

### **13. INTRODUCTION**

- 13.1 Over the years, Worthing has developed into one of the most important shopping centres in West Sussex. Shopping is extremely important in terms of employment and in terms of attracting expenditure into the town. This has been recognised by the Borough Council and other organisations and agencies who are now working together to improve and enhance the quality of Worthing as a shopping centre. Like many large towns, Worthing has experienced pressure for out of town retail development and it is likely that, to some extent, this pressure will continue. Careful planning is, therefore, required to ensure that as much investment as possible goes into existing shopping centres, including the Town Centre, which is where the majority of new retail development should take place. Access into the Town Centre will also need to be considered because good accessibility will be important if it is to remain attractive. Chapter 7 deals with this issue.
- 13.2 The 1996 Sussex Retail Study highlighted the importance of Worthing as a shopping centre, but it also concluded that if Worthing is to maintain its position and is to retain expenditure in the future, then some further retail development will be needed. Government advice towards retailing has changed in recent years and there is now much greater emphasis on enhancing the roles of the town centre and the larger centres, with a consequential move away from "out of town" retailing. This is linked to the Government's aim of reducing reliance on the use of the private motor car and giving encouragement to alternative modes of transport. These aims are set out elsewhere in this Local Plan but it is also important that shopping policies recognise them.

### **STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK**

- 13.3 The Government has shown increasing interest in town centres and retailing in recent years and the Environment Select Committee has considered a number of issues over the last three years. The findings of this Committee effectively resulted in radical changes to Government policies towards retailing. Regional Planning Policy Guidance for the South-East recognises that town and district centres perform an important social and economic function and should be a focus of activity for retailing. It confirms that, where possible, retail development should be located within existing town and district centres. As part of the monitoring and review of RPG9, the Government will require the Regional Planning Bodies to assess the need for major new retail and leisure facilities or large-scale expansion of existing facilities of regional and sub-regional importance (outside of London). Such assessments will be taken into account in any subsequent reviews of this Local Plan.
- 13.4 Planning Policy Guidance Note 1 - General Policy and Principles, acknowledges that town centres are important to the quality of life in our towns and cities but it also highlights the need for retail development to be sustainable. Like Planning Policy Guidance Note 6, it also reminds Local Planning Authorities of the need to adopt a sequential approach to site selection for new retail development. This means that retail development should be located in town centres if a suitable site or building suitable for conversion is available, followed by an edge of centre, district or local centre location. Out-of-centre development will only be considered if no sites, as outlined above, are available and subject to availability of a choice of means of transport. Where developers propose such schemes, the onus will be upon them to demonstrate that they have looked carefully at all potential and available sites in more sustainable locations.

- 13.5 Planning Policy Guidance Note 6 - Town Centres and Retail Development sets out the approach which should be taken when preparing policies for new retail development. The Government's principal objectives are:-
- to sustain and enhance the vitality and viability of town centres
  - to focus development, especially retail development in locations where the proximity of businesses facilitate competition from which all consumers are able to benefit and maximises the opportunity to use means of transport other than the car;
  - to maintain an efficient, competitive and innovative retail sector;
  - to ensure the availability of a wide range of shops, employment, services and facilities to which people have easy access by a choice of means of transport.
- 13.6 Government guidance also clarifies that it is not the role of the planning system to restrict competition, to preserve existing commercial interest or to prevent innovation. The objectives also seek to promote sustainable development which is consistent with the Government's sustainable development strategy and with other planning policy guidance. The Government prefers to see retail development which attracts many trips being located in town and district centres. In this regard, the plan-led approach is important.
- 13.7 Finally, the Government urges authorities when drawing up their local plan policies, to consider the need for new development. Assuming a need is identified, a sequential approach to site selection is then suggested. If there is no need or capacity for further developments, then there will no need to identify additional sites.

### **West Sussex Structure Plan**

- 13.8 The West Sussex Structure Plan 1993 and West Sussex Structure Plan Review also contain policies that are concerned with retail development. The aims of these Policies broadly reflect national guidance and these have also been taken into account in preparing this Plan. They do not provide guidance on the scale or location of new retail development. This is the function of the Local Plan.

### **THE CURRENT RETAIL HIERARCHY**

- 13.9 Worthing has a wide variety of shopping centres which include the town centre, three district shopping centres, eight neighbourhood centres and fourteen smaller local shopping parades. This hierarchy was established in the 1994 Worthing Local Plan, and was reviewed as part of this Plan. In general terms, Worthing is well provided for in shopping terms, but the Sussex Retail Study has identified the need for some further non-food floorspace over the next ten years. It is important to ensure that existing centres are allowed to develop and adapt as the rapidly changing retail industry develops and evolves. It is also important to ensure that new development is appropriate to the scale and character of each centre and that it complies with Government advice and the policies in the West Sussex Structure Plan.

