

**Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004
The Town and Country Planning (Local
Development)(England) Regulations 2004**

**Bedford Development Framework
A Strategy for Bedford High Street Supplementary Planning
Document**

STATEMENT OF CONSULTATION

Background

The Council's Bedford Town Centre Area Action Plan was adopted on 8th October 2008. The Plan sets out a planning framework for the regeneration of the town centre. Policy TC8 states that the main focus for retail reinvestment in the existing centre will be the primary and secondary shopping frontages and the High Street in particular. Within these areas emphasis will be placed on the provision of high quality and distinctive shopfronts and signage, the refurbishment of existing buildings which contribute to the character and heritage of Bedford, the re-occupation of upper floors for commercial or residential use and public realm improvements. The policy goes on to state that the Council will prepare a strategy for the renaissance of the High Street.

Consultation on the emerging strategy

In order to take the High Street strategy forward, a multi-disciplinary group of Officers was established including representatives from the Heritage, Economic Development and Re-generation and Highways and Transportation teams. An initial strategy was considered by the Borough Council's Town Centre Working Group on 23 September 2009 and subject to a minor change to the wording, the general direction of the document was approved. This was also considered by the Townscape Heritage Initiative Steering Group on 11th November 2009. This comprises representatives of the Bedford BID Company, Bedford College of Further Education, the Bedford Licensees Association, the Bedford Architectural, Archaeological and Local History Society, the Bedfordshire Architectural Heritage Trust, St Paul's Church, Bedfordshire and Luton Chamber of Commerce, the Bedford Creative Arts and other private businesses. This group did not raise any substantive issues with the document and as a result, no changes were made to it.

The draft strategy was considered by the Borough Council's Executive on 11th November 2009 and amendments were proposed to strengthen linkages with the Sustainable Community Strategy and references to the early de-trafficking of the High Street. The draft strategy (which was agreed by the Executive for the purposes of public consultation) incorporated these amendments.

Consultation on the draft Supplementary Planning Document

Consultation on the draft Supplementary Planning Document and the sustainability appraisal screening took place from 15th February to 29th March 2010. Consultation was undertaken in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 and the Statement of Community Involvement.

1. Copies of the documents were made available for public inspection at the Borough Hall, Town Hall and at local libraries.
2. The documents were published on the Council's website. Copies of the document could be downloaded from the website and comments could be returned on-line. This was hosted on a dedicated website (www.bedford.gov.uk/highstreetstrategy) which also contained information about the consultation. A freepost address was used in order for questionnaires and letters to be sent free of charge.
3. A letter and/or email alert were sent to individuals, companies and interested parties registered on the Council's Local Development Framework consultation database inviting them to comment. Letters and e-mails were also circulated by Bedford BID and local businesses were encouraged to engage with the consultation process.
4. A public notice was placed in Bedfordshire on Sunday (14th February 2010 edition).
5. An article was published in the February edition of the Council's newspaper *Bedford News* which was distributed to all households in the Borough. Readers were encouraged to 'have their say' on the issues raised in the document. Respondents were also invited to send written or email responses.
6. Questions relating to the High Street, and Town Centre regeneration generally were included in the winter 2009 Bedford Citizens Panel Survey. The Citizens Panel is a group of over 1,000 residents, recruited to be broadly representative of the population of the Borough. They agree to receive surveys from the Council, and are generally sent two a year. 569 responses were received to this survey. Results of the Citizens panel are set out below.



Very high levels of respondents said that they feel the High Street is important to the overall regeneration of Bedford Town Centre. The rating of the appearance of the High Street was very low, with the majority of respondents rating it as 'poor' or 'very poor'. The areas that respondents feel most need improving are reducing the number of pubs and clubs, pedestrianisation, and dealing with the empty shop units.

Results

How important do you feel the High Street is to the overall regeneration of Bedford Town Centre?

Very important	73%
Fairly important	24%
Not very important	3%
Not important at all	1%
Base	557

The vast majority of respondents (97%) stated that the High Street is either 'very important' or 'fairly important' to the overall regeneration of Bedford Town Centre.

How would you rate the appearance of Bedford High Street?

Very good	0%
Good	7%
Okay	34%
Poor	39%
Very Poor	19%
Don't know	0%
Base	554

Over half of the respondents (58%) rated the appearance of Bedford High Street as either 'poor' or 'very poor'. Only 1 respondent rated it as 'very good'.

What do you think most needs improving in the High Street?

Respondents were asked to write in their responses. Comments were then grouped together. The table below shows how many respondents gave a comment that fitted each group. Some respondents wrote several comments that fitted into different groups.

Less pubs/clubs	87
Pedestrianisation	69
Sort empty shops	67
Improve state of shop fronts	58
Better quality of shops	48
Less charity shops	41
Better traffic management	37
Improve pavements	33
More shops	32
Improve general cleanliness	27

More independent shops	20
Better variety of shops	19
Less fast food venues	19
Lower rent	15
More specialist shops	12
Remove the faces	11
Sort litter	8
Better parking	8
Less café/restaurants	7
Use upstairs of buildings	5
Enforce 'no waiting'	4

Reducing the number of pubs and clubs was the most common suggestion made, followed by pedestrianisation, and addressing the empty shops. Of those that mentioned the empty shops some mentioned ensuring that the shops are filled, and others suggested at least making them look more attractive whilst empty. The next most common response was pedestrianisation followed by improving the state of the shop fronts. Suggestions for how shop fronts could be improved include agreeing standards amongst shop owners, painting them all, or ensuring that they match.

Responses to the questionnaire

Overall 110 responses were received to the consultation. 94 questionnaires were completed (43 online and 51 paper). 16 written responses were received (9 via email and 5 via post).

70 responses were received from individuals, and 40 were received from organisations. The following organisations gave a response (in alphabetical order):

- 5/A Charity Shop (Hannah Nobel BNP Paribas)
- Advocacy Alliance
- Age Concern
- Alive Communication
- Baker Brothers
- Bedford & Milton Keynes Waterway Trust
- Bedford Borough Council - Archaeology Service
- Bedford Borough Council – Registration and Records
- Bedford Corn Exchange
- Bedfordshire and Luton Chamber of Commerce (Bedford Business Group)
- Bedfordshire Police (Bedford Borough)
- Bedfordshire Police Authority
- Bell & Company Chartered Accountants
- Brickhill Parish Council
- Cardington Parish Council
- Chelveston-cum-Caldecott Parish Council
- Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment
- Cycling Campaign for North Bedfordshire
- DCG Professional Services LTD (T/A Kallkwick)

- Dean & Shelton Parish Council
- East Midlands Regional Assembly
- English Heritage (East of England Region)
- Evolve Recruitment
- Giorgio Hairdressers
- Humphriss and Burgess
- Kempston Town Council
- Oakley Parish Council
- Pavenham Parish Council
- Phillips Planning Services Ltd
- Queens Park Urban Community Council
- Renhold Parish Council
- South East England Partnership Board
- St Neots Town Council
- Statsoft
- The Bear Public House
- The Bedford Swan Hotel (BDL Hotel LTD)
- The Coal Authority
- The Jewellers Bench LTD
- Woods Hardwick Planning
- Youth Matters

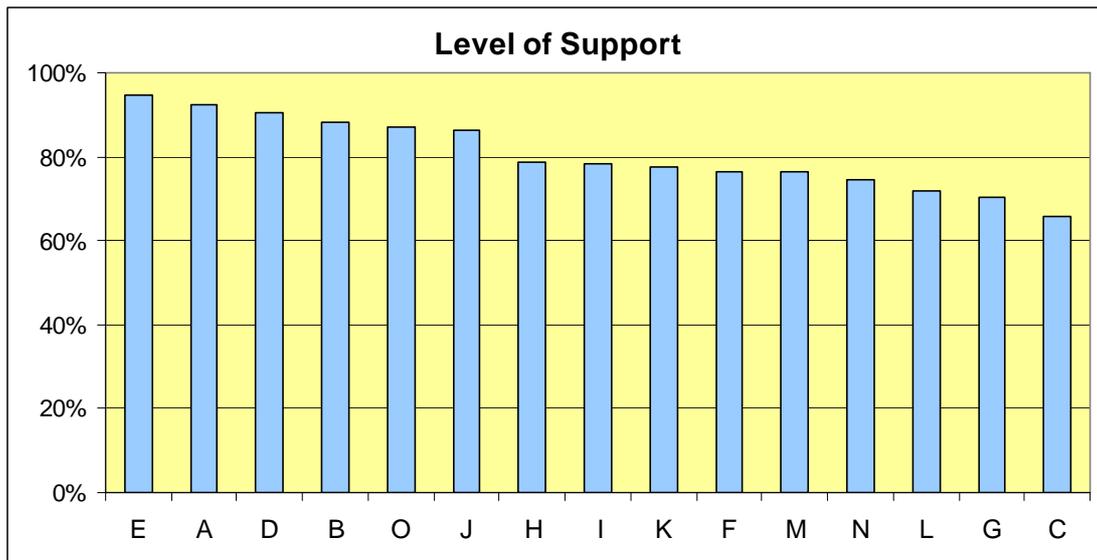
Respondent Support

The questionnaire asked respondents to indicate how much they support the key ideas in the document. **Due to the small size of the sample, and the fact that it is entirely self selecting, this data should be treated with care. It should be used only to highlight the general mood amongst the respondents, and to help put the comments and suggestions from respondents into context.** The table below shows the responses for the 94 completed questionnaires.

SS = strongly support
 PS = partially support
 N = neither
 PO = partially oppose
 SO = strongly oppose
 DK = don't know

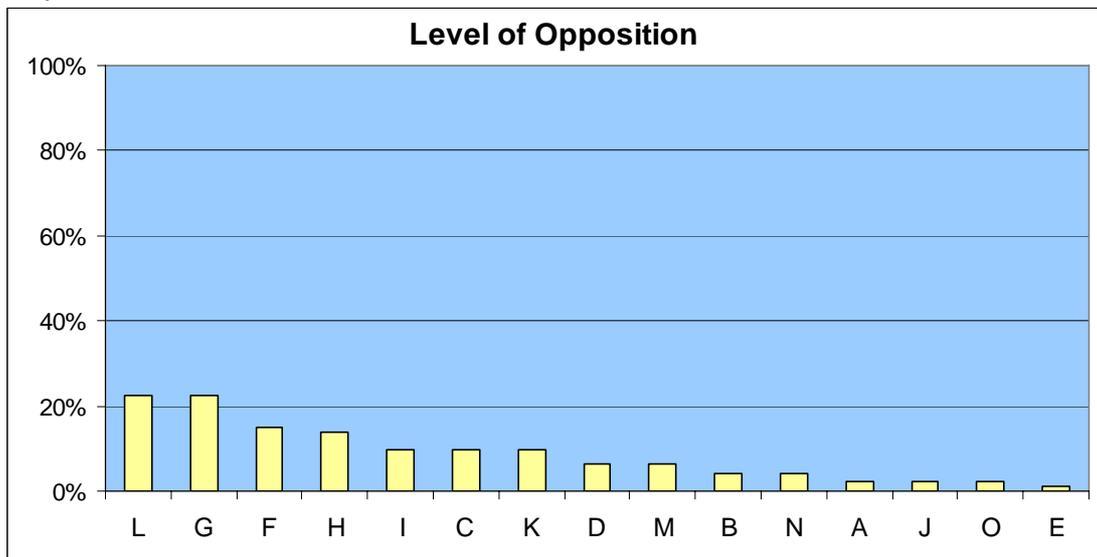
Restoring the Existing Fabric of Bedford High Street		SS	PS	N	PO	SO	DK
A	Securing external funding to revitalise the town centre including a Townscape Heritage Initiative Bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund	78	9	4	2	0	1
B	Creating a grant scheme to private businesses/owners to encourage the restoration of key buildings including improvements to shop fronts, adverts and facades	63	19	7	2	2	0
C	Introducing new interpretation features to explain the street's heritage	37	25	22	3	6	1
D	Using planning guidance and where appropriate enforce planning controls to maintain the quality of the buildings	64	20	3	3	3	0
E	Working with and providing assistance to local shopkeepers, property owners and landlords	68	20	4	1	0	0
Uses and Activities of Bedford High Street							
F	Broadening the appeal of the High Street throughout the day and night to a wider audience including families, other ethnic groups, the gay community, the over 40's and the under 18s	50	22	8	9	5	0
G	Introducing events and markets facilitated by temporary closure of the street over weekends in the short term	47	19	7	8	13	0
H	Providing more space to pedestrians by increasing pavement widths and removing / reducing barriers to movement	61	13	7	4	9	0
I	Improving the quality of public spaces in terms of surfacing, street furniture and public art	53	20	11	4	5	0
J	Introducing use to the vacant upper floors for residential or office accommodation	61	20	11	0	2	0
K	Rebranding the High Street as a traditional shopping destination with a quality niche retail and café culture offer	60	13	12	7	2	0
Access and Movement in Bedford High Street							
L	Identifying and introducing the changes needed to enable the whole of the High Street to be closed to through traffic in the longer term	54	13	5	5	16	0
M	Improving links between the High Street and the new Cultural Quarter and improving pedestrian access to the High Street	56	16	16	3	3	0
N	Introducing new signs to highlight key locations in the town	46	24	19	1	3	1
O	Working with local access and disability groups to ensure any future changes take account of the needs of all residents and visitors to the borough	61	21	9	0	2	1

The table below shows the level of support amongst respondents for each of the ideas. The level of support is calculated as the percentage of 'agree' and 'strongly agree' responses from the total number of valid responses for that idea.



