

BOROUGH PLAN BACKGROUND PAPER: Nature of Town Centres Growth

Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council

2015

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this background paper is to draw together the key datasets/evidence that have been used in developing the Nature of Town Centre growth policy. It provides the detail behind the overall vision, the development of the policy and is used to help justify the elements included within the policy. In relation to the district, local and neighbourhood centres within the Borough, these are delivered through the Hierarchy of Centres policy.

2. National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out a number of requirements for Local Plan making. The 'Ensuring the vitality of town centres' chapter, states that planning policies should be positive, promote competitive town centre environments, and set out policies for the management and growth of centres over the plan period. In addition, paragraph 161 of the NPPF sets out requirements around retail matters for business. Table 1 depicts the key requirements from the NPPF along with a brief summary as to how these matters will be achieved through the Policy. There are a number of crossovers with the Hierarchy of Centres policy.

Table 1: NPPF Requirements

NPPF requirement	Relationship with policy
Recognise town centres as the heart of their communities and pursue policies to support their viability and vitality.	The purpose of the policy is to ensure that the Town Centres remain competitive. This will strengthen their importance within the community and ensure they have a sustainable future.
Define a network and hierarchy of centres that is resilient to anticipated future economic changes.	The hierarchy of centres are defined in the hierarchy of centres policy. The future resilience of these centres will be dealt with by this policy which will ensure their presence in the long term.
Define the extent of town centres and primary shopping areas, based on a clear definition of primary and secondary frontages in designated centres, and set policies that make clear which uses will be permitted in such locations.	The boundaries of the town centres will be dealt with through the policy to provide a clear focus for town centre uses.
Promote competitive town centres that	The vision and aspirations for each

NPPF requirement	Relationship with policy
<p>provide customer choice and a diverse retail offer which reflect the individuality of town centres.</p>	<p>centre reflects the individuality of the different centres and helps to develop a range of uses and themes that work together within the Town Centres.</p>
<p>Retain and enhance existing markets and, where appropriate, re-introduce or create new ones, ensuring that markets remain attractive and competitive.</p>	<p>The markets are considered to be anchors within both centres. The intention is to retain the presence of these markets in both centres. There are no proposals at this stage to make policy recommendations regarding the markets. However, the markets will continue to be supported through the Council's town centres team.</p>
<p>Allocate a range of suitable sites to meet the scale and type of retail, leisure, commercial, office, tourism, cultural, community and residential development needed in town centres. It is important that needs for retail, leisure, office and other main town centre uses are met in full and are not compromised by limited site availability. Local planning authorities should therefore undertake an assessment of the need to expand town centres to ensure a sufficient supply of suitable sites.</p>	<p>The policy provides the strategic direction for change within each centre. Within each centre there are a range of development sites that have been identified to meet development opportunities. Through the Town Centre Study (2011) undertaken by Roger Tym & Partners, an assessment of potential development opportunities were undertaken. The policy itself does not make reference to specific sites. It is intended that any detailed site work will be delivered through an Area Action Plan. There is flexibility at this stage as to other potential development sites that may come forward. In addition, the current economic conditions means that it would be counter productive to restrict growth to a specific set of sites. As such, it is considered that the policy should not allocate specific site to ensure increased flexibility for town centre growth.</p>
<p>Allocate appropriate edge of centre sites for main town centre uses that are well connected to the town centre where suitable and viable town centre sites are not available. If sufficient edge of centre sites cannot be identified, set policies for meeting the</p>	<p>A policy on Hierarchy of Centres has been developed which outlines the sites that would be suitable for town centre uses if there was limited supply within the town centre.</p> <p>In relation to sites on the edge of a centre, the primary shopping area is</p>

NPPF requirement	Relationship with policy
<p>identified needs in other accessible locations that are well connected to the town centre.</p>	<p>considered the key Town Centre area. Development outside the primary shopping, but still within the town centre boundary, provides opportunities for flexibility within the Town Centres.</p>
<p>Set policies for the consideration of proposals for main town centres uses which cannot be accommodated in or adjacent to town centres.</p>	<p>The policy approach is to follow the requirements of the NPPF paragraph 26 which states:</p> <p>“When assessing applications for retail, leisure and office development outside of town centres, which are not in accordance with an up-to-date Local Plan, local planning authorities should require an impact assessment if the development is over a proportionate, locally set floorspace threshold (if there is no locally set threshold, the default threshold is 2,500 sq m). This should include assessment of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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; and • The impact of the proposal on town centre vitality and viability, including local consumer choice and trade in the town centre and wider area, up to five years from the time the application is made. For major schemes where the full impact will not be realised in five years, the impact should also be assessed up to ten years from the time the application is made. <p>In addition, it is proposed within the Borough Plan that the Hierarchy of Centres be maintained and this should be the basis for directing Town Centre uses. The Hierarchy of Centres policy outlines the</p>

NPPF requirement	Relationship with policy
	characteristics of a district, local and neighbourhood centre. If any new Centres were put forward during the Plan period, The Hierarchy of Centres policy would help to determine their suitable make up.
Recognise that residential development can play an important role in ensuring the vitality of centres and set out policies to encourage residential development on appropriate sites.	Both centres include residential elements either in the centre, or on edge of centre locations. Residential development in the town centres is considered a valuable and necessary part of securing the future of the town centres. However, Nuneaton Town Centre has a number of restrictions which limits the opportunities for residential development, such as Flood Zones. Residential development would still be favoured in edge of centre locations which are deemed suitable for residential purposes
Where town centres are in decline, local planning authorities should plan positively for their future to encourage economic activity.	The policy seeks to ensure that both Town Centres remain competitive during the Plan period. The policy provides positive aspirations for both centres. The town centres will be closely monitored to measure their overall performance and ensure they are not in a state of decline.
Use an evidence base to identify the role and function of town centres and the relationship between them, including any trends in the performance of centres.	This is dealt with through the Hierarchy of Centres policy.
The capacity of existing centres to accommodate new town centre development.	Through the Town Centre Study (2011) undertaken by Roger Tym & Partners, an assessment of potential development opportunities was undertaken. The policy itself does not make reference to specific sites. It is intended that any detailed site work will be delivered through an Area Action Plan.

NPPF requirement	Relationship with policy
<p>Local authorities should seek to improve the quality of parking in town centres so that it is convenient, safe and secure, including appropriate provision for motorcycles. They should set appropriate parking charges that do not undermine the vitality of town centres. Parking enforcement should be proportionate.</p>	<p>Appropriate actions for car parking will be undertaken through a car parking standards supplementary planning document and an Area Action Plan. Facilities for cars within the town centres will be considered along with other modes of transport.</p>
<p>Pursuing sustainable development involves seeking positive improvements in the quality of the built, natural and historic environment, as well as in people's quality of life, including (but not limited to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making it easier for jobs to be created in cities, towns and villages • Replacing poor design with better design • Improving the conditions in which people live, work, travel and take leisure. 	<p>The policy will seek to maintain and improve a quality environment in the town centres, maximising the use of natural and historic features. Design standards will be delivered through the sustainable design and constructions policy, the urban character and design quality policy and the valuing and conserving our historic environment policy. The vision for the town centres is to create an environment which is attractive for businesses to grow. New development will be built to high standards in order to be attractive for businesses and to make the towns more attractive places to visit.</p>

3. National Planning Policy Guidance (March 2014)

The National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) supports and informs the government's NPPF. Together, the NPPF and the NPPG set out the Government's national planning policies and how they should be applied. They have a major influence on local authorities who have to ensure that they are being consistent with the NPPF in preparing their local plans and in making decisions on planning applications. The NPPG provides the guidance on how to do this. The 'Ensuring the vitality of town centres' chapter in the NPPF is continued as part of the NPPG, this guidance is outlined in Table 2.

