

Appendix 7 - Preferred Policy Option 9

Retail and Leisure

1. Rickmansworth town centre and the district centres of South Oxhey, Chorleywood and Abbots Langley will remain the focus for retail and leisure activity and other town centre uses.

1) Retail development will be acceptable in principle within the Retail Hierarchy:

a. Within the primary frontages at ground floor level, as defined on the Policies Map, development within Use Class E will normally be permitted provided

- Uses retain an active frontages at ground floor and demonstrate a positive contribution to the vitality, viability, balance of services and/or evening economy of the town centre
- Development is of a scale, type and format that reflects and enhances the role and function of the centre within which it is proposed

b. Within the primary and secondary frontages, the use of upper floors for residential use is supported in principle across all parts of the town centre hierarchy subject to other local planning policies.

c. Within the secondary frontages at ground level, development within Use Class E, Sui Generis uses suited to a town centre, Class F1 and Class F2(b) will normally be permitted.

d. Redevelopment proposals providing managed workspace, flexible workspace accommodation will be encouraged to support small businesses within the defined retail hierarchy.

e. The intensification of town centres to provide additional floorspace for main town centre uses is supported in principle subject to impacts on townscape and heritage.

The Town Centre at Rickmansworth

~~f. The District Centres at South Oxhey, Abbots Langley and Chorleywood~~

~~g. The Local Centres at Croxley Green (Watford Road and New Road) and Mill End (Money Hill Parade)~~

- ~~The Neighbourhood Centres across the District~~

2) Local and Neighbourhood Centres, as defined within Appendix X will provide a mix of commercial and community uses to meet residents' day to day shopping needs, provide local employment opportunities, and support opportunities for community interaction

3) Retail impact assessments will only be required for proposals of more than 2,500 sq m of (gross) new retail floorspace outside the town centre hierarchy, including proposals for Class E (commercial, business and service) uses that would enable at least 2,500 sq m of (gross) floorspace to be occupied by retail use.

~~Main town centre uses will be directed to the Town Centre, District Centres and Local Centres.~~

~~3) Primary Shopping Areas will be the main focus for retail uses (and other Class E uses) and these uses will be protected, unless it is demonstrated that the loss of the Class E use would not have significant harmful effects on the vitality and viability of the Town and District Centres. A wider variety of main town centre uses will be encouraged within the Town Centre~~

Boundaries of the Town and District Centres.

4) Identified Local Centres, Neighbourhood Centres and Individual Shops will be protected and enhanced where they are catering for local day to day needs. The retention of retail uses will be encouraged. The provision of uses that are complementary to the Local and Neighbourhood Centres will also be encouraged.

5) The hierarchy of retail centres and their established character and diversity will be maintained by:

a) Protecting and enhancing the vitality and viability of the Primary Shopping Areas of the Town and District Centres by generally resisting the loss of retail use and other Class E uses

b) Promoting uses which are complementary to the Primary Shopping Area, normally within the Town Centre boundary of the Town Centre and District Centres.

c) Taking account of the contribution of non-retail uses to the vitality and viability of centres, having regard to market conditions and impacts on local amenity

d) Protecting and enhancing existing Local Centres, Neighbourhood Centres and Individual Shops where they are catering for local day to day needs

e) Permitting main town centre uses in out of town locations only where the sequential test is passed and where it is demonstrated that the development would not significantly adversely affect existing retail centres.

f) Only permitting retail and leisure development (of 2,500m² gross floorspace and above) in an out of centre location where an impact assessment has demonstrated that the development would not have a significantly adverse impact on the considerations stated in paragraph 89 of the NPPF or result in an increase in private vehicle use.

6) Proposals involving main town centre uses will be considered taking into account:

a) The location of the proposed development with preference given to centrally located and accessible areas served by a range of transport modes including public transport

b) The impact of development on the viability and vitality of existing retail centres

c) The appropriateness of the type and scale of development in relation to the centre and its role, function, character and catchment area.

7) In all locations, proposals for new retail and leisure development, involving gains and/or losses, will be considered taking into account its accessibility, its impact on existing centres and appropriateness of the type and scale of development. New retail and leisure facilities will be encouraged where they are supported by up to date evidence of need, where they contribute to the vitality and viability and general economic well being of the area and where they do not impact detrimentally on existing centres

8) Any sustainable applications for evening economy uses in the Town Centre should be considered favourably.

9) Shop fronts and displays should be appropriate to the character and function of the area.

Future Retail and Leisure Provision

(Leisure = commercial leisure sector e.g. indoor health and fitness facilities, cinemas, restaurants, pubs/bars/nightclubs, bowling, bingo and cultural facilities (theatres, museums, etc.).

10) With regard to convenience (food) floorspace, this equates to a net gain of around 2,400-3,100 square metres by 2036. The target provision over forthcoming five year periods will be broadly as follows:

a) 1,000-1,300 square metres by 2026

b) 700-800 square metres from 2026 to 2031

c) 700-1,000 square metres from 2031 to 2036

11) With regard to comparison (non-food) floorspace, the provision of additional floorspace equates to the net gain of around 1,900-2,600 square meters by 2036. This is broadly set out over forthcoming five year periods below:

a) 300-400 square meters by 2026

b) 800-1,000 square meters from 2026 to 2031

c) 800-1,200 square meters from 2031 to 2036

12) With regard to the development of restaurants, cafés and bars, the provision of net additional floorspace equates to a net gain of:

a) 327 square meters by 2036 in Rickmansworth Town Centre

b) 402 square meters by 2036 in the District and Local Centres

These targets will be reviewed regularly and amended in light of new evidence in relation to forecast expenditure and population. Proposals that would result in provision over and above these targets will be considered on their merits taking into account their appropriateness in scale and function to the relevant centre.