Idea E – ‘Working with and providing assistance to local shopkeepers, property owners and landlords’ was the most supported idea amongst respondents followed by A – ‘Securing external funding to revitalise the town centre including a Townscape Heritage Initiative Bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund’. The least supported idea amongst respondents was C – ‘Using planning guidance and where appropriate enforce planning controls to maintain the quality of the buildings’.

The table below shows the level of opposition amongst respondents for each of the ideas. The level of opposition is calculated as the percentage of ‘disagree’ and ‘strongly disagree’ responses from the total number of valid responses for that idea.



Idea L – ‘Identifying and introducing the changes needed to enable the whole of the High Street to be closed to through traffic in the longer term’ was the most opposed idea amongst respondents. It is worth noting that this only represents opposition from less than a quarter of the respondents, and that for every idea the level of support was much higher than the level of opposition.

The least opposed idea is E – ‘Working with and providing assistance to local shopkeepers, property owners and landlords’, this was also the most supported idea amongst respondents.

In addition, comments were received from a number of individuals and organisations. These are summarised in Appendix A together with a response indicating how the draft Document and/or its sustainability appraisal scoping should be changed.

Summary of main issues raised

The consultation response showed that there was support for the general direction of the draft strategy but that further clarification was needed on a number of key issues, particularly on highway matters. The key issues that required clarification were:

De-trafficking

Because of the need to maintain access for emergency vehicles and cyclists and restricted access for service vehicles and taxis, the strategy needed to make clear that the Council is working towards the removal of unnecessary general traffic as soon as possible rather than the creation of a ‘traffic free’ or ‘pedestrianised’ environment.

Allied to this, concern was expressed about alternative routings for traffic and the need to understand how the highway network would be affected following the closure of the High Street to general traffic. Some respondents did not support de-trafficking because they didn't believe that alternative routes would be adequate. In response, the strategy now makes clear that any permanent arrangements involving closure to general traffic will need to be considered following a full study which in turn will be the subject of further consultation.

Town Centre Parking

A number of comments stated that public parking within the town centre should be reviewed (in terms of cost, number of spaces and opening hours) particularly in the evenings if the strategy's objective of broadening the use of the High Street is to be achieved. The strategy now recognises that parking management arrangements will need to be reviewed as aspirations for different uses and levels of activity within the town centre change.

Community Safety

The Police sought additional references in the strategy to reducing opportunities for crime/anti-social behaviour along with a commitment that the Police should be actively involved in the planning of the High Street. These have been added. Reference has also been made to the need to consider licensing requirements where authorisations of Street Trading and Highways Tables and Chairs are sought along with the need to consider the effective

dispersal of large groups of people in any detailed design and layout for the High Street.

Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI)

There was support for the THI bid but clarification was sought as to the geographical extent of the bid and the need for a map to identify key buildings, pedestrian routes etc referred to in the draft strategy. Both of these points have been now been addressed.

The comments received were reported to the Council's Executive on 21st July 2010 which noted the proposed amendments and resolved to adopt the revised strategy as a supplementary planning document.

Comments received and proposed response

In addition to the specific questions, respondents were asked to give comments on any part of the draft strategy. Comments were given on many different issues addressed in the draft strategy. This document highlights comments made by respondents, and groups them by the chapters of the draft strategy that they relate to.

Comment Received	Council's Response
<p><u>In Support</u> There were several comments received in general support of the document:</p>	
<p><i>If Bedford is to attract inward investment, encourages local businesses to prosper and grow and be a place that people want to live and work then these plans need to be adopted as soon as possible. I relocated to this area ten years ago and change is needed if we are to achieve any of the above. With a stunning river frontage, some fine old buildings, history and new initiatives we have the core ingredients to make the vision a reality (Alive Communications).</i></p>	<p>Agreed. Support for the strategy is welcomed.</p>
<p><i>I whole heartedly agree with your strategy for the High Street and applaud the thoughts and efforts that have been put into regenerating the High Street (Individual).</i></p>	<p>Support for the strategy is welcomed.</p>
<p><i>The ideas are very good and I am sure will provide Bedford with the much needed revitalisation and attention it deserves that will attract new and old (Individual).</i></p>	<p>Support for the strategy is welcomed.</p>
<p><i>The overall plan to allow more pedestrian access is a fair one, we need wider pavements. (Individual)</i></p>	<p>Support for the strategy is welcomed. The strategy aims to provide more space for pedestrians.</p>

<p><i>I wholeheartedly agree with the High Street strategy (Individual)</i></p>	<p>Support for the strategy is welcomed.</p>
<p><i>We strongly support all the items mentioned in the questionnaire, namely:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Restoring the Existing Fabric of Bedford High Street</i> • <i>Uses and Activities of Bedford High Street</i> • <i>Access and Movement in Bedford High Street</i> <p>(Cycling Campaign for North Bedfordshire).</p>	<p>Support for the strategy is welcomed.</p>
<p><i>Supports the aims and objectives of the Strategy for Bedford High Street, especially the upgrading of the buildings and the uses proposed for them (Renhold Parish Council).</i></p>	<p>Support for the strategy is welcomed.</p>
<p><i>English Heritage endorses the Council's aspirations to regenerate and enhance Bedford High Street, and welcomes the production of a strategy in the form of a supplementary planning document (SPD). The High Street forms part of Bedford Conservation Area, which was included on English Heritage's Heritage at Risk Register in 2009. Notwithstanding that the High Street only forms a small part of the conservation area, the SPD should contribute to wider efforts to remove the "at risk" status (English Heritage).</i></p>	<p>Support for the strategy is welcomed.</p>
<p><i>Broadly in favour of the strategy but has concerns regarding what will happen to the traffic once pedestrianisation takes place and would like to see more flexibility in town centre car parking generally (Kempston Town Council).</i></p>	<p>Support for the strategy is welcomed. Any permanent arrangements involving closure to general traffic will need to be considered following a full study which will be the subject of further consultation. Amend the text of the strategy to make this clear.</p> <p>Parking management arrangements will need to be reviewed as aspirations for different uses and levels of activity within the town centre change.</p>

	Amend the text of the strategy to make this clear.
<i>Generally supports the proposals (Oakley Parish Council).</i>	Support for the strategy is welcomed.
<i>Brickhill Parish Council strongly supports the draft strategy, believing that a vibrant, diverse and attractive High Street is an essential component of successful future development and improvement of the town centre. We strongly support initiatives to secure external funding to revitalise the High Street (such as the THI bid for funding and the funding streams discussed in paras 10.4 and 10.5) so that this development is not made at the expense of other Borough Council Services (Brickhill Parish Council).</i>	Support for the strategy is welcomed.
<i>It is great to see some real plans to improve the High Street. I think the High Street has the potential to be the perfect mix of old and new architecture (Individual).</i>	Support for the strategy is welcomed.
<u>Local Policy and Guidance</u> (Chapter 2)	
<i>Public Art - Para 2.11 Get rid of the policy TC32.</i>	Policy TC32 forms part of the Borough Council's Area Action Plan for the town centre. This seeks to create high quality public realm including public art and interpretation. The High Street Strategy is a supplementary planning document and it cannot therefore amend or delete existing policies. Policy TC32 would need to be reviewed as part of a review of the Area Action Plan. No change.
<i>A consultation process MUST be initiated BEFORE any further public funds are WASTED on public art, not only in the High Street but in the town generally. The UNDEMOCRATIC way in which the Two Faces of Bedford were FOISTED on the town is a disgrace and a total waste of money. The statues are grotesque; they are an eyesore and are totally unsuitable for the space they are in. Relocating them to</i>	The faces of Silver Street were chosen by a Member led Town Centre Working Group and before installation, featured at the April 2008 Town Centre Public Exhibition. A public consultation exhibition regarding the Townscape Heritage Initiative and wider High Street Strategy will be held in 2010 as part of

<p><i>Bedford Park or a much larger space would be more appropriate. 2) Going Green - reducing the carbon foot print of Bedford: Whilst this is an admirable endeavour and the Mayor launching hi £100,000 fund to help Bedford businesses reduce their carbon foot print is admirable but the Council do not practice what they preach, no matter how little electricity the illumination of the statues in Silver Street uses, it is still a net increase in carbon foot print that was totally unnecessary - as was the whole statue come to that. The premise it is and making sure it is kept up to scratch, it is a good and positive suggestion where the Council can lead by example. 8.33 Again good aspirations but actions speak louder than words and action is not a trademark so far seen from BBC. Thank you for taking the time to read this - Assuming someone has - I do not mean to be over critical only I am aware that consultants, exhibitions, consultative documents and so on are not cheap. We have had at least 4 Exhibitions in the town explaining the Town Centre Vision, there have been reams of paper wasted on reports, consultation documents and I suspect hundreds of thousands of pounds so far spent over the past 10 yrs and we have ABSOLUTELY NOTHING to show for it. I said talk is cheap, it isn't it is wasting a lot of MY Council Tax money and I should have a right to be heard on the matter (Individual).</i></p>	<p>the work required by the Heritage Lottery Fund to ensure the public and stakeholders are engaged and can inform the plans and priorities of their town centre.</p> <p>Much work has been undertaken in the town centre over the past 5 years but larger schemes have been delayed due to the economic crisis, however, developers are still committed to the town. No change.</p>
<p><i>Sections 2.3 & 2.4 - 'Scheduled Ancient Monument' should be replaced with 'Scheduled Monument' in recognition that not all Scheduled Monuments are old (Bedford Borough Council - Archaeology Service).</i></p>	<p>Agree. Amend text to reflect this.</p>
<p>Background Studies (Chapter 3)</p>	
<p><i>Presumably since the Conservation Area at Risk document was published in June 2009 there has been nothing to change the status of the Conservation area to it 'is' at risk rather than 'was' which implies</i></p>	<p>For clarification amend para. 3.8 to read 'Bedford Conservation Area is considered to be at risk....'</p>

