
10 CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 The key conclusions and recommendations of this report are summarised as follows:

BARNSTAPLE

Vitality and Viability

- 10.2 Barnstaple is a vital and viable town centre providing an excellent retail choice for both its immediate catchment area and the wider population of northern Devon. It is also well below the GB average for vacancy rates suggesting that it is a very healthy town centre with high investor confidence.
- 10.3 There are a number of opportunities to enhance the overall quality of the centre including the sites at Queen Street/Bear Street, The Cattle Market, and the land to the rear of Lower Boutport Street and Silver Street. These sites are detailed within the Revised Deposit Local Plan.
- 10.4 Sites for bulky goods developments are identified as being Anchorwood Bank and Seven Brethren. The Revised Deposit Local Plan proposes 6,000 to 10,000 sq m gross of non-food bulky goods retailing at Anchorwood Bank and also proposes a number of uses at Seven Brethren, including additional retail warehousing to meet the future shopping needs of Barnstaple and North Devon.
- 10.5 Where new development is proposed in or on the periphery of the town centre, particular attention will need to be given to establishing direct and attractive pedestrian links to the established town centre. The aim of this is to create natural and convenient links. Further, we recommend that the Council continue to protect the primary and secondary shopping frontages in accordance with Policies BAR4 and BAR5 of the Local Plan.
- 10.6 It is important that linkages between the main retail area and the Pannier Market are maximised in order to ensure that the two areas complement each other. Such linkages have been encouraged by the continuation of the primary

shopping frontage along Butchers Row from the High Street. This designation helps to ensure that A1 retail uses are continuous between the High Street retailers and the Pannier Market. The Council should resist any future proposals, which may damage these links.

- 10.7 The Barnstaple train station is somewhat detached from the town centre, being located on southern side of the River Taw. However, a clear pedestrian link exists along Station Road, between the railway station and the town centre. It should be the aim of policy to seek to both maintain and maximise this pedestrian linkage.
- 10.8 The site immediately to the north of the Barnstaple bus station “Land to the rear of lower Boutport Street and Silver Street” is allocated for a mix of retailing units with residential, community or leisure uses above ground level” (Proposal BAR6c). Any development on this site should seek to maximise, as far as possible, existing linkages with the shopping frontages and the bus station.
- 10.9 Bicycle route provision should be encouraged by the Council along with facilities such as bicycle lockers at park and ride facilities and racks in the town centre where appropriate.
- 10.10 Joy Street, which is located at the heart of the primary shopping area, is a pedestrianised zone providing easy access to the main shopping sector. It is considered that further proposals to extend the pedestrian zone should be encouraged.

Comparison Goods Capacity

- 10.11 Barnstaple is the main urban centre of North Devon and it is classified as a Sub-Regional Centre. As such, it is the role of Barnstaple to meet the wider development needs of the northern part of Devon.
- 10.12 We recommend planning to increase trading density to the ‘Target’ rate shown in Scenario 2 (see Table 9.5) in order to increase the vitality and viability of Barnstaple.
- 10.13 Table 9.6 shows the comparison floorspace requirements in Barnstaple, including both the town centre and retail parks, if the total area associated with

existing commitments, vacant units and existing allocations listed in the Revised Deposit Local Plan (2003), is deducted from the figures derived using the trading density that Barnstaple is currently trading at. It shows that no additional comparison floorspace over and above the existing allocations would be required until 2011, when an additional 7,848 sq m (net) of comparison floorspace is needed. By 2016 the additional floorspace required will increase to 12,194 sq m (net) and by 2021 it will increase to 29,019 sq m (net).

- 10.14 Overall, it is considered that whilst Barnstaple should seek to retain its market share and provide a range of goods to meet local needs and the wider development needs of the northern part of Devon, it is not necessary to make significant allocations within Barnstaple, which would result in a wider range of comparison provision during the plan period (up to 2021). Further, any proposals for development involving additional comparison floorspace in Barnstaple will be subject to the sequential test from the town centre and need analysis as outlined in PPS6 to avoid sites considered sequentially from the district centres of Pilton and Newport.

Bulky Goods

- 10.15 In terms of bulky goods, in the absence of suitable town centre sites any need will have to be met outside the town centre. The preferred locations for bulky goods developments is firstly Seven Brethren followed by Anchorwood Bank. If insufficient land is available on these sites, then alternative locations should be considered in accordance with the sequential approach to site selection.