Table 2: NPPG statements

NPPG	Relationship with Policy
<p>A positive vision or strategy for town centres, articulated through the Local</p>	<p>The policy creates a positive vision and aspirations for the town centres.</p>

NPPG	Relationship with Policy
<p>Plan, is key to ensuring successful town centres which enable sustainable economic growth and provide a wide range of social and environmental benefits. Once adopted a Local Plan including any town centre policy that it contains, will be the starting point for any decisions on individual developments. Local planning authorities should work with the private sector, Portas Pilot organisations, town teams, neighbourhood planning groups, town centre management organisations and other relevant groups when developing such strategies. Non-planning guidance produced by other Government Departments and the sector may be useful in producing such a strategy.</p>	<p>This will make the town the place of choice to live, work and visit. The specific details will be delivered through an Area Action Plan. The Council will work and consult with relevant bodies and residents to ensure the vision is deliverable.</p>
<p>Any strategy should be based on evidence of the current state of town centres and opportunities to meet development needs and support their viability and vitality. Strategies should answer the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ what is the appropriate and realistic role, function and hierarchy of town centres in the area over the plan period? This will involve auditing existing centres to assess their role, vitality, viability and potential to accommodate new development and different types of development. This assessment should cover a three-five year period, but should also take the lifetime of the Local Plan into account and be regularly reviewed ○ what is the vision for the future of each town centre? This should consider what the most appropriate mix of uses would be to enhance overall vitality and viability 	<p>The latest evidence base for the town centres is the retail and leisure update April 2014. The town centres will be monitored through the AMR in order to examine their performance. Health checks of the town centres will also be regularly updated to check on their performance and to ensure the centres are not in decline. The hierarchy of centres policy will determine the roles and functions of the Borough's centres. This policy aims to ensure that the mix of uses within the town centre are appropriate for their location. In relation to sites on the edge of a centre, the primary shopping area is considered the key Town Centre area. Development outside this area but still within the town centre boundary, goes beyond the primary shopping area, and therefore provides flexibility for the Town Centres. The recommendations in the retail and leisure update cover the plan period for the Borough Plan, in this report it acknowledges that some of the uses will be realised towards the end of the plan period</p>

NPPG	Relationship with Policy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ can the town centre accommodate the scale of assessed need for main town centre uses? This should include considering expanding centres, or development opportunities to enable new development or redevelop existing under-utilised space. It should involve evaluating different policy options (for example expanding the market share of a particular centre) or the implications of wider policy such as infrastructure delivery and demographic or economic change ○ in what timeframe should new retail floorspace be provided? ○ what complementary strategies are necessary or appropriate to enhance the town centre and help deliver the vision for its future, and how can these be planned and delivered? ○ how can parking provision be enhanced and both parking charges and enforcement be made proportionate, in order to encourage town centre vitality? 	<p>and particularly for the leisure uses are subject to demand. The Economic Development Strategy will identify actions to support growth and diversification of the Borough's economy for delivery in conjunction with public and private sector partners. Appropriate actions for car parking will be undertaken through a car parking standards supplementary planning document and an Area Action Plan. Facilities for cars within the town centres will be considered along with other modes of transport, as it is also important that there is good access by public transport and for cyclists. A safe and attractive environment for pedestrians must also be considered.</p> <p>In relation to the scale of town centre growth, this is dealt with through the scale of growth policy and is based on detailed retail forecasting work.</p>
<p>Strategies should identify changes in the hierarchy of town centres, including where a town centre is in decline. In these cases, strategies should seek to manage decline positively to encourage economic activity and achieve an appropriate mix of uses commensurate with a realistic future for that town centre.</p>	<p>The town centres will be monitored through the AMR in order to examine how they are performing. Health checks of the town centres will also be regularly undertaken to check on their performance and to ensure the centres are not in decline.</p>
<p>Local planning authorities should take full account of relevant market signals when planning for town centres and should keep their retail land allocations under regular review. These market signals should be identified and analysed in terms of</p>	<p>The town centres will be monitored through the AMR in order to examine how they are performing. Health checks of the town centres will also be regularly updated to check on their performance and to ensure the centres are not in decline. The town</p>

NPPG	Relationship with Policy
<p>their impacts on town centres. This information should be used to inform policies that are responsive to changes in the market as well as the changing needs of business.</p>	<p>centre updates will also take account of market signals such as retail rental values and yields, vacancy levels, retailer representation.</p>
<p>The following indicators, and their changes over time, are relevant in assessing the health of town centres:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ diversity of uses ○ proportion of vacant street level property ○ commercial yields on non-domestic property ○ customers' views and behaviour ○ retailer representation and intentions to change representation ○ commercial rents ○ pedestrian flows ○ accessibility ○ perception of safety and occurrence of crime ○ state of town centre environmental quality 	<p>The town centres will be monitored through the AMR in order to examine how they are performing. Health checks of the town centres will also be regularly updated to check on their performance and to ensure the centres are not in decline. Other data will be fed into the monitoring as appropriate.</p>
<p>Not all successful town centre regeneration projects have been retail led or involved significant new development. Improvements to the public realm, transport (including parking) and accessibility as well as other measures promoted through partnership can also play important roles.</p> <p>Any strategy should identify relevant sites, actions and timescales, and be articulated clearly in the Local Plan, where it can be considered by local people and investors. It should be regularly reviewed, assessing the changing role and function of different parts of the town centre over time.</p>	<p>The policy considers more than just retail development. The vision articulates the aspirations for the town centres which include improvement to public realm and overall connectivity. The town centres will be monitored through the AMR in order to examine how they are performing. Health checks of the town centres will also be regularly updated to check on their performance and to ensure the centres are not in decline. Other data will be fed into the monitoring as appropriate. The town centre work be consulted on through the Local Plan.</p>

NPPG	Relationship with Policy
<p>Tourism is extremely diverse and covers all activities of visitors. Local planning authorities, where appropriate, should articulate a vision for tourism in the Local Plan, including identifying optimal locations for tourism. When planning for tourism, local planning authorities should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ consider the specific needs of the tourist industry, including particular locational or operational requirements; ○ engage with representatives of the tourism industry; ○ examine the broader social, economic, and environmental impacts of tourism; ○ analyse the opportunities for tourism to support local services, vibrancy and enhance the built environment; and ○ have regard to non-planning guidance produced by other Government Departments. <p>Local planning authorities may also want to consider guidance and best practice produced by the tourism sector.</p>	<p>The Council has produced a Tourism guide for visitors as tourism is seen as a key to ensuring the future viability and vitality of the town centres. The vision takes account of the tourism aspirations for the town.</p>
<p>The sequential test seeks to deliver the Government's "town centre first" policy. However as promoting new development on town centre locations can be more expensive and complicated than building elsewhere local planning authorities need to be realistic and flexible in terms of their expectations.</p>	<p>This policy aims to ensure that the mix of uses within the town centre are appropriate for their location. In relation to sites on the edge of a centre, the primary shopping area is considered the key Town Centre area. Development outside this area but still within the town centre boundary, goes beyond the primary shopping area, and therefore provides flexibility for the Town Centres.</p>

4. Determining the nature of town centre growth

Nuneaton and Bedworth Council have been working on an approach to deliver the enhancement and growth of Nuneaton and Bedworth town centres. This work has been informed by a number of evidence based studies which have developed over time. The latest information is contained within the Retail and Leisure Study Update (April 2014) and the Office Requirements Update (December 2013). These studies have superseded the following studies:

- Convenience Goods Retail Study (June 2011)
- Nuneaton & Bedworth Town Centres Study (June 2011)
- Nuneaton & Bedworth Town Centre Development Sites Viability Report (February 2012).