<p>perhaps that the risk has gone away (Woods Hardwick Planning Ltd).</p>	
<p><u>A Strategy for Bedford Borough</u> (Chapter 5)</p>	
<p><i>There would appear to be a notable omission in that within the vision there is no reference to reducing opportunities for crime / antisocial behaviour and improving community safety (Bedfordshire Police Authority).</i></p> <p><i>Suggested Wording:</i> <i>'To create the traditional heart of the town centre and maximise its townscape and heritage quality by the removal of all unnecessary traffic, the creation of a high quality public realm and a safe, secure and welcoming environment...'</i></p>	<p>Agree. Amend the vision to read '....the creation of a high quality and safe public realm.....'</p> <p>Instead of the suggested wording, It is proposed to amend objective 6 to read 'Review the management of the night time economy, reduce opportunities for crime/anti-social behaviour, improve community safety and raise the image and reputation of the street to be accessible to all.' This should deal with the concerns expressed by the Police authority.</p>
<p>In the vision of the strategy 5.1 cyclists should be mentioned under items 7 and 8 in addition to pedestrians. (Cycling Campaign for North Bedfordshire).</p>	<p>Cycling is dealt with in section 8 of the strategy and it would be appropriate to amend objective 8 to refer to strengthening links including pedestrian and cycle routes between the High Street and other parts of the Town Centre.</p> <p>It is proposed that in order to provide further clarity, objective 7 is amended to read: Create an attractive pedestrian piazza that can become a niche retail destination in the town centre through the removal of unnecessary general traffic. Reference to creating a traffic free environment should be removed in order to more accurately reflect what is proposed once traffic is reduced to the full extent envisaged in the strategy.</p>
<p><i>...the stated objectives would carry more weight if it were clear that</i></p>	<p>Para.10.1 makes clear that the Borough Council cannot deliver the</p>

<p><i>they were capable of being achieved by the Borough Council. For example, it is unclear how the Council can 'ensure' the built fabric is brought up to appropriate standards, or how it can 'attract a range of niche shops (Woods Hardwick Planning Ltd).</i></p>	<p>vision alone and that it needs to work with external stakeholders and partners. For clarification, amend para. 10.1 to read 'Clearly the Borough Council cannot deliver the vision and objectives alone....'</p>
<p><i>The vision and objective of creating a traffic free environment is not achievable and later in the document it becomes apparent that this is not what is actually being proposed, so the objective should be tempered accordingly (Woods Hardwick Planning Ltd).</i></p>	<p>It is proposed that in order to provide further clarity, objective 7 is amended to read: Create an attractive pedestrian piazza that can become a niche retail destination in the town centre through the removal of unnecessary general traffic. Reference to creating a traffic free environment should be removed in order to more accurately reflect what is proposed once traffic is reduced to the full extent envisaged in the strategy.</p>
<p><u>The following were suggested as additional objectives.</u></p>	
<p>To improve understanding of the historic environment through interpretation (for example to be achieved through the use of plaques, interpretation boards and other interpretation techniques as appropriate e.g. websites/ Bluetooth etc.) (Bedford Borough Council - Archaeology Service).</p>	<p>Amend the list of objectives to include:- Improve knowledge and understanding of the historic environment through interpretation, for example, through the use of plaques, interpretation boards, websites and other techniques, as appropriate</p>
<p><i>Proposed developments need to consider means in reducing crime and improving community safety, in both their design and operation (Bedfordshire Police Authority).</i></p>	<p>Instead to introducing a new objective it is proposed to Amend the vision to read '....the creation of a high quality and safe public realm.....' In addition, amend objective 6 to read 'Review the management of the night time economy, reduce opportunities for crime/anti-social behaviour, improve community safety and raise the image and reputation of the street to be accessible to all.'</p>
<p><u>Restoring the Existing Fabric</u> (Chapter 6)</p>	

<p><i>The reference to the condition survey begs the question – what did it find? The survey does not appear to be in the public domain so the reader cannot investigate further so the matter is left hanging (Woods Hardwick Planning).</i></p>	<p>Most properties surveyed were of considerable age, most have been altered, and many need significant basic maintenance work or refurbishment. In many cases, the deterioration has been accelerated by the lack of occupancy of the upper floors, which has delayed knowledge of maintenance defects, and in turn, minor problems have become major issues before they are detected and dealt with. The most significant work is required to improve the roofs, windows (single glazed), ceilings, chimneys, rendering/brickwork of external walls, damp proofing and heating systems. Amend text to refer to these conclusions.</p> <p>Vandalism and attempted theft have also been issues related in part to under-occupancy of the structures.</p>
<p><i>The Council should start by setting a good example with its own property in St. Paul's Square. The former County Council owned buildings in St. Paul's Square have been empty for as long as I can remember. Here is an opportunity to make a real change.</i></p> <p><i>Not sure about the reference to applying the Shop fronts and Adverts Design guide. Should the Council not be doing this already?</i></p> <p><i>Don't think that Article 4 directions are available for advert. The equivalent is an Area of Special Control and even then conservation area designation does not necessarily justify being designated as such (PPG 19 para 22) (Woods Hardwick Planning).</i></p>	<p>It is presumed the comment refers to 1-3 St Paul's Square. These properties are now in the ownership of a third party. The Council is in discussion with the new owners and is seeking to bring the buildings back into active use. No change.</p> <p>Amend the key action to read 'Continue to apply the principles of the Shopfronts and Advertisements design guide....'</p> <p>Further research by the Council has shown that the vast majority of buildings in the High Street do not benefit from permitted development rights. It is accepted that there would therefore be very little benefit in serving Article 4 Directions to remove certain permitted development rights. Delete this action from the key action list.</p>
<p><i>The High Street has a number of licensed premises including Gambling Licensed Premises and Liquor Licensed Premises. The High Street is also a primary location for users of licensed vehicles to commence or end their journeys. Currently the High Street is not a</i></p>	<p>Noted.</p>

<p><i>key area of the Town Centre for authorisations of Street Trading and Highways Tables and Chairs. This is predominantly due to the restrictive pedestrian area.</i></p> <p><i>Of all the retail outlets on the High Street in early 2010, 4 were licensed Gambling Premises, 4 were licensed for the sale of alcohol for consumption only off the premises and 20 were licensed for the alcohol consumption on the premises and 3 are licensed for Late Night Refreshments only (i.e. after 1am). Many of these premises have authorisation to be open to the public until 3 and 4 am in the morning and this consequently means thousands of members of the public are in the High Street until these times at the weekends. It also means that transport for these members of the public is a major issue for Authority that is predominantly met through licensed private hire and hackney carriage providers. Getting this dispersal logistics wrong would have major consequences for the Police, the Council, businesses and residents in the area.</i></p> <p><i>In considering shop front design requirements for on-licensed premises in the High Street it is advisable to recognise the need for supervised access and egress from those premises. This is the critical area to refuse access to under 18's by applying Challenge 21 identity controls, to refuse access to those who are intoxicated or agitated and to prevent overcrowding by maintaining capacity numbers. To operate effectively this means that doorways need to be wide enough to allow management of the venues at capacity</i> (Bedford Borough Council – Registration and Records).</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>Agreed. Any permanent arrangements involving closure to general traffic will need to be considered following a full study which will be the subject of further consultation. That study will need to fully consider the implications on the existing network as well as access arrangements for taxi pick up points. Amend the text of the strategy to make this clear.</p> <p>The Council recognises the need for the design of replacement shopfronts to reflect the proposed use of the building. Where existing shopfronts or frontages are of such historic value that significant alteration would be unacceptable, the Council would seek to agree internal arrangements that met the needs of the user while preserving the character of the building and conservation area. No change.</p>
<p><i>It would be helpful to clarify the scope of the proposed THI scheme and whether it will cover the whole of the High Street or just key parts</i> (English Heritage - East of England Region).</p>	<p>Agreed – provide additional wording to clarify that the Townscape Heritage Scheme would apply to the whole of the High Street.</p>

<p><i>The poorly maintained buildings between the magistrates' court and High Street could really give an opportunity if there were pedestrianised frontage (Individual).</i></p>	<p>It is presumed the comment refers to 1-3 St Paul's Square. These properties are now in the ownership of a third party. The Council is in discussion with the new owners and is seeking to bring the buildings back into active use. No change.</p> <p>Whilst the aim of reducing traffic in St Paul's Square is supported, it is unlikely that there will be an opportunity to do this unless and until Batts Ford Bridge is implemented. No change.</p>
<p><i>The appearance of Bedford High Street is absolutely appalling in my opinion. Boarded up dwellings (Porter Blacks) and old advertisement hoardings, not to mention litter and dirty pavements, whilst Riverside is a credit to the town, The High Street looks like a slum. I would welcome this strategy provided the revitalisation is not 'quirky' modernisation architecture and development viz the hideous sculpture of the two faces (Individual).</i></p>	<p>The strategy is actively seeking to improve the appearance of the High Street. An important element in that strategy is the bid to the Townscape Heritage Initiative, which if successful will provide grant funding for repairs etc. No change.</p> <p>The concept of the High Street Strategy and THI programme is to ensure that the traditional character of Bedford High Street is preserved through the restoration of historic buildings and shop frontages/facades which will hopefully lead to an improved retail offer and de-trafficking the Street to improve future viability. No change.</p>
<p><i>The talk about shop fronts is laughable as it is our planning department that gives the OK to the likes of Tesco etc, that means YOU, not us (Individual).</i></p>	<p>The Tesco replacement shopfront scheme is considered to comply with the Shopfronts Guidance SPD and preserve the character of the building and conservation area as far as possible while providing for the requirements of the occupier and users. No change.</p>
<p><i>The High Street has many fine buildings, however too many of these suffer from neglect, look tired, and are cluttered with signage that is not sensitive to the building. The introduction of a grant scheme backed by public funds is entirely appropriate as it is in all of our interests to have a vibrant town centre that acts as an economic stimulus and attracts inward investment (Individual).</i></p>	<p>Support for a grant scheme is noted.</p>

<p><i>I own the property 34 - 36 High Street Beds currently let to Lloyds TSB Bank ground floor and the basement whilst the second floor is let to a Church. Such properties will benefit from the uplift suggested by the Council. All the properties on High Street presently look dull and out of touch with the modern world. The outlook of High Street must change for the better and compete with modern outlooks making it attractive</i> (Individual).</p>	<p>Noted. The strategy is actively seeking to improve the appearance of the High Street. An important element in that strategy is the bid to the Townscape Heritage Initiative, which if successful will provide grant funding for repairs etc. No change.</p>
<p><i>This is a case of 'shutting the door after the horse has bolted'. This exercise should have been carried out many years ago. It is feared that the High Street has deteriorated so much in recent years and many businesses have been lost that it will be almost impossible to revive it now. Having said that the Parish Council is pleased to see the proposal to try and preserve the façade of the High Street buildings.</i> (Pavenham Parish Council).</p>	<p>The Parish Council's support is welcomed. The Council is committed to the regeneration of the High Street and has devised the strategy to try and redress the balance of decline. Time will tell whether the revival of the High Street has been achieved. No change.</p>
<p><i>Under the Key Actions (Section 6.6) we support the proposal to fund a dedicated project officer/team to drive the strategy forward</i> (Cycling Campaign for North Bedfordshire).</p>	<p>Support is noted.</p>
<p>Uses and Activities (Chapter 7) Several comments were received that relate to the night time economy:</p>	
<p><i>In order to create a 'cafe culture' environment - will first of all require existing pubs/clubs situated in and around the High Street to be encouraged to be more socially responsible in terms of the current 'binge drinking culture. Until this high volume retail drinking offer is reduced it is difficult to envisage the vision of turning the high street into the kind of environment proposed in this document.</i> (Cardington Parish Council).</p>	<p>The trend in the last decade has been to so called vertical drinking venues. This is a national trend and one which will be reflected in Bedford as it is in other towns and cities.</p> <p>The night-time economy in Bedford is less buoyant currently than has been the case in recent years. Nevertheless it remains a key contributor to retail operations in the Town Centre, it provides employment to hundreds of individuals and they continue to meet the market that exists for this style of entertainment offering. Issues</p>