Convenience Goods Capacity

- 10.16 The existing convenience provision in Barnstaple involves three supermarkets in town centre locations and five supermarkets in out-of-centre locations. Out of all these stores, the Tesco store at St Johns Retail Park, followed by the Sainsbury's store at Roundswell, receive the greatest amounts of expenditure.
- 10.17 Table 9.26 shows that the total amount of additional convenience floorspace required in Barnstaple in 2006 is 2,081 sq m (net). This rises to 4,559 sq m (net) in 2011, then to 8,752 sq m (net) in 2016 and then to 14,246 sq m (net) in 2021.
- 10.18 The existing commitments and existing allocations listed in the Revised Deposit Local Plan, for convenience floorspace in Barnstaple total 7,008 sq m

(net). Therefore, taking into consideration the existing commitments and existing allocations, it can be seen that no additional floorspace over and above existing commitments will be required up to 2011 and 1,750sq m net will be required by 2016.

10.19 Overall, whilst it is evident that convenience stores are under-trading relative to the 'Target' trading density, this has not necessarily had a negative impact on the vitality and viability of the town centre. In planning for future growth, the planning authority should not specifically constrain convenience floorspace to alleviate this under-trading. Instead the planning authority should consider the need for convenience proposals on an individual basis.

10.20 Any proposals for development involving additional convenience floorspace in Barnstaple will be subject to the sequential test from the town centre and need analysis as outlined in PPS6 to avoid sites considered sequentially from the district centres of Pilton and Newport.

BRAUNTON

Vitality and Viability

10.21 The main shopping location has been identified along Exeter Road, Caen Street, South Street, Heanton Street and Saunton Road. It is considered that linkages should be improved between the museum and the central shopping area in order to attract more visitors to the retailing area of the village.

10.22 Braunton has a high service provision in the village centre. Much of this service provision supports and enhances the retail function of the village, however, it is important that this service provision does not become over dominative. Therefore, we recommend that Revised Deposit Local Plan Policy BRA6 be maintained to ensure there is no over concentration of service uses within the village centre.

10.23 Braunton has a low vacancy rate, being only 1% of the total number of units in the village centre. Although, this low level of vacant floorspace highlights the relative economic prosperity of the centre, it is worth noting the constraints that exist due to a lack of vacant units. These include difficulties for potential retailers to move into the Area Centre, which may in turn limit future retail

growth and potential retail choice. The shortage of premises supply may also cause increases in rents, which subsequently could affect the viability of some smaller independent operators.

- 10.24 Traffic congestion is a problem throughout the village centre at peak times with traffic coming to a standstill. As the shops within Braunton are based around the main through roads (A361 and B3231), this traffic congestion is detrimental to the shopping environment, as conflicts exist between vehicles and pedestrians. Therefore, any schemes to reduce traffic flow should be encouraged.
- 10.25 Overall, Braunton is considered to be a vital and viable village centre, which offers an adequate range of services to serve the local population.

Comparison Goods Capacity

- 10.26 Braunton is classified as an Area Centre, whereby its role is to provide local services to meet local needs and those of the rural hinterland, and only those needs.
- 10.27 Scenario 2 in Table 9.9 shows that using the Target trading density of £2,691 per sq m, additional comparison floorspace is not required until 2011, being only 209 sq m (net). By 2016 this will increase to 562 sq m (net), and by 2021 it will increase to 696 sq m (net).
- 10.28 There was only one vacant unit (with a net floorspace area of 45.5 sq m) in Braunton at the time that the Scott Wilson survey was undertaken. Also, it was noted that this unit was soon to be occupied by a haberdashery. In any event, it is considered that this unit would not alleviate the additional floorspace requirement to any great extent.
- 10.29 We recommend planning to increase trading density to the 'Target' rate shown in Scenario 2 (see Table 9.9) in order to increase the vitality and viability of the centre.
- 10.30 Overall, Braunton is part of a wider network of centres, and whilst its function is to provide for local needs, this retail offer is supplemented by the retail offer of higher order centres. It considered that it is not necessary to increase floorspace within Braunton, however, to alleviate the under-trading, it is

considered that additional comparison floorspace is not required in Braunton until 2011. Further, any proposals for development involving additional comparison floorspace in Braunton will be subject to the sequential test and need analysis as outlined in PPS6.