5. Retail and Leisure Study Update (April 2014)

This study provides an update for the quantitative capacity and qualitative needs assessments for retail and leisure uses, specifically focussing on the main town centres of Nuneaton and Bedworth. The study comprises a number of key outputs:

- Planning Policy Overview - of the key national and development plan policies relevant to retail, leisure and town centre uses, and other material considerations.
- Market Trends Review – of the major changes in the retail and leisure sectors over the last decade; the impact of these changes and the economic downturn on town centres and high streets; and the prospects for future growth and development.
- Health Check Assessments - of Nuneaton and Bedworth Town Centres based on a number of key performance indicators (KPIs) that in combination help to determine their current vitality and viability, and any significant changes in their performance over recent years.
- Retail Capacity Assessment – of the quantitative need for new retail (convenience and comparison goods) floorspace over the development plan period (up to 2028) based on the most current population and expenditure forecasts provided by Experian Business Strategies (EBS) and Oxford Economics.
- Leisure Needs Assessment –to identify any key changes and ‘gaps’ in the leisure offer of Nuneaton and Bedworth Town Centres, and the Borough as a whole, based on a combination of quantitative and qualitative research.

The study is informed by a wide range of primary and secondary research, and robust datasets commonly used to inform retail and commercial leisure capacity (and impact) assessments (including, for example, Experian Goad

Town Centre Reports). A separate stakeholder consultation and workshop was also carried out for both town centres on 16th May 2013 to help inform the research and study findings. The quantitative and qualitative assessments have been informed by the results of the telephone interview survey of some 1,000 households carried out by NEMS Market Research during August 2010. This survey informed the Convenience Goods Retail Study 2011. The survey questionnaire was designed by Strategic Perspectives, working in partnership with the Council. The survey helped to establish 'baseline' shopping patterns for both comparison and convenience goods purchases, as well as household leisure preferences and views on whether (and how) provision in Nuneaton and Bedworth Town Centres could be improved. Tables 3 and 4 and highlight the recommendations of the 2014 study. In terms of what these figures mean for Nuneaton, it is sufficient to justify an extension to Asda or Sainsbury's and/or a new store closer to the town centre. For Bedworth, it is sufficient to support an extension to existing or smaller format e.g. Sainsbury's local or M&S Simply food. As part of this study a health check was also undertaken for both town centres.

Table 3: Comparison and Convenience floorspace figures

	Comparison (sqm) 2013 - 2031	Convenience (sqm) 2013 - 2031
Nuneaton	11,420 - 13,950	910 - 2500
Bedworth	1,570 - 1,925	460 - 540
District and Local Centres	480 - 585	380 - 540
Total	13,470 - 16,460	1,750 - 3,580

Table 4: Eating and drinking floorspace figures

	Eating and Drinking (sqm) 2013 - 2031
Nuneaton	2,324 – 2,672
Bedworth	342 - 393
Total	2,666 – 3,065

Nuneaton Health Check

The study found that despite the impact of the recession on retail investment and market demand across the UK, Nuneaton is still a relatively viable town

centre. The health check and consultation exercises have identified that the centre has a number of key strengths and opportunities:

- A relatively attractive and safe shopping environment, particularly within the prime pedestrian zone.
- An award winning street market that attracts regular shoppers and tourists.
- Abundant car parking provision located in close proximity to the pedestrian zone.
- An increase in town centre usage since 2008/09.
- Good multiple retailer representation, balanced with a good choice of independent and specialist retailers.
- Potential to build tourism based on the street market.
- Current opportunities for new retail development in the town centre.

Some potential weaknesses and areas for concern identified include:

- A decrease in convenience and comparison provision (outlets and overall floorspace) in the town centre since 2008.
- Increasing vacant units in the town centre, with the potential threat of further vacancies linked with retail leases coming to an end and operators withdrawing from the town centre.
- A 'gap' in the town's retail and leisure offer compared with competing town centres and shopping locations.
- Limited choice for families and visitors (e.g. cinema, theatre, etc.) and the lack of a quality restaurant offer.
- A fall in retailer requirements since 2008, principally due to the impact of the economic downturn on market demand and investment activity.
- The increased strength and attraction of other major centres in the region, principally Coventry, Birmingham and Fosse Park.

Bedworth Health Check

The health check and consultation exercises identified a number of strengths with regard to Bedworth Town Centre's overall vitality and viability. For example:

- The town centre has benefited from new investment over recent years. The redeveloped Tesco acts as an important anchor to the town's overall retail offer and has also improved frontages along Mill Street and Leicester Street.
- The centre has experienced falling vacancy levels and floorspace since 2008, despite the impact of the economic downturn on business confidence and market demand;
- The covered market meets the day-to-day needs of local residents for a range of goods; and
- The town centre benefits from a pleasant car-free shopping environment, particularly along King Street and All Saints Square.

Some potential weaknesses and areas for concern include:

- Poor pedestrian connectivity between Tesco and the rest of the town centre.

- An undeveloped early evening and night-time economy, despite the attraction of the popular Civic Centre. This may reflect the limited choice of complementary commercial leisure uses, such as quality restaurants and pubs, which would help to draw visitors to the centre in the evening and encourage them to stay for longer.
- There are 'pockets' within the town centre where there are a high number of vacant units (i.e. Congreve Walk).
- Aside from the main multiples, the choice and range of retailing in the town centre is limited, and there is an over representation of charity shops.

Although Bedworth town centre will never compete with Nuneaton for major comparison and fashion shopping, it does have an important role and function meeting the day-to-day needs of its local catchment population and other visitors/tourists to the town. Therefore, its future performance and prospects are inextricably linked to its convenience, service and leisure offer. Fundamentally, at this level in the shopping hierarchy, the maintenance and enhancement of the food shopping function is of paramount importance as this will draw people to the centre on a day-to-day basis and help to generate linked trips and 'spin-off' expenditure to the benefit of the town's other shops, businesses and facilities.

Survey of Shopping & Leisure Habits

In summary, the survey evidence shows that the Borough's main centres and stores are retaining a relatively high proportion of convenience goods shopping trips and expenditure within the Borough zones.

Nuneaton Town Centre is the prime destination for a range of comparison goods shopping. There would appear to be potential to increase its retention levels for certain categories of comparison goods expenditure through the potential 'claw back' of expenditure 'leaking' out of the Borough to competing centres in the region, particularly Coventry, Leicester and Hinckley.

Although Bedworth's town centre market share of food and convenience goods purchase is limited at Borough level, it does achieve a strong market share within its core zones. The town centre's market penetration will have increased following the redevelopment of Tesco.

For both towns the survey the greatest proportion highlighted need for better quality restaurants. There is potential to improve and strengthen leisure offer to stimulate evening economy and increase dwell times.

Leisure Summary

In terms of Nuneaton's commercial leisure offer, the healthcheck and needs/gap assessments have identified that the town's current provision is relatively limited for a centre of its size and status. Key anchor leisure attractions are located out of town at Bermuda Park and this places the town

centre at a competitive advantage in terms of attracting new leisure uses and operators. There is therefore a need for a more diverse town centre leisure offer to help strengthen Nuneaton's daytime and evening economy. The increase in trips, footfall and spend generated by a potential new anchor cinema and related leisure uses (principally cafes, restaurants and bars) would not only benefit existing town centre business and facilities but would also help to stimulate market interest and demand from other operators seeking space in the town centre. Thus it would significantly strengthen the town centre's overall vitality and viability. Although this would be subject to market demand. It is important to note that due to the size of the cinema at Bermuda there is no quantifiable need for more provision within the Borough over the plan period. However, It was also suggested at the stakeholder event that a civic/arts/cultural venue would represent a major new attraction for the town centre and could possibly incorporate an 'arthouse' or boutique cinema and event space, subject to demand. This would offer something different to that offered at Bermuda and as such would complement this use rather than try to compete with it.