### **THE SUSSEX RETAIL STUDY**

- 13.10 The Sussex Retail Study was published by James Morrissey Associates in the middle of 1996. The Study concentrated on the Brighton and Worthing Sub-Regions and sought to establish catchment areas for the main retail centres within the study area. It also provided guidelines for the level of further floorspace that may be needed over the next ten years. It must be stressed that the conclusions of the Study are to be used only as guidelines. However, because Worthing has a large catchment area, the Study identified that there could be a need for up to 40,000 square metres of additional non-food retail floorspace by the year 2006 in Worthing. By contrast, Worthing is now well served with existing food operators and the Study concluded that it is extremely unlikely that there will be a need for a further major food superstore during the same period.
- 13.11 The Study also found that Worthing retains quite a high proportion of its expenditure and that it attracts significant expenditure from smaller towns and villages to the east, north and west of the town. This, of course, has important implications for the economic health and employment prospects of Worthing. It is estimated that up to 5000 people were employed in retailing in Worthing in 1991.
- 13.12 As part of the work for the preparation of this Plan, the Borough Council has carried out an assessment of sites that may be possible candidates for further non-food retail development in the town. These are reflected in the policies which are set out in this Section. It has also accepted that no further major food retail development will be needed within the life of this Plan. It is envisaged that the Sussex Retail Study will need to be updated in the not too distant future. This will include a review of the guidelines of floorspace needs up to 2006 and may extend to assess needs beyond that time.

### **PROVISION FOR NEW RETAIL FLOORSPEACE IN WORTHING DURING THE PLAN PERIOD**

- 13.13 The Sussex Retail Study has suggested that as a guideline, up to 40,000 square metres of non-food retail floorspace may be needed in Worthing by the year 2006. However, retailing is a rapidly changing industry and estimates of floorspace must be treated with much caution, particularly in the longer term. The estimates are based on a number of assumptions and if any of these change, the level or type of need can also change. For the purposes of this Plan, therefore, the approach that has been taken is to allocate sufficient sites to provide much of the floorspace which is expected to be needed during the Plan period. The need for further floorspace will be assessed before this period expires and on the basis of the actual 'take-up' of sites during the earlier part of the Plan period. The Plan makes no provision for new food retail development, although current planning consents do exist for an extension to the Tesco Store at West Durrington and for expansion by redevelopment of the Safeway Store in the north of the town centre (incorporating the BG site). The future need for further food and non-food retail floorspace will be re-assessed as part of a review of the Sussex Retail Study. The Council, along with a number of other West Sussex districts, will be commissioning a review of the Sussex Retail Study. The findings of this revised study will be considered as a background document to the Plan in due course.
- 13.14 Any proposals which do come forward for food retail development, or for non-food retail development on sites not allocated in Policy S1 or MS2, will be assessed against government guidance and the development plan strategy. Local Plan Policy S15 will apply to any retail proposal of 1000 square metres

or more and Policy S5 to any retail proposal in or immediately abutting the Plan's defined shopping centres outside the central shopping area.

- 13.15 The identification of sites will be challenging, given the amount of floorspace involved. However, the assessment that the Council has already undertaken suggests that needs can generally be met. In accordance with Government advice, the majority of this development should take place in or on the edge of Worthing's Town Centre. However, some development is also likely to be needed outside the main Town Centre. If possible, this should be located within or close to the Town Centre, or close to another centre, provided it is designed in such a way that it enhances the role of that centre.

### **POLICY S1**

**Non-food retail development will be permitted on the following sites, as shown on the Proposals Map, subject to its scale, design and impact being in keeping with the character of the town centre, and subject to compliance with all other relevant policies:-**

- (i) BG Site, High Street;**
- (ii) Stagecoach Site, Marine Parade;**
- (iii) Union Place car park and Police Station.**

- 13.16 It is anticipated that these sites will go a long way towards meeting the likely need for non-food retail floorspace. Overall provision will be supplemented by extensions and alterations to existing facilities and redevelopment that will provide further additional floorspace. Within the Town Centre, in particular, an allowance has been made for extensions to and redevelopment of existing retail or other facilities to provide additional floorspace. It is considered that over the full life of the Plan, these smaller developments will make an important contribution to the provision of floorspace. Policy MS2 allocates the former Teville Gate shopping centre for leisure use and/or non-food retail.

#### **BG Site, High Street**

- 13.17 This site is already partly surplus to the requirements of BG and is likely to be available in its entirety for redevelopment within the Plan period. It adjoins an existing food store with access from High Street and the new development should also have its vehicular and service access from this road. This is likely to take the form of a traffic signal junction and off-site works may be required. The site is surrounded on three sides by residential properties and the design and operation of any development must not have any significant adverse impact on the occupiers of these properties. The Borough Council will be likely to seek off-site works in the form of improvements to Lyndhurst Road.. In particular, it will seek improvements to the road alignment close to the North Street junction, a widening of the pavement on the south side of Lyndhurst Road and the provision

of an adjoining dedicated cycle path. This is part of an overall scheme to improve pedestrian and cycle links between the hospital and the town centre.

- 13.18 Previous uses of the site are likely to have led to some contamination of land. This will require further investigation by the owners or developers and mitigation measures as appropriate.

