality of uses, residential development will only be permitted where the District Planning Authority is satisfied that new leisure and tourism uses on the seafront will also take place. Public parking provision

13.21 Although the existing public car parks at the seafront are often under-utilised, they provide a necessary function during high season and it is important that adequate public parking provision is made in the area for visitors. This will include retention for visitor use and environmental enhancement of the existing car park adjacent to the Coastal Park and also additional provision for general public parking. Such additional provision could be (in part) achieved through the sharing of parking facilities required for leisure uses where peak levels of use would not coincide.

Pedestrian linkages up the Leas Cliff

13.22 The Leas Cliff is a substantial physical barrier between the western end of the seafront and main town centre shopping area and it is important that direct pedestrian linkages between these two locations are

enhanced. This will require improvements to the existing Leas Cliff steps and a new means of vertical public transportation to complement the Leas Lift (also see Policy FTC8).

POLICY FTC6 Planning permission will be granted for the redevelopment of [land south of Marine Parade](#), as shown on the proposals map, as a mixed-use leisure and residential area where development meets the following criteria:

a) Proposals provide a high quality of development which includes:

i) Residential uses on land west of the Rotunda building and;

ii) A new Leisure Zone located on the western part of the port area and on the eastern part of the Rotunda Amusement Park. This Leisure Zone should take the form of a continuous area clearly separate from any adjoining port operations and should incorporate hotels, health & fitness centre and major indoor leisure attractions and residential use above ground level.

b) Provision of improved access for pedestrians to and along the seafront in the form of a public walkway along the seafront edge and a substantial pedestrian area from this walkway through the Leisure Zone to the Folkestone Harbour Rail Station and to the Tram Road/Beach Street site (between the Hotel Burstin and inner Harbour);

c) The Council will seek development contributions in relation to improvements to the existing Leas Cliff steps and towards the provision of a new lift or similar means of public vertical transportation up the Cliff (also see Policy FTC8);

d) Provision of adequate parking facilities including:

i) Parking to meet the operational needs of the new Leisure Zone, in accordance with the current parking standards;

ii) Retention and enhancement of 70 off-street car parking spaces on the western part of the site for visitor use in association with the Coastal Park;

iii) Provision of additional general visitor parking to accommodate a minimum of 100 off-street public car spaces;

iv) Residents parking to the rear of residential blocks or in covered communal areas at the ground floor of buildings.

e) The Leisure Zone incorporates an appropriate mix of uses to complement major leisure proposals including active frontages at ground level which could include uses falling within Classes A1, A2, A3 and D2 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987;

f) The built form of residential development should have a minimum density of 100 dwellings per hectare and be based around a mixture of public and private courtyards which retain views and public access through the site to the sea. Complementary non-residential uses including restaurant and retail uses will be permitted on the ground floor of buildings;

g) Complementary uses permitted under criteria e) and f) above should positively contribute to providing a high quality environment, enhance the particular areas main function and, not detrimentally impact on the vitality and viability of the town centre.

Where necessary, the District Planning Authority will seek to enter into an Agreement with the landowner under Section 106 of the Planning Act 1990 to secure the above criteria. Where leisure facilities have not already been provided, this will include restricting the occupation of residential development until the provision of such facilities.

Undercliff site (north of Marine Parade)

13.23 Re-development of the undercliff area (as shown on the Proposals Map) should focus on improvements to the public parking area and the provision of new residential development. This part of the seafront will achieve a semi-private character through the provision of a new residential block which will improve the

visual appearance of the area by infilling the frontage gap between Marine Crescent and Marine Terrace. Development should reflect the height of Marine Terrace and Marine Crescent and private residential parking should be provided in courtyards to the rear or communal covered areas at ground floor level.

13.24 This site lies within the Leas and Bayle Conservation Area. Development should respect the character of the Listed Buildings within the area and seek to enhance the areas overall appearance. Any residential development will need to incorporate and allow for improvements to Marine Terrace and conversion of Marine Crescent into residential use, in recognition of their contribution to the overall townscape. Proposals must also incorporate environmental enhancements to the Coach Park site, which will provide public parking for visitor use in connection with the seafront and allow provision of the Sustrans cycle route, part of which is currently proposed through the rear of the site along Lower Sandgate Road.

POLICY FTC7 Planning permission will be granted for proposals for residential development at the [undercliff area](#), as shown on the Proposals Map, where it meets the following criteria: -

- a) Residential development is of a high quality, based around private courtyards. The height of the new residential blocks must reflect that of Marine Terrace and Marine Crescent. A minimum density of 100 dwellings per hectare is required;
- b) Resident's car parking is provided to the rear of the residential blocks or within communal covered parking areas at the ground floor of the buildings;
- c) The Listed Buildings at Marine Crescent and Marine Terrace are enhanced and Marine Crescent is converted into residential use;
- d) The Coach Park site should be environmentally enhanced to provide a safe and secure public parking area for visitors to the seafront providing a minimum of 30 public car spaces and 23 coach spaces;
- e) Development does not prevent provision of the Sustrans cycle route.

Development for non-residential uses will only be permitted if the amenity of residents is protected and there are no other environmental or highway objections. Mixed-use development including restaurant or retail use will be permitted on the ground floor of buildings along the main access road.

The overcliff (formerly Leas Lift car park)

13.25 The main part of this area is occupied by an open air car park on the ground level and rises up the Leas cliff to the war memorial on the Leas. It lies within the Leas and Bayle Conservation Area and in its present state is visually unattractive. There is a need to improve the pedestrian links between the seafront and the main town centre shopping area and this site is ideally located to serve this function.