Bedworth benefits from the Civic Centre and Arts Centre, which are key assets and attractions for the town. These key leisure and cultural assets should be widely marketed to help maintain and strengthen their long-term viability. However, the lack of 'linked' facilities and attractions (particularly restaurants) has restricted the potential to promote and grow the evening and night-time economy. The attraction of more restaurants to the town should be a priority, subject to the strength and quality of market demand. In turn, the provision of more cafes and restaurants will help to strengthen the town's overall vitality and viability as it will encourage shoppers and visitors to dwell longer in the town centre, spend more money and increase footfall to the benefit of other shops, businesses and facilities.

Eating/drinking – target marketing of branded restaurant chains (for Nuneaton) and providing more flexible policies to enable change of uses to support new food and drink businesses (for Bedworth). Expand café offer – targeting chains that are not present or encouraging business start up in the specialist café market. Attraction of more restaurants for the town should be a priority subject to demand.

Health/fitness - in short term enough capacity, medium to long term may need extra provision

Bingo/Gambling - there is no demonstrable need to enhance existing provision, subject to demand

Bowling - provision in the Borough is adequately satisfied, may be need for additional in long term if demand and economy strengthens

Stakeholder event

Stakeholder workshops were held in both Nuneaton and Bedworth Town Centres on 16th May 2013. This allowed the draft findings to be discussed and the positive and negatives aspects of each of both town centres.

A summary of the key themes that emerged from the workshop for Nuneaton include:

- Shopping – the town centre’s shopping is limited and there is a lack of quality retailers, while there is increasing competition from centres outside the Borough (e.g. Coventry).
- Businesses – high business rates and rents are forcing smaller businesses to close, which is contributing to increasing vacant units in the centre.
- Environment – there is a general need to improve the maintenance and management of the town centre and riverside, and improve links between Riversley Park and the river.
- Culture and Heritage – a need was identified to promote the town’s local heritage and associations with film and the arts, with the potential to create a arts/cinema/theatre venue.
- Development Sites – there is an opportunity to promote vacant/development sites in the town centre to stimulate investment in the centre.
- Connectivity – traffic congestion is considered an issue in the centre during peak hours and improvements could be made to pedestrian wayfinding, (particularly to and from the railway station). There is also an opportunity to improve cycle paths and connections.

A summary of the key themes that emerged from the workshop for Bedworth include:

- Shopping – it was generally felt that the redevelopment of Tesco has had a positive impact on the town centre, while the lack of out-of-centre retailing in the Borough generally has helped to retain shoppers and expenditure in the town centre.
- Town Centre Activity – the town centre is busiest on a Saturday morning, although activity falls away in the afternoon. On Sundays and weekday evenings the town centre was described as being ‘dead’.
- Vacant Units – increasing vacant units in the town centre is a particular concern.
- Environment – the general shopping environment and public realm would benefit from new investment.
- Culture and Heritage – the Civic Hall is an important cultural attraction and the town also benefits from many local heritage attractions, although these need to be promoted and marketed more effectively.

- Leisure – Bermuda Park is viewed as an important leisure attraction for the residents of Bedworth, but there was an identified potential to promote more family leisure uses and events in the town centre, particularly during the ‘quieter’ periods.

6. Office Requirements Update (December 2013)

This report provides an update for the future office space requirements in the Borough’s main town centres, taking account of market demand and supply dynamics. Specifically, the following has been undertaken in accordance with the brief:

- A review of existing baseline reports comprising the Employment Land Review 2010, the Town Centre Study 2011, the Nuneaton and Bedworth Forecast Model report 2011 and the Scale of Growth Background Paper 2013.
- A review of current provision and changes in provision by analysing historic trends in planning completions for office floorspace for the Town Centres and analysis of office floor space take-up data for the Borough Council area as a whole. Additionally reviewing existing and pipeline supply in the Town Centres.
- An analysis of office market trends, rental values and yields at a national, regional and local level (including a review of competing regeneration/development projects in the pipeline).

This report considers whether the figure proposed within Preferred Options document for new office floorspace, (30,000 sqm i.e. 1,500 sq m per annum) is still appropriate and whether an updated figure for office need for Nuneaton and Bedworth town centres should be applied.

The report recommends that the Borough’s town centre office target of 30,000 sq m of floorspace (1,500 sq m per annum) for the plan period be reduced as this figure is unlikely to be realised. We recommend adopting a town centre requirement figure in the region of 15,000 sq m over the plan period (750 sq m per annum) on the basis that this is consistent with the baseline evidence evaluated as part of this report. The vast majority (approximately 13,000 – 14,000 sq m) will be required in Nuneaton with between 1,000 and 2,000 sq m required in Bedworth town centre. Table 5 highlights the recommended office floorspace figures to take forward in the Borough Plan. The report also envisages that the majority of the office development will come forward in the later part of the plan period in part due to the current economic climate and impediment to delivery. The figure of 15,000sqm is thought to be a figure which is more realistic but still remains aspirational.

Table 5: Recommendations for office floorspace requirements

	Office floorspace (sqm) 2011- 2028
Nuneaton	13,000 - 14,000
Bedworth	1,000 - 2,000
Total	15,000

The recommendations from the report are as follows:

- Recommend policy is positively worded to allow flexibility to support additional office floorspace over the requirement.
- Consider high density office in the town centre to be appropriate.
- Emphasis should be placed on addressing labour market constraints on growth in professional/business services sector.
- Early focus should be placed upon upgrading the existing accommodation to provided better specified more flexible accommodation rather than larger spec built schemes unless there is a substantial pre-let element

7. Superseded Town Centre Studies

Nuneaton & Bedworth Town Centres Study (June 2011)

Nuneaton

Vision

Nuneaton – The Midlands’ best market town – where shoppers, workers and residents come together to enjoy the diverse retail and leisure opportunities, the Anker riverside and George Eliot Park; and where businesses choose to locate because of the quality of the workforce, connectivity and high quality premises.

Objectives

The vision should be supported by the following proposed objectives:

- A thriving town centre residential community
- A diversified retail offer with more local independent stores
- An opened up riverside lined with high quality development, taking advantage of its amenity benefits
- A range of day time dining and leisure venues
- Improved integration of the park and the core of the centre
- A 'critical mass' of office development and office-based businesses
- An improved gateway to the town centre

Bedworth

Vision

Bedworth is a connected shopping, service and leisure destination that surpasses the needs and aspirations of its residents, and is widely renowned for its' civic, cultural and parkland assets.

Objectives

The vision should be supported by the following proposed objectives:

- Attractive, safe and convenient routes into and within the centre, and between all of the town's key assets
- High quality retail premises and significantly reduced vacancy
- Increased profile and usage of the Civic Hall and Miner's Welfare Park, including a bigger and better programme of activities
- First-class public realm including a new focal point for the centre
- Significantly increased number of people using the town centre in the day and evening-time

The study identifies sites within Nuneaton and Bedworth Town Centres which have potential to be brought forward to meet the identified demand for new development. RTP assessed the suitability, viability and availability of each site.

In Nuneaton the following "Category A" sites are identified as priorities for redevelopment:

- Site A1 Church Street/Vicarage Street
- Site A2 Bus Station and surrounding environs, Newtown Road/Harefield Road
- Site A3 Land at junction of Abbey Street and Roanne Ringway

The following "Category B" sites are identified as longer-term priorities:

- Site B1 Abbey Street surface car park
- Site B2 Victoria Street/Dugdale Street
- Site B3 Former Post Office/Wilkinson site, Church Street
- Site B4 ASDA store and retail warehouses, Newtown Road
- Site B5 Land at Abbey Street/High Street
- Site B6 Coton Road

The following “Category C” sites are identified as infill sites with redevelopment potential:

- Site C1 St Mary’s Road Depot
- Site C2 Rear of Town Hall, Coton Road
- Site C3 Multi-storey car park, Newtown Road/Harefield Road
- Site C4 Retail warehouses, Back Street/Leicester Road
- Site C5 Orchard Street surface car park
- Site C6 Land to the rear of Newdegate Street
- Site C7 Junction of Back Street and Bond Street
- Site C8 Rear of Abbey Street and Burgage Place

The Bedworth sites have not been prioritised. Rather, RTP recommends that any applications which come forward should be treated on their own merits.

