

13. Supporting Retailing and Commerce

- 13.1. The retail sector is an important part of the local economy providing local jobs and important goods and services for residents and workers. Shops are the foundation of every town centre and influence their aesthetic and environmental quality.

The Retail Hierarchy

- 13.2. The role of the retail hierarchy (shown in Table 5) is to ensure that new retail development takes place in appropriate locations and at appropriate scales. The centres in the borough are designated as town or local centres. Hemel Hempstead, as the primary town centre will be the focus for future major retail development, whilst Berkhamsted and Tring will accommodate a smaller amount of new retail development. The level of new development may reach the demand forecasts in Policy CS16: these forecasts will be more reliable for the shorter term (i.e. to 2021).
- 13.3. Local centres will play a smaller, but complementary role in meeting overall retail needs, although their focus is on providing services and facilities to serve their local communities. The availability of such accessible shops and services is vital, and the Council will support their provision and retention where it can. New development of retail and compatible uses will be encouraged in local centres where it is commensurate in scale with the size, role and function of the centre. A new local centre will be created at the Heart of Maylands to serve the needs of the business and local residential community. The precise nature and scale of this local centre will be determined through the East Hemel Hempstead Area Action Plan.
- 13.4. Development proposals in town and local centres should, where possible, add to the range, variety and choice of shopping and complementary uses, improve the quality of the shopping environment, and refurbish or reuse existing buildings.

Table 5: The Retail Hierarchy

Type of Centre	Location	Principal function
Principal Town Centre	Hemel Hempstead (including Hemel Hempstead Old Town)	Provides a range shops including many national multiple retailers. Provides a range of services and facilities and is home to a number of businesses.
Secondary Town Centre	Berkhamsted	Provides a range of shops including many independent retailers and weekly markets. Provide a range of services and facilities and home to a number of businesses.
	Tring	
Local Centre - with a district shopping function	Woodhall Farm	Provides a few local shops and a medium sized supermarket.

Local Centre - with a neighbourhood shopping function	Adeyfield	Provides a range of mainly small shops, services and facilities of a local nature, serving a small catchment.
	Apsley	
	Bennetts End (Bennettsgate)	
	Bovingdon	
	Boxmoor (St. John's Road)	
	Chaulden	
	Gadebridge (Rossgate)	
	Grovehill	
	Heart of Maylands	
	Highfield (Bellgate)	
	Highfield (The Heights)	
	Kings Langley	
	Leverstock Green	
	Markyate	
	Miswell Lane (and Western Road)	
	Nash Mills (The Denes)	
Northchurch		
Warners End (Stoneycroft)		

Shopping Areas

- 13.5. Parts of the town centres are designated as main shopping frontage and other parts as mixed shopping frontage. These designations will be used to ensure retention of retail use and a diverse mix of uses in different parts of the centres. Areas within local centres are designated as shopping areas where a minimum supply of shop (A1) uses will be retained.
- 13.6. A lively and diverse evening and night time economy is an important part of the vitality and vibrancy of a town centre. However, there can be negative impacts in areas such as community safety, litter and noise. These impacts must be controlled for the evening and night time economy to have a positive effect in town centres.

Out of Centre Retail Development

- 13.7. There are a number of out-of-centre retail locations in Hemel Hempstead which are well used and which complement the offer in the town and local centres. The role and size of these locations will remain stable. Significant new retail development or changes to the type of goods that are currently sold will not be allowed at these locations in order to support the retail hierarchy. These locations are listed in Table 6. In this context 'significant' is defined as any development that is likely to have a negative impact on town or local centres.

13.8. Jarman Fields is designated as an out-of-centre retail and leisure location where significant new retail development above that already permitted¹ will be resisted. The future of this area will be closely linked to the planned regeneration of Hemel Hempstead town centre. Whilst the precise mix and quantum of uses may change over time, the role of the site should remain complementary to the role of the town centre and continue to support the retail hierarchy. This principle applies to all out of centre locations.

Table 6: Out of Centre Retail Locations

Location	Main uses
<i>Out of centre retail locations</i>	
Hemel Hempstead	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sainsbury, Apsley Mills Retail Park, London Road (Sainsbury, Apsley) 	Food retailing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remainder of Apsley Mills Retail Park, London Road (Apsley Mills) 	Bulky, non-food goods
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two Waters, London Road (Two Waters) 	Bulky, non-food goods
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homebase and Wickes, London Road (London Road) 	Bulky, non-food goods
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> B&Q, Two Waters Road (Cornerhall) 	Bulky, non-food goods
Tring	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tesco, London Road (Tring) 	Food retailing
<i>Out of centre retail and leisure locations</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jarman Fields 	Food retailing and bulky non-food goods. Leisure uses.