13.26 Mixed use residential buildings will help to achieve the transition from the predominantly residential uses on the seafront to the commercial uses in the town centre. A strong visual link could be provided from the Bouverie Place development, to draw visitors down to the seafront and Coastal Park area. This could be achieved by the use of key landmark buildings stepped down the Leas cliff. However, it will be important to ensure that these buildings do not detract from the setting of the war memorial and will retain views through the site towards the sea. Improvements to the existing steps in this location are required in order to create a safe pedestrian link from the Leas down to this site (see Policy FTC6). Stepped development down the cliff side will also enable the provision of a new public lift or similar, to supplement the Leas Lift.

POLICY FTC8 Planning permission will be granted for development at the [Overcliff site](#), as shown on the Proposals Map, where proposals meet the following objectives:

- (a) Provides a high quality of development incorporating one or more of the following uses:
 - (i) Residential development in the form of town houses and apartments with retail uses on the ground floor (a minimum density of 80 dwellings per hectare should be achieved);
 - (ii) Restaurant, hotel or other leisure and tourism development compatible with neighbouring uses;
- (b) The height of the buildings at the bottom of the cliff reflect the adjacent residential development at the undercliff. The height and form of development at the top of the cliff should retain public views through the site, preserve the setting of the War Memorial and provide a focus to draw people down to the seafront from

the town centre;

(c) Provision of a new lift or similar means of vertical public transportation up the Leas Cliff.

Hotel Burstin

13.27 The Burstin Hotel provides an important source of visitor accommodation for the District. It visually dominates the harbour area and would benefit from improvements to enhance the attractiveness of its external appearance. Making Lower Sandgate Road and Marine Terrace to the north and west of the Hotel two-way would enable the re-routing of traffic from the Harbour Approach Road and the creation of a new pedestrian area between the front of the Hotel and the inner harbour. This will link the proposed Leisure Zone, South Quay and Tram Road / Beach Street area, and provide a major extension to recently completed environmental improvement works. The opening up of ground floor frontages onto a new pedestrian area for retail and restaurant uses would further enhance vitality of the area.

POLICY FTC9 Planning permission will be granted for (re)development of land adjoining the [Burstin Hotel](#), as shown on the Proposals Map, where proposals would be consistent with the following objectives:

- a) Improvements to the external appearance of the Hotel and / or improvements to other areas within the site;
- b) Re-routing of traffic along Lower Sandgate Road and Marine Terrace and the creation of a high quality pedestrian area between the Hotel and inner harbour, linking the proposed Leisure Zone and South Quay with the Tram Road/Beach Street site (also see Policy FTC6);
- c) A mix of active frontages at the ground level of the Hotel incorporating uses falling within Classes A1 and A3 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987. The acceptability of particular proposals will depend on their ability to positively contribute towards providing a high quality environment and, enhance the vitality and viability of the area.

Tram Road / Beach Street

13.28 This area is situated between the foot of the Old High Street, the railway viaduct and the harbourside. It acts as the key entrance into the town from the harbour and seafront area forming a gateway to the town for visitors arriving from across the Channel. It was once intensively developed but was substantially damaged during the Second World War. The area has been the subject of a major environmental improvement project through a programme of regeneration initiatives promoted jointly by Kent County Council and Shepway District Council. This involved resurfacing and landscape works, pedestrian and cycle route improvements and new and improved parking areas. The area would benefit from further upgrading and environmental improvement to fulfil its role in creating the right first impression for visitors. Any proposals should respect the vernacular architecture of the surroundings and be of a form and scale appropriate to the setting within the Leas and Bayle Conservation Area. Retention of the car parking for visitors to the harbour and seafront is essential.

POLICY FTC10 Planning permission will be granted for development of the [Tram Road/Beach Street](#) site, as shown on the Proposals Map, where proposals meet the following criteria: -

- a) The redevelopment of the Ark Café site for residential / business / leisure use;
- b) The relocation of the Tourist Information Centre to a key location immediately accessible to visitors arriving at the port;
- c) The upgrading of the existing buildings, structures and surfacing to create a high quality environment;
- d) The design of the development is consistent with the location within the Leas and Bayle Conservation Area.

13.29 Tontine Street needs significant enhancement to improve the visual appearance and ambience. Improvements to the harbour area and the development of Payers Park will provide direct benefits for Tontine Street and surrounding areas such as the Old High Street. Proposals for Bouverie Place and new indoor leisure facilities on the seafront will also contribute to improving Tontine Street and other town centre locations through enhancing the area's overall vitality and viability. The District Council is to prepare a Strategy for Tontine Street to improve this main arterial route from the harbour.

The Stade

13.30 This area is the location of the historic fishmarket and the mixture of residential accommodation, pubs, cafés, fish shops and seafood stalls give it considerable character. It is popular in the summer with tourists, being an attraction in its own right but also providing views over the outer harbour and access to the popular sandy beach to the east. Environmental improvement works have been undertaken to upgrade the surfacing and street furniture but a site at the eastern end owned by the District Council detracts from the overall appearance of the area. This requires upgrading or redevelopment to enhance its contribution to the townscape and vitality of the area.

POLICY FTC11 Planning permission will be granted for the redevelopment of the Stade (East) site, as shown on the Proposals Map, where development provides for:

- a) A single storey development reflecting the design qualities of the rest of the Stade and comprising commercial uses supportive of the leisure and tourism function of the harbour and / or;
- b) Vehicle and boat trailer parking (in conjunction with a new slipway within the harbour) to provide facilities for small pleasure craft.