- Site BW1 Land at George Street Ringway/Margaret Avenue
- Site BW2 Arc Car Wash and haulage site, Leicester Street
- Site BW3 Surface car park, rear of High Street
- Site BW4 Station Gateway
- Site BW5 Scout Hut site, land off Park Road

Site BW6 Indoor Market and land south of Congreve Walk

The study builds on the visions and objectives and sets out options for spatial frameworks in each of the centres. These frameworks aim to interpret the visions and objectives in a spatial and geographical way, identifying areas for different types of development.

Nuneaton

Two options were presented for Nuneaton, a ‘Quarters’ option and a ‘Gateways’ option. The ‘Quarters’ option identifies a number of areas within the centre where certain uses can be considered best suited in order for the centre to be fully integrated and function successfully. The quarters are as follows:

- Retail core – the existing primary retail area, including the Ropewalk and Abbeygate Shopping Centres, Queen’s Road and Abbey Street;
- Retail expansion – areas bordering the retail core which could be redeveloped for retail uses in order to meet the identified comparison goods floorspace requirement;

- Retail warehousing – north of Newtown Road, including the existing Asda food store and adjacent units;
- River Corridor – stretching along the spine of the River Anker through the town centre;
- Office Quarter – land between Church Street and the Ring Road;
- Station Gateway – land between Nuneaton rail station and the Ring Road.

RTP considered that this spatial framework option would enable the development of a ‘critical mass’ of office uses by focusing development in a single location at which a ‘brand’ and identity can be built.

Land to accommodate the projected requirement for additional retail floorspace is identified immediately adjacent to the existing retail core so that new development would capitalise on the activity and the vitality of the existing core whilst also enabling the activity it generates to spill directly into the core of the town centre.

Residential and leisure uses, for which attractiveness and amenity are of greatest importance and deliver greatest value uplifts, were proposed to be focused along the river corridor and areas around the park where the attractiveness and amenity is highest.

The existing cluster of retail warehousing is recognised and opportunities to improve connectivity with the core of the centre through redevelopment and reconfiguration could be taken forward.

Finally, new development at the gateway could serve to create an attractive, active and interesting route from the station into the heart of the centre. Retail and office-focused areas would be more active during the day, whilst in the evening residential and leisure areas would come alive.

The ‘Gateways’ option focuses on ensuring that the entry points to the centre for its users present a high quality first impressions of the centre. New development would be focused at the junctions of ring road with: Bond Street; Leicester Road; Wheat Street; Church Street; Coton Road; Queens Road; Abbey Street; and Corporation Street.

At each of these key gateway locations, development opportunities would be sought and exploited to deliver high quality mixed use development. Active ground floors of retail and leisure uses (including cafes, restaurants and the like) would draw users into the core of the centre. Above this residential and office developments would increase the number of people living and working in the centre and, most importantly, spending their money there. This kind of mixed use development is likely to lead to increased activity across all parts of the centre, during the day and evening.

Bedworth

Two options were presented for Bedworth, a 'Quarters' option and a 'Consolidate and Re-focus' option. The 'Quarters' option identifies three distinct functional areas within the centre, the character and functionality of which could be enhanced through new development and other interventions. The framework plan identifies a shopping heart for Bedworth that includes All Saints Square, covered market, and (redeveloped) Tesco store; a business quarter stretching from King Street to Bedworth rail station; and the area to the south of Rye Piece Ringway for leisure and recreation.

Dividing the town centre into functional area in this way will guide development of certain types and other interventions in order that their functionality can be improved. By focusing on retail uses in the shopping heart, it is intended that a critical mass will be delivered. The business quarter builds on an existing cluster of offices and the accessibility afforded by the train station – new development of good quality small scale office/business accommodation could complement this. To the south of these areas, are some of the towns key leisure and recreation assets, and development or interventions to support this could drive increased usage and profile of these assets. Outside of the 'quarters' is the town's residential hinterland, from which much of the expenditure and activity in the centre is derived. If more people are encouraged to live close to the centre, then the centre will clearly benefit from increased levels of expenditure.

However, in order to encourage more people to spend more time and money in the centre, there is a need to address issues around the environmental and design quality in some parts of the centre. In particular, the retail development along the western frontage of All Saints Square is particularly unattractive, to the extent that many retailers would not want to locate there. This area may need to be the focus for any intervention.

This 'Consolidate and Re-focus' option seeks to consolidate and re-focus the provision of town centre uses in the centre into an area stretching from Tesco to the north to the Civic Hall in the south, and from the Market in the west as far as Croxhall Street in the east. A more compact retail core will mean a greater intensity of footfall and activity, from which all town centre businesses will benefit, rather than the current highly dispersed pattern where activity is dissipated and users of the centre simply utilise one aspect of the centre's offer before leaving. In order to consolidate the provision of town centre uses, this approach would see a policy framework that discourages and prevents new development of, changes of use to, town centre uses outside of the defined core area. It would also proactively promote the conversion of existing town centre uses outside of the core area to residential or other none town centre uses.

Refocusing the centre will require safe, attractive, direct and active routes from all of the major drivers of activity in the centre to the heart of the centre. These drivers of activity include the redeveloped Tesco store to the north, the train station to the east, the Civic Hall and Miners' Welfare Park to the south

and Aldi, Home Bargains and the Market to the west. At the centre of these is the confluence of All Saints Square, King Street and High Street which, with investment in the public realm, could be a new focal point for the centre. Routes to this focal point are good from the north, east and south (although could be improved further through investment in the public realm), but not from the west, where the route to the focus is indirect and unattractive. In order to create a direct and high quality route linking the Market and Aldi/Home Bargains development to the west with the core of the centre, and to bring the activity they generate into it, redevelopment of at least part of the block forming the western frontage to All Saints may be required.

Outside of the consolidated area of retail and other town uses, development opportunities should be exploited to increase the local residential population and the resulting amount of expenditure directed towards retail and leisure outlets in the town centre.

The study sets out RTP's conclusions and recommendations.

Nuneaton

The two spatial framework options for Nuneaton comprise very different approaches and would have very different outcomes. The 'Quarters' framework would re-enforce the retail core, whilst providing ample space to accommodate projected future requirements for comparison floorspace. It would also enable the office quarter to develop its own brand and identity as a location for business capitalising on the criminal justice centre, proximity to which will be attractive for several office based sectors. It also makes maximum benefit of the river corridor by focusing development of uses that will derive increased value from it. However, some initial (and most likely public sector) investment in cleaning up and opening up the corridor (along with the necessary flood alleviation works) is likely to be necessary if this approach is taken.

The 'Gateways' framework takes a very different approach. It seeks to attract users into the core of the centre by ensuring that routes into it are lined with development and uses that will engage pedestrians. It would be allied to investment in public realm to improve connectivity across the ring road and into the centre, again led by the public sector. It seeks a genuine mix of uses (both horizontally and vertically) in each part of the centre that maximises sustainability and, hopefully, minimise the need to travel. It relies on the co-ordination of the various elements to give the sense of critical mass for each development sector in the centre, given that uses will be dispersed across several locations rather than focused in a single area.

The Nuneaton town centre "Quarters" framework was chosen to re-enforce the retail core, whilst providing ample space to accommodate projected future floorspace requirements. It would also enable the office quarter to develop its own brand and identity as a location for business capitalising on the criminal justice centre, proximity to which will be attractive for several office based sectors. It makes maximum benefit of the river corridor by focusing

development of uses that will derive increased value from it. However, some initial (and most likely public sector) investment in cleaning up and opening up the corridor is likely to be necessary if this approach is taken.

