

# 4. Lancing’s economy has centres of excellence but the high street isn’t one of them...yet.

**Summary:** People in Lancing have an appetite for a more diverse, ‘experience’ focused high street economy and see the potential for Lancing’s centre to play a critical role in connecting people to community assets and centres of excellence across the Parish.

### Lancing’s story

Lancing’s centre continues to play an important social and leisure function for older residents who regularly visit social clubs and community spaces including the recently re-opened Chesham House and Fabric. The high street is also a destination for local people on market days and in recent months, the Halloween and Christmas markets organised by the Parish Council and local trading community have proven very popular with families.

However, people are concerned about the number of empty shops and turnover of businesses on North Street and South street and would like to see greater diversity and improved accessibility. Across community conversations people demonstrated an appetite for a ‘culture and experience’ focused high street. Young people had ideas about ‘cat cafes’, pottery arts and crafts and clothes and gaming shops that would be youth friendly places to meet and share time. At the volunteers coffee morning, participants talked about creating more of a cafe culture on the high street and more retail opportunities. These ideas were shared by participants in the parents and carers ‘Eat Meet and Learn’, Age UK social club members and in survey responses.

One business model that is surviving and thriving on the high street is the takeaway (despite much local criticism!) One question that emerged was ‘what can we learn from takeaways about the success of the business model?’ This was discussed at the Lunch and Learn with Councillors and Officers who identified that takeaways operate a ‘hybrid’ business model with a presence on the high street, a strong digital presence and a local delivery service. Other community conversations had already highlighted the demand for affordable food.

Learning from and connecting the strengths of the local economy was a strong theme emerging from the Business Breakfast conversation which highlighted the ‘centres of excellence’ on the periphery of the Parish including Lancing Business Park; Brighton and Hove Albion’s Elite Football Performance Centre; Shoreham Airport; Lancing College and nature restoration projects including New Salts Farm. Questions emerged about what the role of Lancing’s centre might be in better connecting local people to these centres of excellence. Sentiments mirrored in survey responses which highlighted Lancing’s wealth of natural assets (The sea and the Downs).

### Quotations

*“The fly in the ointment is the high street”* - **Business Breakfast community conversation.**

*“People only come to the high street when there’s a problem”* - **Business breakfast community conversation.**

*“All new and interesting businesses seem to fail rather quickly”* - **Parent / carer, local volunteer, work in area, aged 50-59, survey respondent.**

*“Support for more independent shops and a removal of damaging chains that encourage unhealthy eating and gambling. We are what we see!”* - **Resident, born and bred in Lancing, aged 30-39, survey respondent.**

*“What’s the relationship between the big orange (the Parish economy) and the little orange (high street economy)?”* - **Business Breakfast community conversation.**

*“ People travel to Brighton or Worthing because there is a lack of ‘experience’ to be had on the high street.”* **Business breakfast community conversation.**

*“Business park feels like its own community and is hard to access by car through Lancing”* - **Lunch and Learn with Health and Community Professionals.**

### Unanswered questions

- How do we connect the strengths of Lancing?
- Why are the opportunities created in other areas of Lancing not reaching the high street?
- How connected is the business park to the high street and does it matter? (asked by councillors and officers)
- What is the reason for the high turnover of businesses on the high street?
- How many jobs are on the high street?
- Can we improve public realm to allow better commuting opportunities?