	<p>around 'binge drinking' are being addressed through various methods:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular liaison with licensed premises management (including licensees and area managers) which seek to adopt appropriate measures to encourage a more responsible drinking culture amongst customers. • A programme of education aimed at young persons and parents about safe and sensible drinking. This is being delivered locally through the relatively new Community Alcohol Partnership (CAP). • Since April 2010, all premises licences now contain a mandatory licensing condition which addresses issues surrounding irresponsible drinks promotions. Although new, there is already evidence in the town's bars and clubs that many promotions involving discounting of alcohol have ceased. Further enforcement action by members of the Responsible Authorities (as per Licensing Act 2003) will hopefully improve the situation further.
<p><i>The High St needs to be returned to the excellent shopping centre it was in the 1950s-most shops being owned by local people. (Individual).</i></p>	<p>The Council cannot determine the ownership of local businesses. It can however try to create the conditions which will make the High Street an attractive location for investment in new businesses. No change.</p>
<p><i>Unless the "night clubs" and drinking joints are closed, the High St is NOT going to be attractive to anyone over 40 (Individual).</i></p>	<p>The High Street is the focal point of the town's night time economy. There are several bars, clubs and restaurants in the town centre, many of which are along the High Street and adjoining roads. The offering by those different venues attracts groups from different ethnic groups, gays/lesbians and patrons from different age groups.</p> <p>The age profile of visitors to the Town Centre pubs and clubs includes a percentage of those who are older than 40 years of age. Work is carried out with various statutory and voluntary partners (including the</p>

	licensed trade) to provide a safe environment for all users to enjoy, irrespective of age.
<i>New restaurants in the High Street could cause closures elsewhere in the Town Centre (Oakley Parish Council).</i>	The High Street Strategy is not suggesting new restaurants are introduced but can do nothing to stop them opening if a change of use is not required. Businesses will close because they are not offering what the public want and market forces will therefore dictate this. No change.
<i>7.3 why identify different groups of people, over 40's. under 18's, ethic groups, gays etc? Treat people as individuals, not as "pigeon hole labels" (Individual).</i>	The strategy is seeking to broaden the appeal of the High Street at different times of day and the different user groups are included by way of some examples. No change.
<i>Why does the gay community need particular consideration in the use of a pedestrianised High St- I thought they used it already (Individual).</i>	The strategy is seeking to broaden the appeal of the High Street at different times of day and the different user groups are included by way of some examples. No change.
<i>Singling out the 'over 40's (of which I am one) the 'gay' community (many of whom I cherish as friends) and the under 18's is a joke. These folk are all perfectly capable of having a good time in Bedford and need no help from this scheme (Individual).</i>	Noted. The strategy is seeking to broaden the appeal of the High Street at different times of day and the different user groups are included by way of some examples. No change.
<u>The Cultural Quarter and the idea to improve connections with the High Street:</u>	
<i>In support of High Street Improvements. Particularly linking the High Street with the Cultural Quarter by specifically making the various alleys more friendly and less threatening with measures to reduce the incidence of their use as urinals, such as brighter lighting, signage, street furniture, paving, cctv etc. (Bedfordshire and Luton Chamber of Commerce - Bedford Business Group).</i>	Support for this element of the strategy is welcomed.

<p><i>Does Bedford need greater tourism appeal before so-called niche shops can be attracted and sustained? Specialist retailers flourish in historical/tourist rich centres - locally Olney seems to maintain this appeal on a small scale</i> (Bedford Corn Exchange).</p>	<p>It is difficult to increase the number of visitors without an improved Bedford visitor offer. An improved niche retail offer will attract more visitors. No change.</p>
<p><i>The High Street needs to lead into something. St Paul's Square is a potentially attractive area (a quarter?) blighted by the handsome - yet derelict buildings adjacent to the magistracy. A revitalised high street should lead into the 'open' space and onto the river (& cultural quarter)</i> (Bedford Corn Exchange).</p>	<p>The Council is in discussion with the owners of the buildings adjacent to the Magistrates Court and is seeking to bring the buildings back into active use. No change.</p>
<p><i>...no mention at all of the Bunyan Museum/Church. OK strictly speaking they are in Mill Street, but how many visit Bedford just to see Bedford Museum compared to those on a pilgrimage to Bunyan's Church & Museum?</i> (Individual).</p>	<p>Amend para.7.6 to read 'To the rear of the High Street is the new cultural quarter focused on the Castle Quay redevelopment, Bedford Museum, Cecil Higgins Art Gallery, Bedford Gallery, Castle Bailey Gardens, the Castle Mound and Bunyan Museum/Church beyond.'</p>
<p><u>The following comments were made regarding the idea to increase occupancy of the upper floors of the High Street buildings:</u></p>	
<p><i>We support the redevelopment of the 'above shop' premises particularly as residential as this will clearly help with both security and image</i> (Bedfordshire and Luton Chamber of Commerce - Bedford Business Group).</p>	<p>Support is noted.</p>
<p><i>We agree with the Uses and Activity mentioned under Section 7.8 and suggest that in any changes of use the residential accommodation and offices should have a condition attached specifying that an adequate number of secure and covered cycle stands are provided. An adequate number of cycle stands should also be provided along the street (Section 7.9) for use by the general public visiting the area.</i> (Cycling Campaign for North Bedfordshire).</p>	<p>Any planning application that may be submitted for new development or a change of use should have cycle parking allocated to it as appropriate. The amount and location is dictated by the Council's current standards, which were adopted in August 2006 further to the Cycling Strategy adopted in 2005. If the required amount of cycle parking is not included as part of the planning application either amended plans would be requested or a condition imposed that details of cycle parking have to be submitted and approved prior to the</p>

	<p>implementation of the development. It should however be borne in mind that any request for cycle parking has to be a reasonable request, in terms of practicality and space availability. No change.</p> <p>The provision of cycle stands is a detailed design issue and can be considered in the layout of any environmental improvements. No change.</p>
<p><i>The existing policy in support of 'Living over the Shop' is a clearly positive measure in developing mixed use of the buildings in the High Street. This of itself encourages a 24 hour economy for this space and would support balance in that economy. However, it does also pose particular issues for the success of the on-licensed night time economy which, by its nature, is entertainment driven. This will be challenge in providing residents with accommodation that is not plagued by noise nuisance whilst also allowing the thousands of visitors to the pubs and clubs in this area to continue to enjoy the music and dancing that attracts them (Bedford Borough Council – Registration and Records).</i></p>	<p>Noted. The strategy already states that where residential uses are proposed, consideration will be given to noise issues. Noise issues would be considered on a case by case basis through the Development Management process. No change.</p>
<p><i>Using vacant upper floors for residential' while I understand the advantages to this I'm not sure this would actually work in practice. You only have to look at the properties that have been changed to residential and are left empty - very often due to how much they cost, and when left empty seem to be rented out - when you are, in some instances, adding to problems. An example of this is St. Cuthbert's - the top area appears to be residential but many a time I have driven down there are flags hanging from window, or very tatty window dressings, or constant 'to let signage.</i></p> <p><i>Unfortunately the 'evening culture' of the town is not in line with anyone owning a 250K+ apartment overlooking the High Street</i></p>	<p>The strategy seeks to make use of vacant space above shops either for residential or commercial use. As well as making use of this resource, buildings which are fully occupied are likely to be kept in a better state of repair. Detailed management issues in terms of appearance etc are the responsibility of the owner/landlord and not the Borough Council unless the property is in Council ownership. No change.</p> <p>Noted. The strategy seeks to broaden the use of the High Street in the</p>

(Statsoft).	evening. No change.
<i>Current usage i.e. late night bars will discourage residential influx (Individual).</i>	Noted. The strategy already states that where residential uses are proposed, consideration will be given to noise issues. Noise issues would be considered on a case by case basis through the Development Management process. No change.
<u>The following comments relate to the proposals to extend the pavements on the High Street and the stimulation of a 'café culture':</u>	
<i>...is absolutely no chance that by allowing even more drinkers to spill out onto the pavements on the High Street that a "Cafe Society" will be created The High Street at night will become even more unpleasant than it is now. The creation of a "Cultural Quarter" has been an expensive disaster as hardly any of the shops have been let, and the removal of the Castle Lane car parks in order to create expensive flats has been very bad for local traders. (Individual).</i>	<p>The primary focus of the strategy is to reduce the amount of space given over to traffic so that alternative use can be made of the street. This will provide opportunities for tables and chairs to be set out (subject to licensing requirements) during the day and the early evening. This will help to extend the type of offer which the High Street can provide and make it attractive to different client groups. No change.</p> <p>The Castle Quay development (private sector and Government funded) was completed at the height of the economic crisis which has had a knock on effect on securing niche and specialist retailers. Four of the retail units have been let with the remainder involved in ongoing discussions. One of the restaurant units has also been let and it is hoped that once this is established, more businesses will want to be a part of the development. No change.</p> <p>Lurke Street multi storey car park is a 5 minute walk from the Castle Quay development. No change.</p>
<i>Note the reference to raised beds and planters frustrating the use of some spaces. The Council would be seen in a more sympathetic light if it admitted that it got these wrong and were going to do something about it , rather than leaving the implication that the fault was</i>	Amend the strategy to state that the Council will review the position and desirability of retaining the raised beds/planters when detailed proposals for environmental improvements are considered.

<p>someone else's.</p>	
<p><i>Various issues with Bedford's image are widely reported and are somewhat apocryphal but there is a strong economic argument for further developing one USP, that of the lively night time culture but with broader age group appeal and the notion of the cafe culture spilling onto the widened footpaths is to be encouraged. However the latter is unlikely to attract families and more sophisticated customers whilst the High Street retains the through traffic. (Bedfordshire and Luton Chamber of Commerce - Bedford Business Group).</i></p>	<p>The High Street night time offer is successful for the local economy but it is recognised through this Strategy that the offer is limited to a certain age group and could be broadened. The High Street will be linked to the Cultural Quarter which will cater for more diverse groups including families. No change.</p> <p>The aim of the Strategy and THI programme is to remove all unnecessary traffic from the High Street which will enable different uses and businesses to trade which will improve the overall appeal and image of the area. No change.</p>
<p><i>Consultation should be undertaken before any new public art is installed (Oakley Parish Council).</i></p>	<p>Agreed. Amend text to refer to the need for consultation on the design of major environmental improvements.</p>
<p><i>By my calculation there are 75 shop units, with 16 cafes and 8 public houses/clubs, 24 total. This is about 32%. Why does the cafe culture need stimulating?</i></p> <p><i>5.1(3) Wants to attract 'niche shops. Wasn't this the idea for the cultural quarter? Why would they move to the High Street?</i></p> <p><i>5.1(5) To encourage alternative uses of the upper floors should be encouraged, but how will you do this?</i></p> <p><i>5.1(6) I have seldom been in the High Street at night. My sons like the environment. If there are problems what are the Police doing? Just standing by until both sides beat the hell out of each other.</i></p>	<p>The strategy recognises that the release of more public space for pedestrians rather than traffic will provide the opportunity for cafes etc to use that space. No change.</p> <p>The strategy recognises that if the Castle Quarter is successful in attracting niche retailing there is potential for this to spill over into the High Street. No change.</p> <p>The Council already has a planning policy in place to encourage such use. It will also work with RSL partners to look at the potential for Living Over the Shop schemes. No change.</p> <p>The Police are a key partner and regularly review the way in which the High Street is policed during the night time economy. The partnership has total confidence that the Police take the appropriate actions at the appropriate times and always in accordance with the legislation and</p>