### **POLICY S2**

**Non-food retail development will be permitted on the BG Site, High Street, as shown on the Proposals Map, subject to:**

- (i) there being no significant adverse impact upon the occupants of surrounding properties arising from the design and/or operation of the development;**
- (ii) vehicular access being from High Street only;**
- (iii) off-site highway improvements being carried out to Lyndhurst Road including the provision of enhanced pedestrian and cycle routes; and**
- (iv) a survey into the presence of any contamination within the site and mitigation measures as appropriate.**

### **Stagecoach Site, Marine Parade**

- 13.19 Stagecoach Buses currently occupies this site, but may vacate it within the Plan period. For a number of years, the site formed part of a larger site allocated for redevelopment known as the Warwick Street South Area. It is now clear, however, that this larger area is unlikely to be available for comprehensive redevelopment. This Local Plan assumes, therefore, that redevelopment could occur on the Stagecoach site only. It is considered suitable principally for non-food retail use. There is scope for some ancillary commercial or residential use within the overall scheme, for example on upper floors or on the Bedford Row frontage. Residential use would not be acceptable on the ground floor of the Marine Parade frontage.
- 13.20 The site adjoins the South Street and Steyne Gardens Conservation Areas and several Listed Buildings, including the Dome Cinema and most of Bedford Row. The policy for this site includes detailed criteria, therefore, concerning design issues. The site also occupies an important location between the seafront and some of the town centre's main shopping streets, namely Warwick Street and South Street. Any re-development should encourage pedestrian flows between these key features by including attractive routes through the site. Vehicular access should primarily be from Marine Parade.

### **POLICY S3**

**Non-food retail development together with ancillary commercial and residential use will be permitted on the Stagecoach site, Marine Parade, as shown on the Proposals Map, subject to:**

- (i) the Marine Parade frontage being developed with 3/4 storey buildings in keeping with the surrounding area and having no significant adverse impact upon the setting of the listed Dome building;**
- (ii) the Bedford Row frontage being developed with 3/4 storey buildings sympathetic to the architecture and setting of Bedford Row;**
- (iii) the main vehicular access being from Marine Parade; and**
- (iv) the creation/enhancement of pedestrian links from the site to adjoining roads including the seafront.**

#### **Union Place Car Park and Police Station**

- 13.21 This site offers an important development opportunity within the town centre and the principle use should be non-food retail. The site's proximity to the Connaught Theatre also makes it suitable for an ancillary element of leisure use. It may be appropriate to include an element of residential use within a redevelopment scheme, perhaps as upper floor flats, but the primary use(s) of the site must be non-food retail with or without ancillary leisure development. The Connaught Theatre as a distinctive building, provides the context for the treatment of the Union Place frontage of the development site. This should be a built, not open, frontage sympathetic to the adjoining theatre in terms of scale, architectural treatment and building line. The scale of other surrounding buildings indicates that whilst new development on the site could provide a large amount of floorspace, it should take the form of traditional shop units in its form and appearance. The actual retail floorspace provided could comprise either a retail warehouse type of development or a number of separate units.
- 13.22 The Police Station adjoining the car park on its east side is now expected to become available, following the Police decision to relocate to Durrington with a presence retained in the town centre. This site has therefore been extended from the Deposit Draft stage to reflect the larger site which will be available for redevelopment. The eastern boundary of the available site may be further amended to include part of the adjoining public car park once the High Street improvement details are finalised, although replacement public car parking provision will be required within any development.
- 13.23 Vehicular access will be from Union Place only. Provision must be made within the new development to adequately maintain or replace service arrangements for adjoining properties. It will be important to retain an element of public car parking within the site to serve both the new development and also, importantly, the adjacent Connaught Theatre. This parking could be provided as underground parking, and there will be a need to ensure adequate special needs and cycle parking are also incorporated as part of any proposal. A pedestrian link currently exists from the site to Chapel Road. New development should create and enhance such links to ensure that the site contributes to the overall vitality of the town centre.

#### **POLICY S4**

**Non-food retail development, with or without ancillary leisure development, will be permitted on the Union Place Car Park and Police Station site, as shown on the Proposals Map, subject to:**

- (i) the development providing a built frontage to Union Place, sympathetic to the adjoining Connaught Theatre building in terms of scale, architectural treatment and building line;**
- (ii) vehicular access being from Union Place only and the retention of an element of public car parking to serve the new development and adjacent theatre;**
- (iii) the creation/enhancement of pedestrian links from the site to adjoining roads; and**
- (iv) adequate provision being made to replace existing servicing arrangements for adjoining properties.**

**RETAIL PROVISION IN SHOPPING CENTRES OUTSIDE THE CENTRAL SHOPPING AREA**

13.24 The provision of some new shopping development will take place within or immediately abutting existing smaller centres as defined on the Proposals Map. As has been stated, development must be of an appropriate scale and character and should not undermine the essential function of any particular centre. It should also be of a type and scale which does not unacceptably divert trade from other centres and it should not conflict with any other policy in this Plan.