Convenience Goods Capacity

- 10.31 The existing convenience provision in Braunton only involves a Somerfield store in the village centre. It is considered that this store provides a good level of service to the immediate catchment area.
- 10.32 In terms of the 'Target' floorspace requirements for convenience goods in Braunton village centre, assuming a turnover of £5,000 per sq m, Table 9.29 shows that in 2006 there will be a requirement for 1,435 sq m (net) of additional convenience floorspace. This rises to 1,664 sq m (net) by 2011, then to 2,051 sq m (net) by 2016 and 2,557 sq m (net) by 2021.
- 10.33 The Brannoc Fibres site, Braunton, has an existing planning permission for a new Tesco store, involving 1,739 sq m (net) of convenience floorspace. Further, the Revised Deposit Local Plan recommends a foodstore in Braunton village with a net floorspace up to 1,000 sq m. Therefore, the existing commitment and existing specific allocation listed in the Revised Deposit Local Plan, for convenience floorspace in Braunton total 2,739 sq m (net).
- 10.34 Overall, we recommend alleviating the current over-trading within Braunton in order to increase the vitality and viability of the centre and offer increased consumer choice. In any event, the existing commitment and allocation at the Brannoc Fibres site will cater for the additional floorspace requirements in Braunton during the plan period (up to 2021).
- 10.35 Any proposals for development involving additional convenience floorspace in Braunton will be subject to the sequential test and need analysis as outlined in PPS6.

ILFRACOMBE

Vitality and Viability

- 10.36 Ilfracombe is considered have a reasonably vital and viable town centre. The centre is well served and offers a diverse range of uses. Further, because Ilfracombe is a tourist centre The Harbour area also has a diversity of uses relating to tourists' needs.
- 10.37 As an Area Centre, Ilfracombe is well served with a diversity of uses in its primary and secondary shopping area. Also, due to its role as a tourist centre, it is not a surprise to discover that Pubs and Hotels in Ilfracombe have the greatest level of net floorspace. Also, these premises are located in both the Primary and Secondary Shopping Frontages. Policy ILF5 (Primary Shopping Frontages) of the North Devon Revised Deposit Local Plan (2003) seeks to protect the defined Primary Shopping Frontage for A1 uses. Further, Policy ILF6 (Secondary Shopping Frontages) highlights that this A4 Use Class (Drinking Establishments) will be permitted within the secondary shopping area, at ground level, if it adds to the vitality and viability of the town centre. We recommend that Revised Deposit Local Plan Policy ILF5 be maintained to ensure that the Primary Shopping Frontage is protected.
- 10.38 Ilfracombe has a relatively high level of vacant units (6.4%). This may have a detrimental effect on the street frontage and hence, the amenity of the area. The level of vacancies here is also is representative of a relatively weak economy, which to some extent affects the vitality and viability of the centre.
- 10.39 The main shopping area is located in the middle of High Street between Northfield Road and Springfield Road. Although The Harbour is not connected to the main shopping section, it is considered that links should be encouraged in order to attract visitors into the town centre.

Comparison Goods Capacity

- 10.40 Ilfracombe is classified as an Area Centre, whereby its role is to provide local services to meet local needs and those of the rural hinterland, and only those needs.

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- 10.41 Table 9.11 shows that using the current trading density of Ilfracombe, being £3,300 per sq m, in 2006, 592 sq m (net) of additional comparison floorspace is required. By 2011 this will increase to 1,803 sq m (net), by 2016 it will increase to 2,618 sq m (net), and by 2021 it will increase to 2,928 sq m (net).
- 10.42 There are 13 vacant units located in Ilfracombe town centre. These units have a total net floorspace of 571 sq m. Therefore, a proportion of this amount can be used to alleviate the floorspace requirements.
- 10.43 It is considered that current over-trading in Ilfracombe, shown in Scenario 1 has not had any detrimental effect on the vitality and viability of Ilfracombe and indeed has added towards the vibrancy of the centre. Therefore, we recommend that the Local Planning Authority should not seek to specifically alleviate this issue.
- 10.44 Overall, Ilfracombe is part of a wider network of centres, and whilst its function is to provide for local needs, this retail offer is supplemented by the retail offer of higher order centres. As such, whilst Ilfracombe should seek to retain its market share and provide a range of goods to meet local needs, it is not necessary to make specific significant allocations within Ilfracombe, which would result in a wider range of comparison provision. Further, any proposals for development involving additional comparison floorspace in Ilfracombe will be subject to the sequential test from the town centre and need analysis as outlined in PPS6 to avoid sites considered sequentially from the harbour shopping area.