<p><i>5.1(7) Why, why, why? Where did this presumption come from that we want a traffic free High Street. No-one has justified the premise, and more importantly, what happens to the traffic, does it vaporise? However when you list the exceptions to no traffic, the ideal becomes nonsense. Why Why Why? 6.1 - It is a north-south route and long should it remain.</i></p> <p><i>6 Please allow scope for modern architecture. Do not try to 'preserve' everything that is old. A town that does not evolve will die. Not everything Victorian is, or was, good. 6.6 - This all smells of 'Heritage'. We do not want an environment which is 'historic' with interpretation ;facilities'. We want a town to use. We are not going to be a York or Chester - We are Bedford - play our positives not our past.</i></p> <p><i>7.1.The High Street was 'the prime location for the town's tradesmen, craftsmen and the most prestigious businesses' of the 75 trading units, there are only 28 'real' shops, including charity shops. Just look at the High Street 28 shops, 24 public houses/cafes 7 vacant (soon to be 8 with Norwich and Peterborough) 4 Banks 12 other (hairdressers, estate agents, tanning centre, betting shops etc.) One could say that there are too many cafes/restaurants at a third of the total.</i></p> <p><i>7.6 - Castle Quay is a housing project, with a few commercial units added on, at ground floor level. It has as much to do with culture as does Midland Road, save for the Art Gallery and Museum already/previously on the site.</i></p>	<p>their powers. Complaints about individual actions by police officers should be directed through the official police complaints procedure.</p> <p>The whole environment of the High Street is dominated by traffic and the aim of the strategy is to shift the balance towards being a place for people. It is recognised that all existing traffic cannot be removed easily, and further work will look at the detail of how much traffic can be removed and when.</p> <p>There may be scope for contemporary design where circumstances are appropriate, for example the replacement of a building which has no historic interest, or replacement shopfront on a modern building, However, the Council has a statutory duty to preserve those elements of the High Street that contribute positively to the character of the conservation area. No change.</p> <p>The strategy recognises the diversity of uses within the High Street. No change.</p> <p>Castle Quay is a mixed use development with 103 residential dwellings, 3 restaurants, 8 specialist retail units, an outdoor archaeological park and lime kiln vault. Historically, the area is part of Bedford Castle and includes remains from a Scheduled Ancient Monument (Lime Kiln) and the inner bailey walls of the castle. It forms part of the Cultural Quarter which contains Bedford Museum, Bedford</p>
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<p>7.9 <i>The High Street is, and always has been, a road for carts and cars. That is what made it a success contrary to these statements, I believe that for the floor script is relatively good (it could be improved) but it is buildings which are poor, need cleaning, and are unfriendly. Yes, widen the pavements, but if the gates 'spill out' we want/ the disabled want, the cafe tables to be away from the shop fronts, by at least 2m. The only reason for people to sit outside, is to smoke. I don't want people smoking and littering, and obstructing my promenade.</i></p> <p>7.10 <i>The market has unfortunately lost its character due to the 'Victorian Modernisation'. Why don't the Council think, consult, then re-think, rather than press on with the original ideas. The Council are not infallible!!! (Individual).</i></p>	<p>Gallery, Cecil Higgins Art Gallery, Bunyan Museum and Castle Mound. No change.</p> <p>Applications for Street Trading Licences (e.g. for chairs and tables outside cafes) are considered on their individual merits. This includes the access and safety needs of disabled people. Where possible, local disability interest groups, such as the Access Group and Sight Concern, will be consulted, and a convenient, safe passing space will be ensured. Amend to refer to the need to comply with the Council's licensing requirements.</p> <p>The Council has consulted on the draft strategy and this will be amended in line with the responses set out in this report.</p>
<p><u>Access and Movement</u> (Chapter 8)</p> <p>The access and movement section of the document attracted more comments than the other sections. The main topic commented on was the issue of de-trafficking. Most respondents referred to the idea of de-trafficking as one issue, and did not separately refer to the proposed temporary closure and the permanent closure to general traffic. The following comments were given in support of the de-trafficking.</p>	
<p><i>We strongly support pedestrianisation. The plan should also identify adjacent car parks and safe pedestrian walkways. If pedestrianisation takes place care should be taken to avoid rat runs through areas such as Castle Road. A full study and consultation process about proposed traffic re-routing should take place (Dean & Shelton Parish Council).</i></p>	<p>Noted. Any permanent arrangements involving closure to general traffic will need to be considered following a full study which will be the subject of further consultation. Amend the text of the strategy to make this clear.</p>
<p><i>....supports the removal of non-essential traffic from the High Street provided that access is provided to town centre car parks from the east side of Bedford (Renhold Parish Council).</i></p>	<p>Agree that access to the car parks within the town centre is important. Any permanent arrangements involving closure to general traffic will need to be considered following a full study which will be the subject</p>

	of further consultation. That study will need to look at access requirements for facilities within the town centre including the car parks. Amend the text of the strategy to make this clear.
<i>The intermediate objective for the High Street should be seen, in my view, as worthy but of far lesser importance than the objective of making the High Street permanently pedestrianised. This is not impossible because a 'ring road' route exists with extant roads. A pedestrianised High Street will bring vitality to the historic centre of Bedford. (Individual).</i>	Support is noted, however the strategy refers to de-trafficking rather than pedestrianisation in recognition that some traffic will need to continue to access the High Street e.g. service and emergence vehicles etc. Amend the text of the strategy to make this clear.
Several comments were given in opposition to the idea, whilst others expressed reservations about it based on lack of information about alternative routes for vehicles:	
<i>It is entirely premature to be considering the pedestrianisation of the High Street until the wider transport strategy for the town has been worked out properly. Restricting traffic through the High Street would have very significant effects and these need to be understood and planned for before vehicle restrictions on the High Street are introduced (Phillips Planning Services Ltd).</i>	Any permanent arrangements involving closure to general traffic will need to be considered following a full study which will be the subject of further consultation. That study will need to fully consider the implications on the existing network. Amend the text of the strategy to make this clear.
<i>Residents throughout the Borough must be consulted on alternative routes (with their associated costs) before a decision is made on where the High Street traffic is to be diverted to (Pavenham Parish Council).</i>	Any permanent arrangements involving closure to general traffic will need to be considered following a full study which will be the subject of further consultation. That study will need to fully consider the implications on the existing network. In the case of temporary closure, diversion routes will be signed and use of the network will be monitored. Amend the text of the strategy to make this clear.
<i>We can see little opportunity to pedestrianise the High Street without another river crossing and strongly support the vigorous pursuit of a vehicular crossing at Batts Ford (Bedfordshire and Luton Chamber</i>	Any permanent arrangements involving closure to general traffic will need to be considered following a full study which will be the subject of further consultation. That study will need to fully consider the

<p>of Commerce - Bedford Business Group).</p>	<p>implications on the existing network. Amend the text of the strategy to make this clear.</p> <p>Support for the Batts Ford bridge is welcomed.</p>
<p><i>Pedestrianising the High Street would inconvenience shoppers who needed to use cars (the view was expressed that public transport was slow and not appropriate for use for people carrying shopping)</i> (Queens Park Urban Community Council).</p>	<p>Any permanent arrangements involving closure to general traffic will need to be considered following a full study which will be the subject of further consultation. That study will need to look at access requirements for facilities within the town centre including the car parks. Amend the text of the strategy to make this clear.</p>
<p><i>A High Street without traffic is not a High Street it's a 'hang out' and a cost centre rather than a commercial centre and a shopping draw all your decent stores have gone or are going revitalise the high street? Kick out Tesco from the city limits</i> (Individual).</p>	<p>The strategy recognises that de-trafficking will not involve the removal of all traffic because of the need to maintain access for servicing, emergency vehicles cyclists etc. The aim of the strategy is to make the street more attractive for all pedestrians and not just provide a hang out for teenagers etc. The recent Tesco store is a good example of new retail investment in the High Street. No change.</p>
<p><i>Temporary closures, such would cause enormous congestion for road users, to little benefit. temporary events would be handicapped by having to use an unchanged major road</i> (Individual).</p>	<p>In the case of temporary closure, diversion routes will be signed and use of the network will be monitored. Amend the text of the strategy to make this clear.</p> <p>It is agreed that temporary events will be handicapped by having to use an unchanged major road. This will not change until full de-trafficking has been achieved. No change.</p>
<p><i>I think you need to explain in MUCH more detail exactly how transport will be affected. What will be the alternative route instead of through the town centre? Providing a map with the current route "Through the town" and then the new proposed route would be ideal. Also explaining how you plan to ensure there isn't too much traffic on the new alternative route around Bedford town is an important subject. What measures will you take to ensure traffic doesn't increase and</i></p>	<p>Any permanent arrangements involving closure to general traffic will need to be considered following a full study which will be the subject of further consultation. That study will need to fully consider the implications on the existing network.</p> <p>In the case of temporary closure, diversion routes will be signed and use of the network will be monitored.</p> <p>Amend the text of the strategy to make this clear.</p>

<p><i>commute time stays or goes down for example (Individual).</i></p>	<p>Eventually all published maps will reflect the changed status of the High Street but in the meantime any transport strategy for the town will include appropriate maps. No change.</p>
<p><i>Don't want the High Street closed to traffic until such times as there is a REALISTIC alternative route. Traffic in the town already puts people off, if the council make it harder then no one will be prepared to put up with additional hassle of getting into the town centre to enjoy the improved facilities (Cardington Parish Council).</i></p>	<p>Any permanent arrangements involving closure to general traffic will need to be considered following a full study which will be the subject of further consultation. That study will need to fully consider the implications on the existing network and ensure that the town centre remains accessible. Amend the text of the strategy to refer to the need for a further study.</p>
<p><i>Where will the traffic go? (Individual).</i></p>	<p>Any permanent arrangements involving closure to general traffic will need to be considered following a full study which will be the subject of further consultation. That study will need to fully consider the implications on the existing network. In the case of temporary closure, diversion routes will be signed and use of the network will be monitored. Amend the text of the strategy to make this clear.</p>
<p><i>Very concerned about where traffic will be diverted to. Diverting the traffic will simply transfer the problem to other areas of Bedford, make life a misery for those living in those areas and slow up the movement of traffic through the town. A full orbital road around Bedford must be completed before the high Street is closed to traffic. Residents throughout the borough must be consulted on alternative routes (with their associated costs) before a decision is made (Pavenham Parish Council).</i></p>	<p>Any permanent arrangements involving closure to general traffic will need to be considered following a full study which will be the subject of further consultation. That study will need to fully consider the implications on the existing network. In the case of temporary closure, diversion routes will be signed and use of the network will be monitored. Amend the text of the strategy to make this clear.</p> <p>The combination of Southern and Western Bypasses will go a long way to providing routes for through traffic to use and it is envisaged that capacity improvements will need to be made on other key distributor roads in the town. No change.</p>

<p><i>You are not going to bother with "Park and Ride" if you live somewhere like Tyne Crescent and want to nip into town for a couple of purchases from Wilkinsons, but as there is next to nowhere to park in town now you will go to Homebase. Nothing against Homebase but I thought you planners were trying to promote the High Street and indeed the town as a whole as a shopping area. Similarly why use TKMaxx in town if you can park easily at the one at the interchange? My personal concern is the amount of traffic that will be funn roughfare, with some parking which narrows things further, and also has a set of Alms Houses occupied by elderly residents who need to cross safely. Any vehicles heading up Newnham Road, and pausing to make a right turn either to visit the Alms Houses or the private houses, will hold up traffic while waiting for a gap in the southbound traffic. At busy times this will cause chaos and add hugely to the tailbacks already evident during rush hour. I do not believe that the number of vehicles you say use the High Street can possibly be diverted effectively enough to avoid such problems unless you close off access to the Embankment by the Town Bridge entirely (Individual).</i></p>	<p>Maintaining good access to the town centre will be important, but part of the strategy is expected to be to improvements to public transport, cycling and walking networks.</p> <p>It is recognised that roads east of the town centre could suffer as a result of restricting use of the High Street, and how to ensure this doesn't happen will be part of the further studies and consultation needed. No change.</p>
<p><i>As a resident of Clapham, your strategy does not indicate how a car driver gets thro the town to go to Rope Walk or London Road? - or Bedford Hospital (in the short-term) (Individual).</i></p>	<p>In the longer-term implementation of Batts Ford Bridge would make the Greyfriars-Kingsway corridor the main north-south route for local traffic. Before then the main route will be Ashburnham Rd and Prebend Street, with capacity improvements along the route where possible. No change.</p>
<p><i>Frustration at the, say, 10 year delay until Batts Ford Bridge was open would outweigh the public's appreciation of the benefits of a temporary closure. 7.11 Re providing more space for pedestrians, delays to the traffic using the High Street would increase noise and pollution as congestion increased and pedestrians would still scurry to escape the street and its unpleasantness. (Individual).</i></p>	<p>Temporary closures will initially be at times when traffic levels are lower and the network as a whole has spare capacity.</p> <p>At the moment, although the High Street is a two-lane road, due to stopping vehicles it often only has one-lane of effective capacity. It may be possible to reduce the space given to vehicles without significant impacts on traffic levels and congestion. No change.</p>