**POLICY S5**

**New retail development, including small scale extensions to existing premises and changes of use to retail, will be permitted in or immediately abutting existing shopping centres as shown on the Proposals Map providing that:-**

- (i) the development is of an appropriate scale and character for the centre concerned; and**
- (ii) the development will not divert trade from any other centre to such an extent that the number or range of shops in that centre would be likely to be undesirably reduced.**

**SMALL LOCAL SHOPS**

13.25 Corner shops and small groups of shops can provide a valuable local service, often accessible without the need for a car. If there is a demand in a local area for such shops, then these should normally be permitted, providing they would

not have any adverse impact on neighbouring properties and accord with Policy TR9 in relation to parking. A small shop is defined as being up to 100 square metres gross floorspace.

## **POLICY S6**

**Shops of up to 100 square metres will normally be permitted providing no nuisance would be caused to the occupiers of neighbouring properties.**

## **THE TOWN CENTRE**

- 13.26 Worthing's Town Centre is an attractive sub-regional shopping centre which plays an important part in establishing and maintaining Worthing's wide retail catchment area. It is also important for employment and leisure uses and for many other activities. It is crucial, therefore, that the Town Centre's role is enhanced and improved as far as possible. The Town Centre area has been defined on the Proposals Map. There are many initiatives, such as the revised car parking arrangements and the South Street Pedestrian Enhancement Scheme, which will assist towards the achievement of this aim. Of equal importance, however, is the need to ensure that retailing is maintained but that the correct balance is struck between this activity and other competing uses. Recognition has to be given to the fact that pressure on the Town Centre changes. For example, ten years ago there was significant pressure for the introduction of financial and professional services in the Town Centre. However, because of changes in working practices, this pressure has reduced and has been replaced by pressure for other uses, such as food and drink outlets. It is important, therefore, to ensure that the correct balance is struck in terms of designing policies which encourage these various uses but which seek to locate them in the right positions.
- 13.27 As part of the Sussex Retail Study, an audit of Worthing's Town Centre was carried out. This suggested that Worthing has 63,000 square metres of retail floorspace within the Town Centre. Zone A rentals, which are a good indicator of retailer demand, were fairly high, although not as high as Brighton, Tunbridge Wells or Chichester. Worthing also has two department stores and nearly 100 non-food multiple stores. This led the retail consultants to conclude that Worthing, like Brighton, was one of only two sub-regional centres within the Study region. This is an indicator of the relative importance of Worthing's Town Centre as a sub-regional shopping centre. The consultant concluded that Worthing has extensive retail provision and that it is generally accessible. Retailer demand is strong and vacancy levels were not of concern because they were slightly below the national average. It was concluded that, in the future, development should be encouraged which preserves and enhances Worthing's role as a sub-regional shopping centre. This will not only relate to the provision of further floorspace, but will also be relevant to other proposals within the Town Centre as a whole.

## **NON-RETAIL USES IN THE TOWN CENTRE**

- 13.28 For many years, there has been concern about the growth of non-retail uses in the Town Centre and within other centres. Retailers have expressed concern that the loss of retail can dilute the attraction of a centre and local residents have also indicated a desire to retain as many retail outlets as possible. Consideration also has to be given to the fact that retail is not the only use which is needed in order to provide and retain a vital and viable centre. Increasingly users of the Town

Centre expect to see it provide a wide variety of uses including leisure, employment and access to other services. A balance has to be struck, therefore, between these competing demands. For this reason, the Council has divided its Central Shopping Area within the Town Centre, into Primary and Secondary areas for policy purposes for a number of years.

- 13.29 The Primary area has been further sub-divided into Zone A and Zone B. Zone A constitutes the dominant retail area, containing the major stores and the new Montague Centre. Within this zone, the loss of any ground floor shop (A1) uses will not normally be permitted. Where a ground floor unit is already in non-A1 use, its change to uses other than A1, A2 or A3 use will also not normally be permitted. This is to ensure that a strong retail core is maintained.

### **POLICY S7**

**Within Zone A of the Primary Area of the Central Shopping Area, as shown on the Proposals Map, permission will not normally be granted for the change of use of the ground floor of a shop (A1) to any other use. Similarly, proposals for changes of non-shop premises to uses outside the A1, A2 or A3 Use Classes will not normally be permitted.**

- 13.30 Zone B consists of four areas; retail units on the western side of Montague Place, an area centring on the Arcade and part of South Street, Warwick Street and the Guildbourne Centre. Montague Place and the Arcade/South Street area lie between the main shopping centre and the seafront. They tend to fulfil, therefore, something of a dual role serving both shoppers and tourists, rather than a purely retail function. Warwick Street, since being pedestrianised, has adopted its own special character with a mix of specialist shops and restaurant/cafes, already somewhat in line with the policy approach proposed for it. The ground floor of the Guildbourne Centre is still largely in retail use, but operates rather on the edge of the main centre.
- 13.31 For the reasons outlined above, it is considered that some further A3 uses may be acceptable within Zone B. Because it lies within the Primary Area, however, the dominant function of Zone B must remain retailing. Where appropriate, conditions will be imposed to ensure that A3 outlets cannot change to A2 use without planning permission. As in the case of Zone A, where a ground floor unit is already in non-A1 use, its change to uses other than A1, A2 or A3 use will also not normally be permitted. The policy set out below will only apply to the ground floor of the Guildbourne Centre, Policy S9 deals with change of use within the upper floor.