Convenience Goods Capacity

- 10.45 The existing convenience provision in Ilfracombe involves three supermarkets in town centre locations. The majority of convenience expenditure in Ilfracombe is attributed to the Somerfield store. It is considered that this store provides a good level of service to the immediate catchment area, being used predominantly for 'Main' shopping. The Co-op store is of a similar size and also provides a good level of service. This store is used for both 'Main' and 'Top-Up' shopping to a relatively equal extent. Further, although the Spar store is relatively small, it is predominantly used for 'Main' shopping.
- 10.46 Tables 9.33 and 9.34 demonstrate the convenience floorspace requirements for Ilfracombe within two different scenarios. It is evident that the existing

commitments of 2,953 sq m net will account for the additional floorspace requirements within both of these scenarios. Therefore the current commitments in Ilfracombe ensure that no further convenience floorspace will be required in Ilfracombe during the plan period (up to 2021).

- 10.47 Any proposals for development involving additional convenience floorspace in Ilfracombe will be subject to the sequential test from the town centre and need analysis as outlined in PPS6 to avoid sites considered sequentially from the harbour shopping area.

SOUTH MOLTON

Vitality and Viability

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- 10.48 South Molton is considered to be a vital and viable town centre, which is well served and offers a diverse range of uses in the town centre. It provides a specialist niche, which is demonstrated by the large number of antique and other specialist shops. This enhances its function as a visitor/shopper attraction/destination.
- 10.49 The main shopping area is located on Broad Street, East Street and South Street. It is recommended to bring the town centre area back to the New Road junction for future provision and safeguarding of existing shops as these will be concentrated in a more central area. Further, it is considered that pedestrian linkages with the square should be improved.
- 10.50 South Molton has a relatively high level of service uses, including pubs and hotels, and banks and financial services in the town centre. Policy SMO5 (The Town Centre) in the North Devon Revised Deposit Local Plan (2003) highlights that these Use Classes will be permitted within the town centre, at ground level, where no less than 50% of all ground floor units are shops (Use Class A1) unless the level of vacancies exceeds 5% of the total number of units and there is no harm to the vitality and viability of the town centre. Therefore, we recommend that Revised Deposit Local Plan Policy SMO5 be maintained to ensure there is no over concentration of service uses within the town centre.
- 10.51 South Molton is performing well as an Area Centre and is sufficiently providing for its rural hinterland. Also, there are low levels of vacancies in the town centre.

Comparison Goods Capacity

- 10.52 South Molton is classified as an Area Centre, whereby its role is to provide local services to meet local needs and those of the rural hinterland, and only those needs.
- 10.53 Table 9.14 shows that using the current trading density of South Molton, being £3,314 per sq m, in 2006, 384 sq m (net) of additional comparison floorspace is required. By 2011 this will increase to 1,204 sq m (net), by 2016 it will increase to 1,756 sq m (net), and by 2021 it will increase to 1,966 sq m (net).

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- 10.54 There are four vacant units located in South Molton town centre. These have a total net floorspace of 145.5 sq m. This floorspace can be used to alleviate some of the floorspace requirements in South Molton.
- 10.55 It is considered that current over-trading within South Molton, as shown in Scenario 1 (see Table 9.14), has not had any detrimental effect on the vitality and viability of South Molton and indeed has added towards the vibrancy of the centre. Therefore, we recommend that the Local Planning Authority should not seek to specifically alleviate this issue.
- 10.56 South Molton is part of a wider network of centres, and whilst its function is to provide for local needs, this retail offer is supplemented by the retail offer of higher order centres. As such, whilst South Molton should seek to retain its market share and provide a range of goods to meet local needs, it is not necessary to make specific significant allocations within South Molton, which would result in a wider range of comparison provision. Further, any proposals for development involving additional comparison floorspace in South Molton will be subject to the sequential test and need analysis as outlined in PPS6.

Convenience Goods Capacity

- 10.57 South Molton has facilities that meet most day-to-day convenience goods needs. The majority of convenience expenditure in South Molton is attributed to the Somerfield store at Dart Park. It is considered that this store provides a good level of service to the immediate catchment area. Further, the Spar store located in the town centre is relatively small and mainly provides a 'Top-Up' shopping role.
- 10.58 In determining additional floorspace requirements it is necessary to consider South Molton in its entirety. It is recognised that South Molton is currently overtrading. To this extent we recommend that the Council seek to achieve as a minimum "the continuation of current trends scenario" as outlined in Table 9.42 in order to reduce trading densities over time.
- 10.59 The Revised Deposit Local Plan advises that the land to the south of Broad Street and east of South Street, including the Livestock Market will be redeveloped for a mix of uses, including a new foodstore of up to 1,000 sq m net sales during the plan period (1995 – 2011). This allocation should contribute towards floorspace requirements.

10.60 Any proposals for development involving additional convenience floorspace in South Molton will be subject to the sequential test and need analysis as outlined in PPS6.