<p><i>Proposed closure of High Street pointless until whole of traffic problems of Bedford sorted and Harpur Trust stopped parking where they want to (Individual).</i></p>	<p>Waiting for all of the local traffic problems to disappear before taking action on the High Street would probably mean no progress being made at all. No change.</p>
<p><i>Pedestrianisation of the High Street was likely to result in traffic chaos, particularly until a third river crossing was constructed (Queens Park Urban Community Council).</i></p>	<p>The potential consequences of simply closing the High Street to traffic are recognised, which is why the strategy envisages a step by step approach. No change.</p>
<p><i>The intent of the plan is excellent but I don't see how it can work until the bypass is completed to the Clapham roundabout. Prior to this, closing the high street will mean the Shakespeare Road rat run' becomes even more congested (Individual).</i></p>	<p>Any permanent arrangements involving closure to general traffic will need to be considered following a full study which will be the subject of further consultation. That study will need to fully consider the implications on the existing network. In the case of temporary closure, diversion routes will be signed and use of the network will be monitored. Amend the text of the strategy to make this clear.</p>
<p><u>Vehicular and pedestrian traffic in the High Street:</u></p>	
<p><i>...to prevent excessive speeding it would be necessary to introduce a 20mph speed limit along the street (Cycling Campaign for North Bedfordshire).</i></p>	<p>Agreed. It is likely that when de-trafficked, the High Street will be part of a wider 20mph zone. Amend the text of the strategy to make this clear.</p>
<p><i>We would request that the Police are consulted on all detail of any new road layouts and control mechanisms to exclude traffic, to ensure that they are able to deploy vehicles in order that they are able to effectively police the town centre and wider area (Bedfordshire Police Authority).</i></p>	<p>Agree that the Police will be consulted on any detailed proposals for closure etc. Consideration can be given to inviting a representative of the Police to join the Townscape Heritage Initiative Board. No change.</p>
<p><i>The consultation document does seem to be well constructed but it does not seem to address one of the primary faults of the area, in that, because pedestrian traffic tends to use Silver Street and Mill Street</i></p>	<p>The aim of the strategy is to re-generate the High Street and create a more attractive pedestrian environment. It is hoped that this will significantly change the general feel of the High Street and will</p>

<p><i>and the marker area has been well developed, the top half of the High Street has much less pedestrian activity than the lower half. The problem is made worse by the fact that the northern end east/west routes are unattractive for shoppers (compare the relative attractions of Mill Street/Silver Street with Lurke Street/Lime Street) The proposals made in paragraph 7.10 could well exacerbate this situations, and leave the Northern half of the High Street as little more than a back street. (The Bear Public House).</i></p>	<p>increase pedestrian footfall within the whole street. No change.</p>
<p><i>Is Bedford High Street the best area to de-traffic? To me the answer is no. The traffic will not go away, and the river crossing will be maintained for traffic, so rather than maintaining traffic on an unspectacular road with limited retail / leisure potential the traffic will go on the embankment or through St Pauls Square. This to me is the wrong way round. Put ALL the traffic on the high street, and keep it one way to the roundabout at the bottom of St Johns street. Minimised traffic on the Embankment would open up an area for quality green leisure space, and the whole of St Pauls square would be an absolute jewel for cafe / bar space (Individual).</i></p>	<p>The need to look at the whole town centre when considering traffic routes is accepted and this will be the approach. In general the aim will be to encourage traffic to use the main distributor roads, with traffic that does not need to access the town centre being discouraged from travelling through it. No change.</p>
<p><i>In the long term I strongly support the initiative to improve Bedford's High Street and to close it to vehicular traffic, but only if: (a) there is a viable alternative route or routes for the traffic in place before any restrictive measures are imposed, even if these are only partial impediments to traffic, and the alternative route(s) does not impede on residential areas of the town and (b) pedestrianisation is a reality, in contrast to the nominal pedestrianisation of Allhallows where vehicles of all descriptions are allowed access and no attempt is made to enforce the "no vehicles" signs. (Individual).</i></p>	<p>Any permanent arrangements involving closure to general traffic will need to be considered following a full study which will be the subject of further consultation. That study will need to fully consider the implications on the existing network. In the case of temporary closure, diversion routes will be signed and use of the network will be monitored. Amend the text of the strategy to make this clear. Amend the strategy to make clear that de-trafficking rather than full pedestrianisation is the objective of the Council because of the need to maintain access for service vehicles etc.</p>

<p><i>As mentioned several times in the document, nothing can happen until through traffic is removed from the town. This has to be the number 1 priority followed by improved off-street parking (5.9). Then you can set about restoring Bedford to a thriving market town (Individual).</i></p>	<p>The amount of long distance through traffic in the High Street is small and completion of the Western Bypass will mean that there is no need for the High Street to be used by any through traffic. No change.</p>
<p><i>Reducing/eliminating 'through' traffic is the key to reviving The High Street's fortunes that should be the priority (Individual).</i></p>	<p>The amount of long distance through traffic in the High Street is small and completion of the Western Bypass will mean that there is no need for the High Street to be used by any through traffic. No change.</p>
<p><i>Para. 2.8 and 2.13 The term de-trafficked' implies removal of all traffic. It doesn't become clear until much later in the document that this is not what is proposed. In practice a significant reduction in traffic would allow worthwhile improvements to be achieved. A good example of this is Market Harborough where the town centre was bisected by the A6 and is now an attractive area even though there is some traffic using the former A6. (Woods Hardwick Planning Ltd).</i></p>	<p>The term de-trafficked does not imply the removal of all traffic. The strategy defines de-trafficking as the removal of unnecessary traffic (para.3.3) and recognises that certain types of traffic will need to continue to access the High Street. In order to provide clarification on this point, it is proposed to provide a cross reference between the definition given at para. 3.3 and the first reference to de-trafficking in section 8 (Access and Movement). In addition, amend the strategy to make clear that de-trafficking rather than full pedestrianisation is the objective of the Council because of the need to maintain access for service vehicles etc.</p>
<p><i>Para.8.7 Makes it clear that the aspiration is to 'de-traffic the High Street, significantly reducing the number of vehicles'. This does not amount to pedestrianisation which is the impression that the term de-trafficking gives when used earlier. Para. 8.8 says 'discourage or prevent traffic'. This is a phrase which better reflects the approach set out in 8.11 which is 'most of the traffic is removed.' (Woods Hardwick Planning Ltd).</i></p>	<p>The term de-trafficked does not imply the removal of all traffic. The strategy defines de-trafficking as the removal of unnecessary traffic (para.3.3) and recognises that certain types of traffic will need to continue to access the High Street. In order to provide clarification on this point, it is proposed to provide a cross reference between the definition given at para. 3.3 and the first reference to de-trafficking in section 8 (Access and Movement). In addition, amend the strategy to make clear that de-trafficking rather than full pedestrianisation is the objective of the Council because of the need to maintain access for service vehicles etc.</p>

<p><i>Para. 8.12 St Paul's Sq North. This refers to de-trafficking but para. 8.26 allows for buses and taxis only. If you add blue badge holders then you have the same situation that exists at present, because there is precious little room for other vehicles. (Woods Hardwick Planning Ltd).</i></p>	<p>St Paul's North is also used by traffic from the south wishing to get to the Embankment and by cars exiting Horne Lane car park. Removal of this traffic and better provision for public transport would still provide environmental benefits. No change.</p>
<p><i>How will blue badge holders be accommodated? (Woods Hardwick Planning Ltd).</i></p>	<p>The availability of parking places in the town centre for Blue Badge holders will be part of the wider review of the town centre transport strategy. No change.</p>
<p><i>The last of the key actions in para. 8.3 says 'take account of the needs of disabled people' but that seems to be a reference back to 8.29 and 8.30. There is a need to ensure that whatever environmental improvements achieved by the strategy, are not undermined by lack of enforcement of restrictions (Woods Hardwick Planning Ltd).</i></p>	<p>The importance of enforcing traffic control measures is accepted. No change.</p>
<p><i>Whilst this scheme may enhance things from a pedestrian view point, closure of the High Street to vehicle traffic will result in: time inconvenience to motorists finding alternative routes; traffic congestion in side roads and residential areas; increased CO2 output because of longer journeys. You must consider where peak traffic flow on this major North - South route through town will go - a large chunk of the town centre has already been given up to pedestrians. Wednesday markets already cause major hold-ups early morning with vehicles parked for off-loading (Individual).</i></p>	<p>Any permanent arrangements involving closure to general traffic will need to be considered following a full study which will be the subject of further consultation. That study will need to fully consider the implications on the existing network, including congestion and emissions. Amend the text of the strategy to make this clear.</p>
<p><i>It is imperative that bus access is still allowed in St Pauls Square to ensure the viability of the current bus network (Individual).</i></p>	<p>It is not currently envisaged that bus access to St Paul's Square would change significantly. No change.</p>
<p><i>Until the conditions in 3.2/8.7 are implemented this whole strategy is 'pie in the sky' and a dreadful waste of money! 8.8 is NOT possible despite the first phase of the Western Bypass being completed</i></p>	<p>Agreed that removal of as much traffic as possible from the High Street as soon as possible is an important aim of the strategy. 8.8 is about road classifications and has already been implemented.</p>

(Individual).	No change.
<i>I am totally against shutting the High Street to traffic, where else is it all to go if it is local? Down the nearby streets is not acceptable as they are too busy all ready with local traffic. And as the state of the roads these past 2 years have proved- you ought to be spending OUR money on their 1st CLASS maintenance rather than these rubbish proposals! (Individual).</i>	Any permanent arrangements involving closure to general traffic will need to be considered following a full study which will be the subject of further consultation. This study will look at the potential impacts on other roads and what measures might be needed to manage this. Amend the text of the strategy to make this clear.
<i>Bedford does need to keep its traffic moving. It needs traffic moving at 20 mph (and a limit at that on the High Street would do no harm). It also needs the extra river crossing, but that needs a lot of money (Individual).</i>	It is envisaged that the High Street would be covered by a 20mph speed limit as part of a wider area limit. Amend the text of the strategy to make this clear.
<i>The key actions listed in paragraph 8.33 could include an additional action to investigate options for the early reduction of the High Street to a single carriageway (in part or in its entirety), which would enable pavements to be widened and the pedestrian experience to be enhanced (English Heritage - East of England Region).</i>	Any permanent arrangements involving closure to general traffic will need to be considered following a full study which will be the subject of further consultation. That study will need to fully consider the implications on the existing network and the option of reducing part of the carriageway down to a single lane will be considered as an interim solution in advance of full de-trafficking taking place. Amend the text of the strategy to make this clear.
<i>In the Key Actions (Section 7.11) to address the issues CCNB believes that in the short to medium term, without de-trafficking, the current two lane carriageway could be reduced to one lane with a cycle lane north to south together with a contra-flow south to north cycle lane as well as widening the existing pavements (Cycling Campaign for North Bedfordshire).</i>	<p>Any permanent arrangements involving closure to general traffic will need to be considered following a full study which will be the subject of further consultation. That study will need to fully consider the implications on the existing network and the option of reducing part of the carriageway down to a single lane will be considered as an interim solution in advance of full de-trafficking taking place. Amend the text of the strategy to make this clear.</p> <p>Whether a single traffic lane and cycle lanes and greater space for pedestrians can be achieved will require further consideration.</p>