### **POLICY S8**

**Within Zone B of the Primary Area of the Central Shopping Area, as shown on the Proposals Map, permission will not normally be granted for the change of use of the ground floor of a shop (A1) to any other use. An exception may be granted where:-**

- (i) **the use proposed is an A3 use;**

- (ii) the proposal causes no significant adverse effects for the occupiers of neighbouring properties;**
- (iii) the proposal does not intensify car parking problems; and**
- (iv) the use does not extend or result in a block of non-shop uses with a frontage of more than 20 metres or result in the proportion of non-shop uses exceeding 35% within Zone B of the Primary Area as a whole.**

**Proposals for changes of non-shop premises to uses outside the A1, A2 or A3 Use Classes will not normally be permitted.**

### **The Guildbourne Centre**

13.32 The Guildbourne Centre has declined as a shopping centre in recent years, with virtually all of the units on the upper floor becoming vacant. A number of schemes have been approved with a view to making the Centre more attractive, including additional floorspace, refurbishment within the Centre itself and to the entrance area as part of the overall enhancement of South Street. As further measures to improve the vitality and viability of the Centre itself and of this part of the Central Shopping Area, the Borough Council is prepared to operate a more flexible policy towards change of use of units on the upper floor than elsewhere in the area. A1 Shop, A2 Financial and Professional Services, A3 Food and Drink are all considered to be suitable in principle in this particular location. Some community and leisure uses may also be appropriate, provided that the use would contribute to the vitality and viability of the Guildbourne Centre and/or town centre and would have no significant adverse effects. Such uses could include beauty salons or health suites, crèches, health care uses, advice centres or meeting rooms.

13.33 In addition to this flexible approach relating to the upper floor, the Borough Council will generally support proposals for the amalgamation of small units within the whole Centre where the resulting larger units will improve the vitality and viability of the Centre.

### **POLICY S9**

**Within the Guildbourne Centre, as shown on the Proposals Map, the following types of development will normally be permitted:**

- (i) the amalgamation of small units into larger units where this will improve the viability and vitality of the Centre; and**
- (ii) the change of use of units on the upper floor of the Centre to:**
  - (a) A1 Shop;**

- (b) **A2 Financial, professional or other services, principally for visiting members of the public;**
- (c) **A3 Food and drink use; and**
- (d) **community and leisure uses which contribute to the vitality and viability of the Guildbourne Centre and/or town centre and which create no significant adverse effects.**

13.34 A policy of restricting the establishment or expansion of non-shop uses in ground floor premises within Zone A (and A2 and other non-retail uses within Zone B) is reasonable provided a more flexible approach is adopted within the remaining part of the Central Shopping Area – the Secondary Area. Within the Secondary area, in areas which include Montague Street to the west of Crescent Road, the southern part of Portland Road, Brighton Road and much of Chapel Road, it is considered that a less restrictive policy should apply. Within these areas, it is considered that as well as shops and food and drink outlets, A2 Financial and Professional Offices should also be permitted. The existing character of these areas already reflects this - largely because this approach has been followed for a number of years.

### **POLICY S10**

**Within the Secondary Area of the Central Shopping Area, as shown on the Proposals Map, permission will normally be granted for the change of use of the ground floor of a shop (A1) to either an A2 financial and professional service use or an A3 food and drink use. This is provided that there would be no adverse effects created for the occupiers of neighbouring properties. Proposals for changes of any unit to uses outside the A1, A2 or A3 Use Classes will not normally be permitted.**

### **DISTRICT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SHOPPING CENTRES**

- 13.35 The last Worthing Local Plan identified six district shopping centres, which included Broadwater, Tarring Road, South Farm Road (south part), West Durrington, Goring Road and Teville Gate. Careful consideration has been given to these centres and, in general terms, it is considered that some of these centres still perform as District Centres. Further consideration has been given, however, to the Teville District Centre, to Tarring Road and to South Farm Road (south).
- 13.36 Apart from Durrington, which includes one large Tesco superstore, each of these centres has between 70 and 140 units. However, only Goring Road and Broadwater comply within the definition of a District Centre, as set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 6. This defines District Shopping Centres as groups of shops, separate from the Town Centre, usually containing at least one food supermarket or superstore and non-retail services such as banks, building societies and restaurants. The centres at Broadwater, West Durrington and Goring Road clearly perform as District Centres. Indeed, it could be argued that

given the broad range of facilities and services which they offer and the fact that they function as a focus for the community and for public transport, that Broadwater and Goring Road centres could, in fact, also be defined as town centres, if applied against the criteria set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 6. Nevertheless, for the purposes of the Local Plan, it is considered that these three centres perform as District Centres.