Bedworth

Similarly, the options for Bedworth present very different approaches. The 'Quarters' framework suggests development of business quarter with new office accommodation and a shift/enlargement of the retail core around the Tesco store. Whilst the development of a business quarter would certainly support the centre, there remains some question as to whether demand exists for such office development in Bedworth, and whether it is desirable to draw any demand that is available in the market area away from Nuneaton as the principal town in the Borough. The 'Consolidate and Re-focus' framework seeks to ensure that activity in the centre is concentrated in such a way that town centre businesses can capitalise on the activity generated by one another and support the centre through additional residential development and focal public realm at the core of the centre.

The spatial framework for Bedworth combines aspects of both of the approaches recommended by the Study. The "Quarters" framework suggests the development of a Cultural and Civic Area, Retail Core, Residential Arc and Station Gateway with an emphasis on "Consolidating and Re-focussing" the centre to ensure that activity is concentrate in such a way that town centre businesses can capitalise on the activity generated by one another and support the centre through additional residential development and focal public realm at the core of the centre.

Convenience Goods Retail Study (June 2011)

The study was been prepared in the context of the most current national and development plan policy guidance. It specifically took account of the advice set out in Planning Policy Statement 4 (PPS4): 'Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth' and provides the robust baseline evidence required to inform the preparation of the Council's Development Plan Documents (DPDs) as part of the Local Development Framework (LDF) process. The study and evidence base will also help the Local Planning Authority (LPA) determine planning applications for town centre uses that are not in a centre and not in accordance with an up-to-date development plan

The economic performance of Nuneaton town centre is important to the continued growth and prosperity of the Borough as a whole. As the principal centre in the Borough for retail, leisure and service uses, it has a clear role to play in driving the development of the Borough into the future.

Nuneaton has a relatively strong provision in floorspace particularly within its large supermarkets. The centre has an attractive environment and lower than average vacancy rates, which is a positive indication of its overall vitality and viability. Notwithstanding this, Nuneaton faces significant challenges due to

the lack of investment in its retail offer over recent years. In our judgement, new investment is needed to help improve both the shopping environment and the perception of the centre as a place to shop and visit for a range of uses and activities.

Although Bedworth also has a pleasant environment, it has not benefited from a significant investment over recent years and it has a higher vacancy rate than Nuneaton. In response, the Council has made attempts to avoid 'dead frontages' on Council-owned empty retail units through innovative cladding. Overall we consider that the centre is both vital and viable, although vacancy levels in the centre will need to be carefully monitored.

In summary, the report considered that both centres need to attract further investment to maintain and strengthen their important role and function within the Borough and the wider sub-regional shopping hierarchy. This calls for a robust and deliverable vision and policy direction in the light of increasing competition from other sub-regional centres and the changing economic backdrop

8. Core Strategy Issues and Options consultation document

In taking the town centres policy forward it is important to build upon issues that were raised in previous documentation. The following issues were identified within the document:

- Issue TC1 – although it has started to change since the opening of the Ropewalk, the quality and diversity of retail provision in Nuneaton is limited. The town has a strong market but how it will remain attractive and competitive in the future is an issue.
- Issue TC2 – Nuneaton does not have a strong evening or night time economy. Provision, in the form of pubs and bars are mostly directed at the young to the exclusion of others. Other barriers are poor perceptions of public safety and limited transport provision after 6pm.
- Issue TC3 – office provision in Nuneaton is limited and basic and is reducing economic opportunities in the town centre. There is also limited residential provision which is having a negative impact on the diversity and vibrancy of the centre.
- Issue TC4 – because of its proximity to the larger centres of Coventry and Nuneaton, Bedworth town centre struggles to compete for retail trade and its office sector is small. There is little residential provision or leisure provision other than the Civic Hall, therefore, the evening economy is weak. How Bedworth can best compliment Nuneaton in the future needs to be addressed.

In total 46 comments were received regarding the town and district centres key issues. There was general support for the town and district centre key issues raised in the document, 42% were in support and 37% disagreed with the key issues.

There was recognition of the identified difficulties highlighted in both town centres. The need to improve the attractiveness, competitiveness and the range of uses present in Nuneaton and Bedworth was also highlighted. Things that work well such as the markets need to be supported to ensure they continue to draw people into the town centre. There is recognition of the need for the diversification of shops and the need for higher aspirations for shops/markets, though this needs to remain realistic in terms of the size and the type of retailers who would be likely to locate within the Borough. A key issue raised is the need to provide more of a night time economy with a greater range of evening activities such as entertainment and restaurants. Concern was also raised regarding the lack of recreation and leisure opportunities in the town centre. There was mention of the need for more office space in Nuneaton in order to improve the economy, suitable car parking for office staff was also identified as being key in attracting potential businesses into the town centre.

The reference to Bedworth demonstrated a degree of disagreement. Comments disagree with Bedworth being identified solely to 'complement' Nuneaton. It is suggested that Bedworth should be a 'vibrant' town centre in its own right, not subservient to Nuneaton. In taking this forward, the evidence illustrates that Nuneaton is the principal Town Centre. However the development of a town centre policy outlines their importance for the Borough from a retail perspective and the communities in which they serve.

9. Preferred Options Consultation Document

The vision put forward in the Preferred Options document was as follows.

Nuneaton

In 2028 Nuneaton will be regarded as the best market town in the Midlands. Divided into 7 distinct quarters, the town centre will have a family friendly atmosphere and be a place where shoppers, workers and residents choose to spend their time.

The Retail Core Quarter will be the focus of the borough's shopping activity. It will be a busy and vibrant area with a wide variety of shops and services. The town's market will continue to be a key attraction. Smaller specialist shops will flourish alongside newer larger units that will attract national retailers to the Retail Expansion Quarter. People will shop in the Newtown Road Quarter for their bulky goods.

Nuneaton town centre will provide a market place for business with improved employment opportunities for local residents through the development of an Office Quarter. Businesses will choose to locate in the centre because of the skills of the workforce and the quality of the premises.

The setting of the River Anker will be a focus for high quality residential development in the River Corridor Quarter. This in conjunction with additional housing in the town's Residential Ring will increase the residential population

of the town centre supporting the activities of the other quarters and creating a bustling atmosphere that lasts throughout the day and into the evening.

The River Corridor Quarter will also offer leisure opportunities in the form of Riversley Park and George Eliot Park. This will be complemented by new public squares and seating areas in the Retail Expansion Quarter. Other public realm improvements will link the different parts of the centre together.

The town centre will be easily accessible with public transport at its heart, with clear/safe links into the centre for pedestrians and cyclists. Adequate, safe and well located parking will be provided, making it easy for people of all abilities to use and move around the centre.

Bedworth

In 2028 Bedworth town centre will be a thriving local shopping centre with a Retail Core that meets the day to day needs of the residents of Bedworth and its immediate surroundings, supporting and complementing the wider functions of Nuneaton and Coventry. The town's Cultural and Civic Area will be well used with the Civic Hall and Miners' Welfare Park forming key attractions. Bars and cafes in the retail core will support these uses with high quality pedestrian routes providing attractive, safe and convenient links that brings the different parts of the centre together.

New housing development in the town's Residential Arc will further support activity in this area and the Retail Core.

Bedworth town centre will be easily accessible by a choice of transport modes. The Station Gateway will form an improved access point to the town for visitors arriving in Bedworth by train.

Preferred Options Consultation Comments

The preferred options consultation received a number of comments related to the town centre and its future.

For Nuneaton town centre there were concerns raised over the lack of retail provision and variety, particularly shops at the higher end of the market such as Marks and Spencers. The need to recognise George Eliot as tourism asset to encourage more visitors was raised as an issue. Increasing residential development in the town centre was also deemed as a way to improve the town centre. The importance of a gateway locations was recognised and that there is a particular need to improve the quality of the environment in these areas, as well as the rest of the town centre. An area of particular importance was the area between the railway and bus stations. It was suggested that car parks should not be reduced as this would reduce the number of shoppers into the town.