The Sequential Approach

13.9 The sequential approach adopted by the Council requires new retail development to be delivered in central locations first; this supports the vitality and viability of centres and is a sustainable approach to development. The sequential approach stipulates that retail development is delivered on sites in the following order of preference:

1. locations in shopping areas in appropriate existing centres;
2. other locations within these centres;
3. edge of centre locations, with preference given to sites that are or will be well-connected to the centre; and
4. out-of-centre sites, with preference given to sites which are or will be well served by a choice of means of transport and which are closest to the centre and have a higher likelihood of forming links with the centre.

¹ Planning permission for 6,700 sq m (gross) of retail warehousing floorspace has been granted (04/00455/07/MFA and 04/00377/10/VOT) (as at January 2013)

13.10 The sequential approach will be used to assess applications for new retail development which are not in an existing centre and are not in accordance with local policy. The requirement applies to extensions to retail uses where the gross floorspace of the proposed extension is greater than 200 square metres.

13.11 When considering the sequential approach, the following will be taken into account:

- a) ensure that sites are assessed for their availability, suitability and viability;
- b) ensure that all in-centre options have been thoroughly assessed before less central sites are considered;
- c) ensure that where it has been demonstrated that there are no town centre sites to accommodate a proposed development, preference is given to edge of centre locations which are well connected to the centre by means of easy pedestrian access; and
- d) ensure that in considering sites in or on the edge of existing centres, developers and operators have demonstrated flexibility in terms of:
 - i. scale: reducing the floorspace of their development;
 - ii. format: more innovative site layouts and store configurations such as multi-storey developments with smaller footprint;
 - iii. car parking provision: reduced or reconfigured car parking areas; and
 - iv. the scope for disaggregating specific parts of a retail development, including those which are part of a group of retail units, onto separate, sequentially preferable, sites.

The Impact Assessment

13.12 An impact assessment will be required for all applications for new retail development that are not in an existing centre, or which are in an existing centre, but whose scale is not considered to be in keeping with the size, role and function of that centre. Assessments should take into account the likely cumulative effect of recent permissions, development under construction and completed developments. Such applications will be assessed against the following impacts on centres:

- a) the impact of the proposal on existing, committed and planned public and private investment in a centre or centres in the catchment area of the proposal;
- b) the impact of the proposal on town centre vitality and viability, including local consumer choice and the range of quality of the comparison and convenience retail offer;
- c) the impact of the proposal on allocated sites outside town centres being developed in accordance with the development plan;
- d) the impact of the proposal on in-centre trade/turnover and on trade in the wider area, taking account of current and future consumer expenditure capacity in the catchment area up to ten years from the time the application is made, and where applicable on the rural economy; and

- e) if located on the edge of a town centre, whether the proposal is of an appropriate scale (in terms of gross floorspace) in relation to the size of the centre and its role in the retail hierarchy.

POLICY CS16: Shops and Commerce

The main retail hierarchy of town centres and local centres (listed in Table 5) will be strengthened by encouraging appropriate new retail development and retaining sufficient existing shops in these centres.

New retail development will be assessed in terms of its location, scale and impact. It will be permitted if it accords with the retail hierarchy and conforms to the sequential approach. Most retail development will be directed to the town and local centres.

Opportunities will be given to provide capacity for the following amounts of floorspace if there is demand:

Town Centre	Square Metres (net)			
	Comparison	Convenience	Total	
Hemel Hempstead	15,500 32,000 47,500	6,000	53,500	2009-2021 2022-2031 Total
Berkhamsted	6,000	1,000	7,000	Total
Tring	2,500	750	3,250	

New retail floorspace will only be permitted outside of defined centres if the proposal complies with the sequential approach and demonstrates a positive overall outcome in terms of the impact assessment.

Hemel Hempstead will be the main destination for comparison goods shopping, leisure, entertainment and civic and cultural activities. Other centres will provide core shopping facilities and services for their local communities.

Development proposals that promote a diverse evening economy in the town centres will be supported provided that their social and environmental impacts are controlled.

Monitoring:

Indicator	Target
Net change in retail floorspace in town centres	Positive trend
Net change in retail floorspace in local centres	Positive trend
Net gain in retail floorspace which is outside of designated centres	Nil

Delivery will be achieved by:

- designation of specific sites and consideration of their delivery through the Hemel Hempstead Town Centre Masterplan, the Site Allocations DPD and East Hemel Hempstead Area Action Plan DPD;
- the Development Management DPD;
- implementation of the relevant economic development strategies;
- partnership working with the Local Enterprise Partnership, the Economic Development team at Hertfordshire County Council, the local business community, Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and business support partners;
- implementation of the place strategies and Dacorum Development Programme; and
- Marlowes Shopping Zone Improvements Plan.