- 13.37 Within the retail core of these centres it is considered that there is scope for a mix of A1, A2 and A3 uses, although it is important that a good proportion of A1 uses is maintained. Other uses outside of Class A1, A2 or A3, but which would enhance the vitality and viability of a shopping centre may be permissible, but in no case should there be significant adverse effect on residential amenity, nor an intensification of car parking problems. In the past, the Council has operated policies which have sought to retain at least 65% of the units in A1 shop use. This approach has been successful and at the present time, the proportion of such units within each of these centres is close to, or exceeds this level. This policy stance will therefore be continued.
- 13.38 So far as Tarring Road and South Farm Road Centres are concerned, it is not considered that these function as District Shopping Centres as now defined. They tend to perform as neighbourhood centres and they are, therefore, re-defined as such in this Plan.
- 13.39 The Teville Gate District Centre is made up of several distinct parts which are separated by main roads and other elements. It is fragmented and has a high vacancy rate. It also includes the Teville Gate Shopping Centre, which is in dire need of redevelopment. Given the fragmented nature, the likelihood of redevelopment and the fact that it does not really perform as a local shopping centre in its own right, it is proposed to delete this whole area as a shopping centre. Policy MS2, however, sets out the policy framework for redevelopment of the Teville Gate Shopping Centre for leisure use and/or non-food retail.
- 13.40 In addition to South Farm Road (south) and Tarring Road, the last Local Plan identified Findon Valley, the Mulberry (Goring Road), Ham Road, The Strand, Thomas A Becket and Rowlands Road as neighbourhood centres. Apart from Tarring Road and South Farm Road, which are larger and contain a high proportion of specialist shops, neighbourhood centres tend to range from between 30 and 60 units. They are larger than small local parades and tend to contain a good proportion of local need shops, together with a number of specialist outlets and other uses including offices and food and drink outlets. As with District Centres, they also have an important role to play in terms of providing for the local needs of residents who live close to them. The retention of a good proportion of retail outlets is, therefore, important and this should be as high as it is within the District Centres.
- 13.41 Objective 20 of this Plan seeks to promote local centres as a focus for retailing, business, leisure and social facilities at a community level. This is with the aim of reducing the need to travel by enabling more than one activity to be carried out per trip and of creating/strengthening a sense of community within parts of the Borough. As part of this objective, a study has been carried out of each District and Neighbourhood Centre to assess whether a more flexible approach of allowing certain social or community uses within parts of the Centre would be feasible. It has been concluded that seven Centres could justify this approach. These are Broadwater and Goring Road District Centres and Tarring Road, South Farm Road (South), The Mulberry, Ham Road and Thomas A Becket Neighbourhood Centres. Each Centre has been divided into core and non-core areas. Within the non-core area, the approach of retaining a percentage of A1 uses does not apply and social and community uses may be considered

acceptable as well as A1, A2 and A3 uses. Within the core areas and within all other Districts and Neighbourhood Centres such flexibility will not apply.

### **POLICY S11**

**Within the retail core of the district and neighbourhood shopping centres, the change of use of ground floors from a shop (A1) to other uses will not normally be permitted. Exceptions may be granted where:**

- (i) the use is an A2 or A3 use; and**
- (ii) the proposal causes no significant adverse effects for the occupiers of neighbouring properties; and**
- (iii) the proposal does not intensify car parking problems; and**
- (iv) the use does not extend or result in a block of non-retail uses with a frontage of more than 20 metres or result in the proportion of non-shop uses within the retail core exceeding 35%.**

**Proposals for uses outside the A1, A2 or A3 Use Classes will not normally be permitted within the retail core of these centres. However, other uses which would enhance the vitality and viability of a shopping centre may be permitted.**

### **POLICY S12**

**Within the district and neighbourhood shopping centres, outside the defined retail cores, changes of use will normally only be permitted, provided that:-**

- (i) the use proposed is a social or community use and complies with Policy SC1; or is an A1, A2 or A3 use;**
- (ii) the proposal causes no significant adverse effects for the occupiers of neighbouring properties;**
- (iii) the proposal does not intensify car parking problems.**

### **LOCAL SHOPPING PARADES**

- 13.42 Local Shopping Parades, although much smaller in size and scale, occupy a special place in the shopping hierarchy as they provide an important facility for the local community. They are often the nearest shopping centre available to

many residents and are particularly important for elderly people or disadvantaged groups who might find it difficult, or indeed, undesirable, to visit larger centres to buy their essential goods. Given these factors, it is important to retain the essential retail function of the local parades as far as possible, so as to try and ensure that everyone has easy access to shopping facilities. For this reason, the change of use from retail to other uses will not normally be permitted within a local shopping parade unless it is clear that a good range of shopping facilities will still remain within that parade. In assessing planning applications for changes of use, the Council will have regard to the make up of each centre at that particular time. However, there will be a general presumption against non-retail uses unless it can be permitted without harm to the parade as a local shopping facility. Other uses which would enhance the vitality and viability of the Parade may be permitted so long as the essential retail function is maintained and there would be no unacceptable harm to the residential amenities of the occupiers of neighbouring properties or insurmountable car parking problems. This is particularly important in local parades as they are often located within or very close to residential development.