<p><i>Would support improvements to the pedestrian environment in the short term by widening pavements restricting traffic to a single running lane, with lay-bys for servicing purposes (Renhold Parish Council)</i></p>	<p>Any permanent arrangements involving closure to general traffic will need to be considered following a full study which will be the subject of further consultation. That study will need to fully consider the implications on the existing network and the option of reducing part of the carriageway down to a single lane will be considered as an interim solution in advance of full de-trafficking taking place. Amend the text of the strategy to make this clear.</p>
<p><i>I am in favour of the plan to take through traffic out of the High Street I do have some concerns. Some of these are identified in the report and that is specifically the need for delivery vehicles and of course emergency vehicles.</i></p> <p><i>What is not mentioned is the need to clear the High Street of customers particularly on busy evenings. It is apparent to everyone that the gap between the shops (pavement and road) is narrow between Debenhams and St. Paul's Square and it would therefore be advisable that on evenings when there is a large crowd that this part of the High Street is closed completely. May I suggest that you will need to allow access for private hire and hackney vehicles to drop off and pick up customers and to quickly and efficiently clear the town of revellers without undue problems. This could be achieved by using barriers to reduce the carriageway to one lane from St Peters Street to Mill Street. This would have the impact of widening the pavements. (Individual).</i></p>	<p>Agreed. These ideas will be considered in the further work to develop the detailed proposals. Any permanent arrangements involving closure to general traffic will need to be considered following a full study which will be the subject of further consultation. That study will need to fully consider the implications on the existing network and ensure that the town centre remains accessible. Amend the text of the strategy to refer to the need for a further study.</p>
<p><i>Concern was expressed about the taxi pick up points should the High Street be pedestrianised, particularly on Friday and Saturday nights (Queens Park Urban Community Council).</i></p>	<p>Agreed. Any permanent arrangements involving closure to general traffic will need to be considered following a full study which will be the subject of further consultation. That study will need to fully consider the implications on the existing network as well as access arrangements for taxi pick up points.</p>

	Amend the text of the strategy to make this clear.
<p><i>In considering the future of the High Street, the creation of more pedestrian space is likely to attract requests for an expansion in Street Trading/Highways Tables and Chairs. In this regard the positioning of street furniture can either support such an expansion or it can effectively restrict such use of the created pedestrian space.</i></p> <p><i>However it is to be achieved is vital that licensed vehicles can get close to the shopping areas during the daytime and pubs and clubs in the evening and night time. The key element of licensed vehicles is that they provide door-to-door transport and the public expect this.</i></p> <p><i>If you have to carry shopping any distance before accessing licensed vehicles why not drive and park your own vehicle and carry your shopping that distance. Likewise at night the access arrangements for licensed vehicles can distort and impact upon pubs and clubs as well as creating "hot spots" where conflict can arise due to an inability in the public infrastructure to remove patrons speedily once they have concluding their evening.</i></p> <p>(Bedford Borough Council – Registration and Records).</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Agreed. Any permanent arrangements involving closure to general traffic will need to be considered following a full study which will be the subject of further consultation. That study will need to fully consider the implications on the existing network as well as access arrangements for taxi pick up points. Amend the text of the strategy to make this clear.</p>
<p><i>Measures will need to be taken to avoid traffic congestion in the Town Centre and from vehicles trying to bypass Bedford from the north. If St. Paul's Square becomes two- way, parking will need to be found nearby for the disabled and market traders' vehicles, which currently park on the church side of the Square</i> (Oakley Parish Council).</p>	<p>Agreed. These ideas will be considered in the further work to develop the detailed proposals.</p>
<p><i>There are a number of listed buildings south of the town bridge and into Cardington Road which are part of Bedford History; it would therefore be prudent not to redirect traffic resulting from the closure of</i></p>	<p>Any permanent arrangements involving closure to general traffic will need to be considered following a full study which will be the subject of further consultation. That study will need to fully consider the</p>

<p><i>the High Street onto these roads. Walking along Cardington Road past Dame Alice and into town via the Bedford Rowing Club and over the Town Bridge is a pleasant route with limited traffic this would need to be maintained or even improved with the closure of the access into Cardington Road from the St. Mary's end.(Individual).</i></p>	<p>implications on the existing network including the effect on side roads such as Cardington Road. Amend the text of the strategy to make this clear.</p>
<p><u>Cycling</u></p>	
<p><i>Section 8.13 – Pedestrian Routes – This equally applies for cycling routes and should be added (Cycling Campaign for North Bedfordshire).</i></p>	<p>Para. 8.13 deals with pedestrian routes. Cycling is dealt with in para s 8.27-28 of the strategy. It is proposed to amend these paragraphs to refer to the east-west cycle route which connects with the proposed north-south cycle route proposed for the High Street.</p>
<p><i>Cycle lanes should be protected and not simply green stripes on the road to reduce the danger of accidents and thus encourage more residents to cycle (Oakley Parish Council).</i></p>	<p>Once de-trafficking can be achieved, the accommodation of cyclists will need to be considered as part of the detailed design process. No change.</p>
<p><i>As a driver and pedestrian, I am opposed to giving more road space over to cyclists - the vast majority do not use cycle lanes, ride on pavements and abuse basic traffic rules such as red lights. There is very little, if any, policing of rogue cyclists. (Individual).</i></p>	<p>Once de-trafficking can be achieved, the accommodation of cyclists will need to be considered as part of the detailed design process. No change.</p>
<p><i>Cyclists need much better access through the town centre. It is ridiculous that we can't cycle through the centre. There should be places to sit in the Harpur Centre or other indoor/covered areas so that we can sit down and eat our food even when it's raining outside. Don't erect hideous monstrosities like the faces on Silver Street! All infavour of a traffic-free town centre. Cyclists and pedestrians rule!! (Individual).</i></p>	<p>Provision for cyclists will be considered in the wider development of the town centre transport strategy.</p> <p>The Harpur Centre is privately owned and there are no other indoor/covered areas owned by the Council to provide such seating. No change.</p> <p>The Council does not intend to fund any further public art in the next few years and lessons have been learnt to hold more thorough consultations before any installation. However, art is subjective and will always cause debate and conflicting views. No change.</p>

<p>CCNB does not believe (Section 8.7) that it is necessary to wait for the completion of a Batts Ford Bridge (a 'very' long term objective) or the A428/A6 link before CCNB's recommendation made under Section 7.11 above is implemented – This agrees with Sections 8.11 and 8.12 (Cycling Campaign for North Bedfordshire).</p>	<p>Consideration of reducing the High Street to a single lane will be considered and will not necessarily have to await implementation of Batts Ford Bridge (see comment earlier). No change.</p>
<p>Section 8.26 – The Town Centre Transport Study should have recommended that St Paul's Square (North) be confined to Bus, Taxis and Cyclists (Cycling Campaign for North Bedfordshire).</p>	<p>Removal of car traffic from St Paul's North remains an aim of the strategy. Provision for cyclists will need to be the subject of further study. No change.</p>
<p>Sections 8.27/8.28 – Cycling – St Cuthbert's Street and Newnham Road have never been considered by CCNB as a complete two-way north/south route since it is not authorised to turn right from The Embankment into St Paul's Square (South) or to turn right from St Mary's into The Embankment. As previously stated above, it is believed that a two way cycle route along the High Street could be established in the short term by creating a single lane carriageway for motor vehicles (Cycling Campaign for North Bedfordshire).</p>	<p>See above comments regarding a single lane for traffic in the High Street.</p>
<p>We agree with Section 8.32 – Developing A Transport Investment Programme – but believe that part (c) could be carried out in a SHORTER TERM instead of in a MEDIUM TERM (Cycling Campaign for North Bedfordshire).</p>	<p>Progress in reducing the importance of the High Street to general traffic is expected to require investment in other routes and this will take time. No change.</p>
<p>We agree with the Key Actions quoted under 8.33 and look forward to seeing the results of early actions (Cycling Campaign for North Bedfordshire).</p>	<p>Noted.</p>
<p><u>Parking</u> Parking was a key issue and many comments were given regarding the need for parking in the town to be improved:</p>	

<p><i>Bedford Town Centre is strategically - attempting to encourage greater footfall by redeveloping significant urban areas. tourists are to be attracted by cultural/restaurants - cafe culture initiatives & the promotion of historic sites & artefacts. Where are all the additional visitors going to park? Park n ride doesn't serve the night time economy; Existing car parks close relatively early & presumably only cater for current usage patterns and/or requirements. Let's build Disney land & provide 100 car parking spaces! It doesn't seem to add up. (Bedford Corn Exchange).</i></p>	<p>Parking management arrangements will need to be reviewed as aspirations for different uses and levels of activity within the town centre change.</p> <p>Amend the text of the strategy to make this clear.</p>
<p><i>Parking should be reviewed particularly in the evenings when any High Street Restaurants and the Corn Exchange are currently mitigated against through lack of safe, secure and convenient parking facilities (Bedfordshire and Luton Chamber of Commerce - Bedford Business Group).</i></p>	<p>Parking management arrangements will need to be reviewed as aspirations for different uses and levels of activity within the town centre change.</p> <p>Amend the text of the strategy to make this clear.</p>
<p><i>Car parking to allow access to town 24/7, this needs to be done now. E.g. Lurke Street car park should be open 7 days a week until 23.00 with a nominal parking charge after 19.00hrs and all day Sunday (Individual).</i></p>	<p>Revisions to parking provision to ensure adequate facilities are in place is kept under constant review. Amend the text of the strategy to recognise that parking management arrangements will need to be reviewed as aspirations for different uses and levels of activity within the town centre change.</p>
<p><i>Many people go to MK rather than Bedford because of traffic jams and parking (Cardington Parish Council).</i></p>	<p>Parking management arrangements will need to be reviewed as aspirations for different uses and levels of activity within the town centre change.</p> <p>Amend the text of the strategy to make this clear.</p>
<p><i>There is a major drawback and that is the lack of convenient parking close to the south end of the High Street (Individual).</i></p>	<p>Parking is available nearby in Horne Lane and River Street. No change.</p>

<p><i>Milton Keynes was built around good car parking, Brindley Place in Birmingham lots of Parking. Bedford's needs to take a look at this strategy and put car parking at the top because I can see no mention of this in this strategy. The old town hall was vacated is be a 24 hour NCP car park (Individual).</i></p>	<p>Adequate car parking is an issue for the wider transport strategy for the town as a whole, including off-street car parks, on-street parking management and promoting alternative modes of transport. No change.</p>
<p><i>The Council has control over the pricing of car parks and 'reasonably priced' might be a suitable objective if the objective is to encourage the use of them (Woods Hardwick Planning Ltd).</i></p>	<p>Parking management arrangements will need to be reviewed as aspirations for different uses and levels of activity within the town centre change.</p> <p>Amend the text of the strategy to make this clear.</p>
<p><i>The BBC will need to rethink its parking policy, and in particular, visitors parking during weekends and holidays on main roads. I have personally witnessed parking attendants issuing parking fines for families and pensioners within 5 minutes of their ticket expiring - on many many occasions recently. I have witnessed the arguments from my office window. I have heard visitors swear that they will not visit this town again in a hurry. I have witnessed a young traffic attendant hide and give 3 tickets within 3 1/2 hours in this fashion and on the same spot! It caused me to think that this town is run by Gestapo Officers. Is this Town really turning into a Communist Town run by KGB officers? Conclusion, parking is deficient and problematic (Individual).</i></p>	<p>Ensuring parking supply and restrictions are appropriate is an important aspect of the wider transport strategy. Provision of signing and the enforcement of parking restrictions will also be important. No change.</p>
<p><i>We have far too little parking for the present (2010) throughput of shoppers and you want more folk to visit our charity shopping town centre. You can not fit a quart into a pint pot. You appear to have looked at the Milton Keynes plans and are trying to bring this to Bedford. We are not anything like MK. Bedford is less sprawling and has less space to work in. (Individual).</i></p>	<p>Town centre car parks are not currently at capacity as a whole. The wider strategy will need to look at signing to car parks. No change.</p>