For Bedworth it was recognised that it would be well placed to support smaller shops catering for specialised goods and services. The area near the station

should be improved for a café, retail and additional parking if there is more use with the improvement of rail services. Bedworth is well placed to offer space for the smaller shops catering for specialised goods and services, expanding on the number we still have. Take a flexible approach to the Station Quarter, to adapt the area close to the Small start-up art/media/high tech businesses associated with homes could usefully be applicable here. Coventry has implemented a similar scheme in the Canal Basin that is proving successful. Improvements needed to shops in All Saints Square and Congreve Walk.

For both town centres it was raised that the importance of the markets to the town centres needs to be recognised more. It was agreed that an Area Action Plan is needed for both Town Centres, to identify sites for development and their specific requirements. Concern was raised about the number of office and retail space in the Borough that is either vacant or let to charity and pound shops. It was also raised that what footfall there is in the town they have little spare disposable income to warrant new development. The town centres need flexibility, an interpenetration of work, living and leisure should be welcomed. It was also recognised that there is a lack of a night time economy and focusing solely on retail in the central core does nothing to encourage a 'night time economy'. In order to cater for different business it was suggested that there needs to be more variety of retail floorspace we need to look at the as some units are too big and others are too small, therefore, need to cater for businesses of different sizes. Ideas were suggested to make vacant shops more attractive or more useful by advertising local goods and services, display artwork and craft products, and promote local groups and activities. Need to make sure any improvements take account of the less able bodied to ensure the town is accessible to all. Re-enforce the environmental themes of green infrastructure and climate change adaption within the town centres.

10. Preferred Options Sustainability Appraisal Report

The SA identifies the policy representing a significant positive effect on economic and social factors including:

- The re-use of previously developed land
- Provision of recreation/cultural facilities
- Health implications
- Reducing the need to travel

The SA indicates that the policy will result in no significant adverse effects, although there are uncertain effects on the majority of environmental considerations. This uncertainty is due to the associated implementation of other policies within the Borough plan. The policy is considered to have a neutral effect on water resources as suitable mitigation will be provided prior to commencement of development.

11. Development of Policy and Delivery Mechanisms

The revised Vision seeks to provide emphasis on flexibility, connectivity and leisure, particularly café/restaurants.

Nuneaton

In 2031, Nuneaton Town Centre will offer a shopping experience that is not only attractive to residents within the Borough, but also to the surrounding towns and villages. Vacancy levels will be low and the quality of the environment will be high. The town centre will be accessible to all and there will be provision for all modes of transport. It will contain a diversity of uses, with retailer representation from independent, national and specialist stores. It will offer an environment where businesses want to locate and invest in. It will be a place where people spend their leisure time during the day and evening and will be attractive to people of all ages.

The Town Centre will be interconnected and accessible from all sides of the town. Navigating the town will be simple and straight forward. The town centre will be accessible by all modes of transport and provide a place where shoppers, workers and residents choose to spend their time in the day and in the evening. New development will complement the existing heritage assets and will further enhance the character of the town. There will be an emphasis on natural features such as the River Anker. Green Infrastructure in the public realm will make the town a desirable place to be and complement the existing natural and historic assets helping to define the brand and identity of the town.

The primary shopping area will be the focus of the borough's shopping activity and provide a wide spectrum of shopping experiences. It will be a busy and vibrant area with a wide variety of national and independent shops and services. Smaller specialist shops will flourish alongside the town's larger units. The award winning market will continue to be a key attraction, adding to the overall vibrancy of the town. The Primary shopping area will be extended east and west. This will increase the convenience and comparison offer for the town. It will provide newer larger units that will attract national retailers and provide important anchors to the east and west sides of the town. Public squares and seating areas in the retail areas will improve the public realm and enhance the overall quality of the town centre. Emphasis will be on mixture of uses to ensure the deliverability of schemes and for the uses to feed of each other. Outside of the primary shopping area improvements will be made to improve the connectivity with the convenience and bulky goods stores which border the town centre ring road. For example Newtown Road, Regent Street, Vicarage Street and Burgage Walk.

Nuneaton town centre will be a place where businesses want to invest in and locate in. Opportunities to develop high quality purpose built Offices in the town centre will provide quality premises that are attractive to the market, whilst also improving employment opportunities for local residents.

Businesses will choose to locate in the centre because of its accessibility, the skills of the workforce and the quality of the premises and its surrounding environment. Office development will be supported as part of mixed use schemes. This will allow supporting uses to coexist alongside the office development to ensure that the environment remains vibrant during working hours.

The River Anker will be a key feature for the town centre, rather than being hidden away. It will be the focus for high quality mixed use development which will take advantage of the views of the river. The area surrounding the bus station will be a key attraction for the town acting as a gateway from the railway station. It will improve the leisure of the town particularly the café and restaurant offer. The River will also play a connecting role with George Eliot Park and Riversley Park to provide leisure opportunities out of, but well connected to the town centre.

The town centre will be easily accessible with public transport at its heart, with clear/safe links into the centre for pedestrians and cyclists. Adequate, safe and well located parking will be provided, making it easy for people of all abilities to use and move around the centre. Entry to the town from the railway station will be easy and simple, it will guide people to the café quarter and then on to the primary shopping area. The town centre amenities will be well signposted and the town will be easy to navigate. This gateway will make the town attractive and accessible whether visiting for business or pleasure.

The town centre will be supported by residential development around the town centre ring road. Connections between the outer ring and the inner quarters will be improved and well signposted. Easy access from these areas will support the activities of the town centre and create a bustling atmosphere that lasts throughout the day and into the evening.

Bedworth

In 2031, Bedworth town centre will be a thriving local shopping centre that meets the day to day needs of the residents of Bedworth and its immediate surroundings. It will be an attractive place for independent shops and leisure activities complementing the wider functions of Nuneaton and Coventry. Vacancies will be low and the quality of the public realm will be high. The town will be interconnected and accessible from all sides of the town. The town centre will be able to provide retail, leisure, entertainment and service uses. The town centre will be accessible by all modes of transport and provide a place where shoppers, workers and residents choose to spend their time in the day and in the evening. Public realm improvements will complement the existing heritage assets and will further enhance the character of the town and make the town a desirable place to be.

The primary shopping area will help to consolidate and re-focus the centre to ensure retail activity is concentrated in the heart of the town to create a vibrant shopping centre. All Saints Square will be a key focal point for the town taking

advantage of the town's heritage, namely the Almshouses and All Saints Church.