### **POLICY S13**

**In the local shopping parades, as shown on the Proposals Map, the change of use of the ground floor of a shop (A1) to another use will not normally be permitted. An exception will only be made where:-**

- (i) the use proposed is an A2 or A3 use; and**
- (ii) the proposal causes no significant adverse effects for the occupiers of neighbouring properties; and**
- (iii) the proposal does not intensify car parking problems; and**
- (iv) the loss of the shop outlet will not cause harm to the function of the parade as a local shopping facility.**

**Proposals for changes of any unit to uses outside the A1, A2 or A3 Use Class will not normally be permitted. However, other uses which would enhance the vitality and viability of a local shopping parade may be permitted.**

### **THE USE OF UPPER FLOORS IN THE SHOPPING CENTRES**

- 13.43 The use of upper floors within any Shopping Centre can be critical to maintaining or encouraging the overall vitality and viability of the Centre. A1, A2 and A3 uses or associated storage may support ground floor activities. Upper floors can provide a useful source of residential accommodation, often affordable. In the larger centres in particular, including the Central Shopping Area, the existence of residential units above shops can be beneficial providing security and customers for the ground floor uses. Business uses such as offices can also add to the vitality/viability of an area, drawing people into the Centre. Certain types of leisure activity may also be acceptable within upper floors of the Central Shopping Area where they may contribute to the well being of the Town

Centre. Subject to Policies H10, concerning loss of existing dwellings, and B10, concerning loss of business floorspace, a wide range of uses can be permitted, therefore, on upper floors within the Borough's defined shopping centres. Changes of use within the upper floor of the Guildbourne Centre are dealt with separately under Policy S9.

## **POLICY S14**

**Within all defined shopping centres, as shown on the Proposals Map, planning permission will normally be granted for the following uses on upper floors, subject to Policies H10 and B10 and providing they have no significant adverse effects for the occupiers of neighbouring properties:-**

- (i) retail;**
- (ii) storage, in association with a ground floor shop;**
- (iii) financial, professional or other services appropriate to a shopping area, principally for visiting members of the public (Use Class A2);**
- (iv) food and drink uses for consumption on the premises;**
- (v) residential;**
- (vi) business uses (Use Class B1);**
- (vii) within the Central Shopping Area only, leisure uses which contribute to the vitality and viability of the town centre and which create no adverse effects.**

## **LARGE SUPERMARKETS, SUPERSTORES, HYPERMARKETS AND RETAIL WAREHOUSES**

- 13.44 Over the last ten years or so, a number of large superstores and non-food retail warehouse developments have been completed in Worthing. One of Worthing's four major superstores is located in the Town Centre, one is in an "edge of town" location, one forms part of a District Shopping Centre, while the other is in a peripheral "out-of-centre" location. The Sussex Retail Study has concluded that there is unlikely to be the need for a further food superstore in Worthing during the life of this Plan.
- 13.45 So far as non-food retail warehousing is concerned, Worthing is not so well served by facilities at present. There are three outlets in two "out-of-centre" locations in East Worthing while, more recently, non-food retail warehouse development has taken place at Lyons Farm. The Sussex Retail Study has identified a need for further non-food retail floorspace and sites have been allocated through this Plan as a consequence, based upon a sequential assessment of site availability.

- 13.46 Proposals for any large supermarkets, superstores, hypermarkets or retail warehouses of 1,000 square metres or more trading floorspace, or extensions to existing stores meeting this threshold will be subject to a range of criteria consistent with Government guidance. In terms of location, a proposal must be justified by a sequential assessment of site availability. This means that it should be located in the town centre if a suitable building or site is available. If this is not the case, the next most suitable location will be edge of centre, district or local centre. Only if no such sites are suitable and available will an out of centre site be considered and then only if it is accessible by a choice of means of transport. All development, regardless of location should be accessible by a choice of means of transport, not only the car. It should also include useable, attractive pedestrian and cycle links to any nearby shopping centre. Parking provision should accord with Policy TR9.
- 13.47 A Ministerial Statement has clarified that proposals for new retail development which accord with an up to date plan strategy or are proposed on sites within an existing centre should not be required to demonstrate that they satisfy the test of need because this should have been taken into account in the development plan. In allocating sites for non-food retail development in this Plan, the Borough Council has taken into account need as identified in the Sussex Retail Study. The Ministerial Statement goes on to state that proposals located at an edge of centre or out of centre location which are not in accordance with an up to date development plan strategy should be required to demonstrate the need for additional facilities. This does not simply mean showing there is spare physical capacity or demand in terms of available expenditure within the proposal's catchment area.
- 13.48 When built, new or extended large supermarkets, superstores, hypermarkets and retail warehouses generally represent a significant increase in the retail floorspace available within any town or wider surrounding area. It is not the role of the planning system to discourage such an increase as a means of inhibiting competition or preserving existing commercial interests as such. New retail developments of this size, individually or in conjunction with similar schemes, can, however, divert trade to such an extent that they could seriously affect the vitality and viability of nearby centres. Trade diversion leading to loss of customers and lower turnover can lead to a decline in investment, increased voids, changes to the range, attractiveness and function of retailing and a decline in the physical condition of shopping centres. This is unacceptable in planning terms when it leads to deterioration in the environment of established shopping centres or to a significant decline in the range, quality, attractiveness and character of shopping facilities available to consumers, particularly those without access to a car.
- 13.49 One important issue that will need to be very carefully considered is the environmental effects of such development. Stores tend to be large, are tending to open longer hours and are specifically designed to attract car-borne customers. By their very nature, therefore, they usually need large areas of land and can create rather bland forms of development. This can be made worse by other features such as lighting, large car parking areas and advertising. When proposed close to residential development, careful consideration needs to be given to the potential impact that such development can have on the amenities of the occupiers of those properties. Similarly, highway considerations will need to be very carefully considered because such development can generate significant volumes of traffic at certain times. Capacity of the highway network is also, therefore, a crucial issue.
- 13.50 Some of these concerns can be addressed by giving particular attention to matters such as scale, design, landscaping and siting of the buildings and associated