<p><i>Restrictions to access by car to Bedford Town Centre, particularly the closure of Castle Lane car park, had had a detrimental effect on business in the Town Centre (Queens Park Urban Community Council).</i></p>	<p>It is difficult to identify whether any economic changes are due to car parking policy or wider affects. There is no evidence of a shortage of car parking as a whole. No change.</p>
<p><i>Disabled parking facilities - I work in Town - Mill Street - the parking at the moment in this road is awful. Mainly for vehicles with disabled tickets - a major problem is knowing which are actually even legitimate. When I come in on a weekend over the Town Bridge and around the market square - it makes the area completely congested! A row of disabled cars parked up on the night and then a bus stop on the left - a nightmare, So yes, while I again understand the need for disabled parking it must not be in a position where it stops the flow of traffic.</i></p>	<p>Agreed.</p>
<p><i>In all the new works planned for Bedford there is one massive flaw and that is Car Parking. Bedford is one of the worst places to park in this region with all car parks closing by 8pm which is of no benefit to the night time economy or local theatre (Individual).</i></p>	<p>Parking management arrangements will need to be reviewed as aspirations for different uses and levels of activity within the town centre change.</p> <p>Amend the text of the strategy to make this clear.</p>
<p><u>Miscellaneous Comments</u> Below are comments given on other issues surrounding the High Street Strategy.</p>	
<p><i>Please take notice that a more historically important area of Bedford is St. Marys Street. Can you please explain why so much is being spent north of Bedford Town Bridge while neglecting or destroying the immediate area south of the river? Please take into account with all future planning that we have many elderly people residing just south of Bedford Town Bridge, they need to use local services, such as the hairdressers, post office, grocery store, etc.</i></p>	<p>The focus of the strategy is to concentrate resources and effort on the High Street. No change.</p> <p>Noted.</p>

<p><i>The problem is mainly due to parking restrictions imposed on the owners of these businesses, by the local authority as dictated from central government who have no idea of the reality with the local situation. In the long term, if Bedford College should revise their plans, I would recommend that new build should include an underground car park for the total area being developed. Only then you can hope to try and bring back some of the lost business activity in Bedford. (Giorgio Hairdressers).</i></p>	<p>The need for appropriate parking is understood, but provision needs to take account both of overall policy and the practicalities in a particular area. No change.</p>
<p><i>As district commander for Bedford Borough, I feel strongly the Police should be actively involved in any planning for the High Street (Bedfordshire Police [Bedford Borough]).</i></p>	<p>Agree that the Police will be consulted on any detailed proposals for closure etc. Consideration can be given to inviting a representative of the Police to join the Townscape Heritage Initiative Board. No change.</p>
<p><i>Provision of social, safe, meeting places for young people: e.g. urban I, art, etc. 10 – 10 access professionally manage (Youth Matters).</i></p>	<p>The strategy seeks to broaden the use of the High Street for all of the community. There is nothing in the strategy which would prevent such a facility coming forward. Detailed funding, management etc would need to be considered separately. No change.</p>
<p><i>....would like to see the redevelopment of the High Street dovetailed to interact with the regeneration of the river and water-frontage. This is about to be explored in more detail via a joint Borough and Environment Agency 'Waterspace Strategy' looking at how a range of upgrades, improvements, extending the head of navigation through to Kempston etc, might support the reinstatement of the river as the 'jewel in Bedford's crown'. This could include the introduction of a water taxi service, new mooring etc and redevelopment of a South Bank from the town bridge through to Borough Hall. The sort of transformation this might stimulate would be very much in keeping with the aspirations to revitalise and diversify the High Street and develop a more cultured and prosperous town centre (Bedford & Milton Keynes Waterway Trust).</i></p>	<p>There are no proposals within the strategy to provide a water taxi service. This can be considered through the emerging water space strategy and the High Street Strategy would not preclude any proposals from coming forward. No change.</p>

<p><i>The consultation draft should have enclosed a map of the area in question annotated with relevant addresses mentioned in the draft, such as 491-51 High Street, St Pauls Square North etc. (Individual).</i></p>	<p>Agree amend strategy.</p>
<p><i>Bedford is a beautiful town, and seeing it rundown with empty retail plots is very disappointing. I do not want to have to go to other towns to shop/eat our/spend time when we could have it all here (Individual).</i></p>	<p>Agreed. It is these issues which the strategy is trying to address.</p>
<p><i>Are the plans for a new river crossing at Batts Ford still being reviewed or have they been discontinued? (Individual).</i></p>	<p>The aspiration for Batts Ford Bridge remains and will be considered in the development of the wider transport strategy. No change.</p>
<p><i>I strongly believe that the Embankment, old Borough Council site, market square & St Pauls Square sites offer much more potential than the High Street, so should be developed as pedestrian areas before the High Street. Bedford also needs business, and gridlock will frighten them away (as it will shoppers) (Individual).</i></p>	<p>Noted. The strategy already includes reference to St. Paul's Square north and the lower part of the High Street on the approach to the Town Bridge.</p>
<p><i>The Chamber of Commerce is keen to participate in policy development, funding applications or in any other manner conducive to High Street image and economic regeneration/improvements (Bedfordshire and Luton Chamber of Commerce - Bedford Business Group).</i></p>	<p>Support and willingness to participate with the Council is welcomed.</p>
<p><i>High street does have some attractive facades that should be maintained / improved, but as a dream retail environment it just is not right. Retail spaces are small, it is a straight road, with limited arcades / groups of shops on the Eastern side. Boutique retail is not needed on the High Street. Retail as a sector is contracting, so Bedford does not need more shops. Lime Street / Harpur Street / Allhallows will give enough room for all the boutiques & niche stores Bedford will ever attract (Individual).</i></p>	<p>The Council commissioned a retail study to support the Bedford Town Centre Area Action Plan. It found that there was significant scope for additional retail floorspace in Bedford which should be focused in the town centre. No change. The strategy seeks to create a much improved pedestrian environment which will make the street more attractive for new investment including retail uses. No change.</p>

<p><i>The High Street is a choke point – there are too many sets of traffic lights and the amount of traffic is too much for the town centre. Support the aims restoring the fabric of the existing buildings, reduce the number of fast food shops, have a greater variety of shops but can't see how you can improve the public spaces. Can't see how the High Street can improve until the bus station and surrounding area including Midland Road has been re-built.</i></p> <p><i>Kerbs by the Corn Exchange are too high – this area should have been traffic free for pedestrians only. From the College through to the Town Bridge, Court House should be traffic free. The Court House should be moved. The river should be the crown jewel and Henley on Thames provides a model to follow – more traffic free areas, variety of shops and safe at night by reducing the number of night clubs. The High Street needs to improve by night and day. Cannot be done on its own and must be part of a greater development for Bedford – new bus and railway station, enforcing no cycling in public areas, increasing the size of the no drinking area.</i></p> <p><i>The council should stop talking and start doing. Most people feel nothing will happen in Bedford for at least 10 years. Get the bus station moved then start on the High Street. Don't let the bus company dictate to the Council. (Individual).</i></p>	<p>The general aim of the strategy is to remove traffic from the High Street as circumstances permit. No change.</p> <p>St Paul's Square North is an important part of the current bus network, but removal of general traffic remains the aim. Whether kerbs should remain will depend on the development of the detail and deliverability. No change.</p> <p>The adopted Area Action Plan provides the planning framework for the whole of the town centre. The High Street Strategy flows from this and is an integral part of the plan's proposals. No change.</p>
<p><i>...let's not forget that times have changed, and more and more people are doing their shopping online, closed shops are not just a sign of short term economic problems but also a tectonic shift in shopping behaviour (Individual).</i></p>	<p>The Council commissioned a retail study to support the Bedford Town Centre Area Action Plan. It found that there was significant scope for additional retail floorspace in Bedford which should be focused in the town centre. The retail study takes account of the effect of mail order and internet shopping in reaching its conclusions. No change.</p>

<p><i>Is there any mileage in giving part of the High Street (once traffic access is prohibited free standing roofing to encourage outdoor activities & protect against inclement weather? (Bedford Corn Exchange).</i></p>	<p>This can be considered as part of any detailed design along with the feasibility of such a structure. No change.</p>
<p><i>When introducing the changes for the benefit of a certain group of people you have in the past done it at the expense of the majority of the population. Any action taken must not disadvantage the majority of the population (Individual).</i></p>	<p>The Council is keen to achieve as inclusive a strategy for the High Street as possible. The Council is very mindful of its duties under equality legislation (e.g. the Equality Act 2010) to consider and promote the interests of all members of the community.</p>
<p><i>What relevance has 'ethnic group', 'faith' or 'sexual orientation' to do with the questionnaire? (Individual).</i></p>	<p>Equality legislation, such as the Equality Act 2010, places a duty on the Council, when developing policies, to consider the needs of all members of the community – particularly those with what the legislation describes as 'protected characteristics'. No change.</p>
<p><i>A very successful and easy format to complete (St Neots Town Council).</i></p>	<p>Noted.</p>
<p><i>The SPD would benefit from a large scale map of the High Street that shows all of the key sites and designations (including the buildings that mentioned in paragraph 6.3) (English Heritage).</i></p>	<p>Agree amend strategy.</p>
<p><i>No specific comments on the document (The Coal Authority).</i></p>	<p>Noted.</p>
<p><i>No specific comments on the document (South East England Partnership Board).</i></p>	<p>Noted.</p>
<p><i>In relation to the response forms, I must complain very strongly that in the following section Heterosexual has been given 3rd place- if you want to know peoples religion you should uphold the Bible's view that any deviance from Man coupled with Woman is abhorred by Almighty God! So I object strongly that deviants are given 1st and 2nd place!</i></p>	<p>Equality legislation, such as the Equality Act 2010, places a duty on the Council, when developing policies, to consider the needs of all members of the community – particularly those with what the legislation describes as 'protected characteristics'. There is no particular order of preference given in the equality legislation</p>

(Individual).	regarding 'protected characteristics'. In the course of public consultations, questions may well be asked about age, gender, disability, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion or belief – but responses will always be voluntary. No change.
<i>No specific comments on the document (Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment [CABE]).</i>	Noted.
<i>No specific comments on the document (East Midlands Regional Assembly).</i>	Noted.
<u>Comments on the Sustainability Appraisal Screening</u>	
<i>Page 22: Assessment Paragraph 11.9 states that under social affects that these were mostly neutral with a positive effect on 'crime'. As has been stated above in respect of the Vision, the document makes no specific reference to crime so it is difficult to understand how this statement can be substantiated. We would request that a comment is made as to how the proposed SPD makes a positive effect on crime in order that this can be taken into consideration (Bedfordshire Police Authority).</i>	These comments relate to the sustainability appraisal of Policy TC8 of the adopted Bedford Town Centre Area Action Plan which is reported here. This assessed the policy as likely to have a positive effect on the sustainability objective 'to reduce crime and the fear of crime' because of the expected increase in the level of activity that would result from implementation of the policy of retail reinvestment in the High Street. Amend the text to refer to working with the Police to reduce opportunities for crime/anti-social behaviour and improve community safety.
<i>In our role as statutory consultees on Sustainability Appraisals (SA), we note and agree with the findings of the SA Screening in Appendix A, which concludes that an SA is not required for the SPD because of the existence of a higher level policy document (Bedford Town Centre Area Action Plan) that has already been subject to proper sustainability appraisal (English Heritage).</i>	Noted.