facilities. Similarly, proposals for lighting, opening hours, servicing and delivery hours and other similar environmental factors need to be carefully assessed. Where permission is granted, conditions will be needed to ensure that such matters are properly and adequately controlled to protect amenity.

- 13.51 There is an increasing tendency of both food and non-food operators to introduce additional activities within their stores, or to sub-let parts of premises to other operators. Such matters need to be carefully considered, both in impact terms and to ensure that where such developments are permitted, the Council maintains adequate control over both the size of unit and the type and range of goods that are sold. This will be particularly important in view of the fact that much of this type of retail development will be sited close to existing retail centres.

### **POLICY S15**

**The development of new large supermarkets, superstores or hypermarkets or retail warehouses, or extensions to existing developments of 1,000 square metres or more will only be permitted where:**

- (i) it is justified in locational terms by a sequential assessment of site availability i.e. the proposal is in the town centre, if a suitable site or building suitable for conversion is available, followed by an edge-of-centre, district or local centre location. Only if no such sites are suitable and available will an out-of-centre site accessible by a choice of means of transport be considered;**
- (ii) in the case of proposed developments at an edge-of-centre or out of centre location, the developer can demonstrate need for additional facilities;**
- (iii) the development would help to sustain and not adversely affect the vitality and viability of any defined shopping area as shown on the Proposals Map. Account will be taken not only of the incremental effects of the new development on existing centres, but also the likely cumulative effects of recently completed developments and outstanding planning permissions in the relevant catchment area. Where necessary, conditions will be used to limit the range of goods sold and/or the size of unit operated within the development;**
- (iv) the development is accessible by a choice of means of transport, proposes attractive pedestrian and cycle links to nearby shopping centres and proposes parking in accordance with Policy TR9;**
- (v) the scale, siting, design and appearance of buildings and ancillary developments are appropriate to the scale and**

**character of the surrounding area and satisfactory landscaping is provided;**

- (vi) activities associated with development such as lighting, vehicular access movement, servicing, deliveries and other ancillary operations would not adversely affect the character or amenity of the surrounding area; and**
- (vii) the development has adequate access to the main road network and would not adversely affect the safe and free movement of vehicles on the network.**

#### **ALL RETAIL DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS**

13.52 Policy S15 above is the main Local Plan policy which will be used to assess retail proposals of 1000 square metres or more. Small shops of up to 100 square metres will be assessed against Policy S6, and Policy S5 applies to any retail proposal in the Plan's defined shopping centres outside the central shopping area. However, all retail proposals including those of over 100 but under 1000 square metres will be assessed against Government guidance (particularly PPG6 and PPG13) and the overall development plan strategy.

#### **PROPOSALS FOR FOOD AND DRINK OUTLETS**

13.53 During recent years, there has been an increasing number of proposals submitted for A3 food and drink outlets in the town. The wide ranging nature of the A3 Use Class includes restaurants, pubs, cafes, wine bars, snack bars and hot food takeaway outlets. The potential effects of these various forms of development are often very different. For example, a restaurant can be quiet in its operation with very little traffic generation. By contrast, a takeaway, which may wish to open late into the night, can be very noisy in its operation and garish in its appearance. It can also generate significant traffic movements - sometimes late at night and also at weekends when such outlets tend to be at their busiest.

13.54 Careful consideration needs to be given to the effects that such proposals have on the amenities of neighbouring properties. This is particularly so where there are residential units opposite, above, or close to such outlets. In considering proposals for A3 uses therefore, the Council will establish the nature and type of operation that is proposed and will consider the effects on amenity and the implications for car parking. Proposals for takeaway uses will be carefully considered and the Council will normally impose conditions to restrict opening hours in order to protect amenity. Where proposals for restaurants or other similar uses (other than takeaways) are proposed, the Council may impose conditions limiting the use to that applied for.

#### **POLICY S16**

**Proposals for A3 food and drink outlets will normally be permitted provided that:-**

- (i) adequate car parking provision is made;**

- (ii) the operation would not adversely affect the amenities of the occupiers of neighbouring properties;**
- (iii) adequate provision is made for the ventilation and the extraction of odours and fumes from the premises in both amenity and visual terms; and**
- (iv) the proposal complies with all relevant shopping policies.**