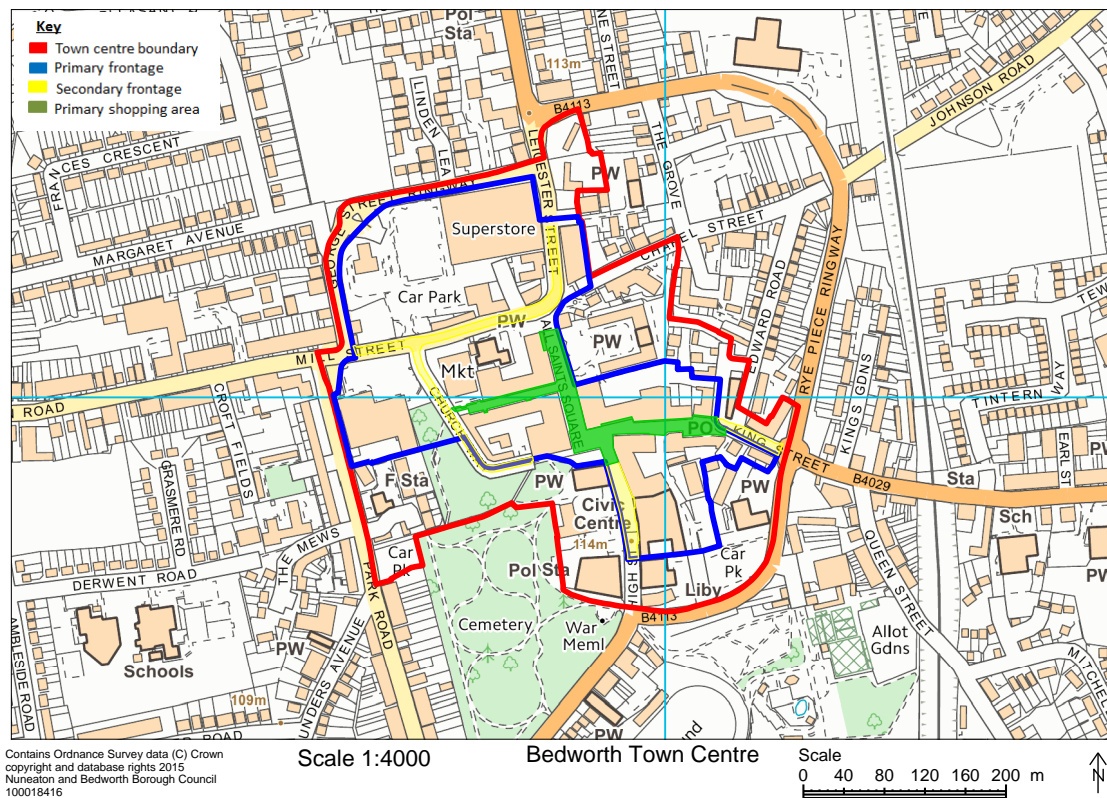
The town's gateways will be enhanced with local amenities well signposted. The Cultural and Civic Area will be well used with the Civic Hall and Miners' Welfare Park forming key leisure attractions. Bars and cafes in the primary shopping area will support these uses with high quality pedestrian routes providing attractive, safe and convenient links that bring the different parts of the centre together.

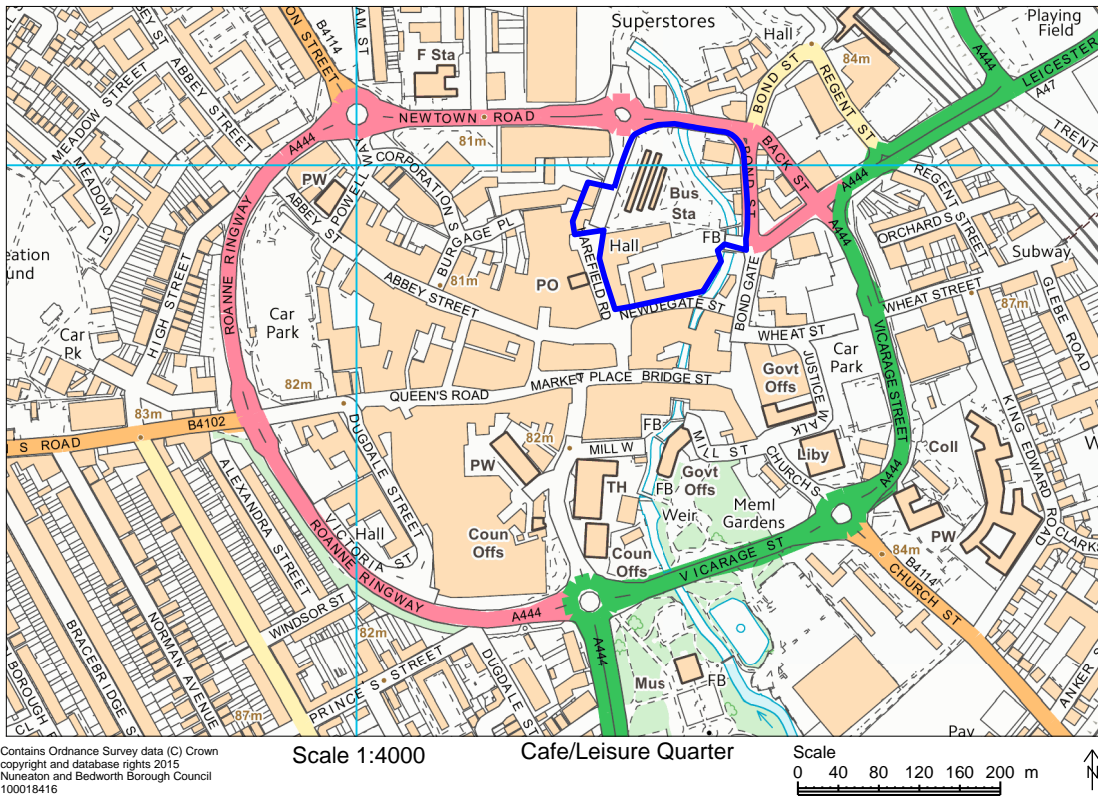
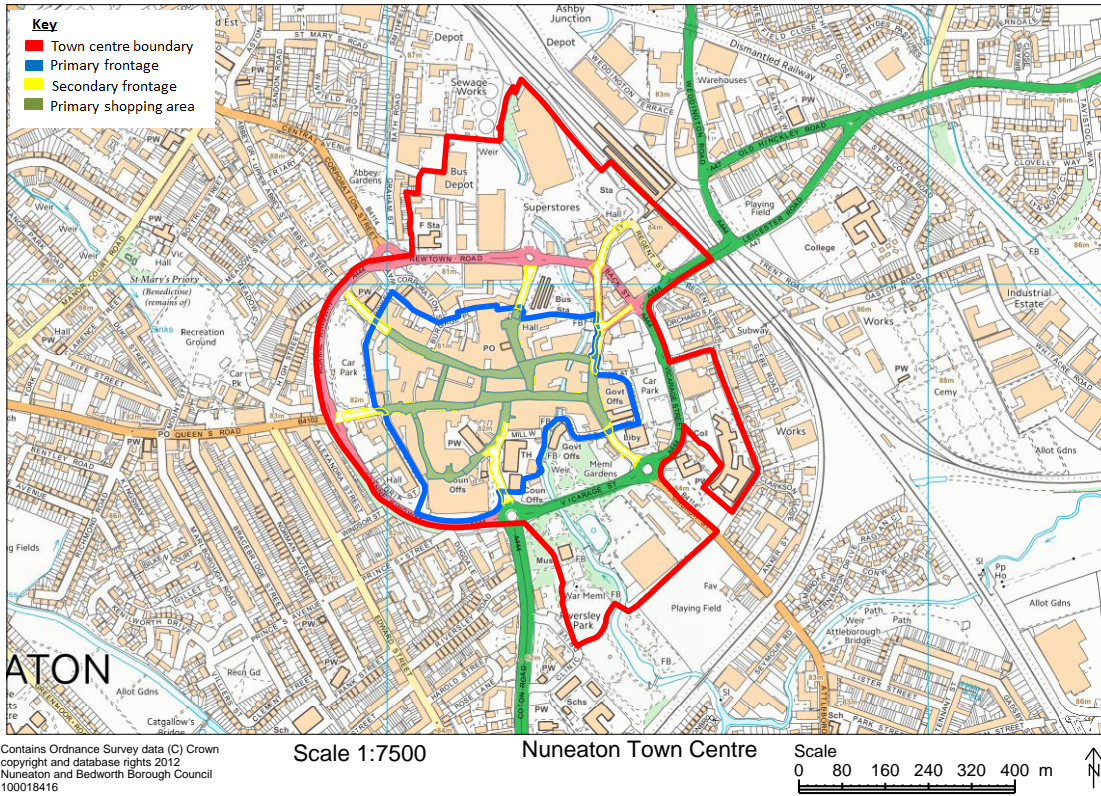
The gateways to the centre area will be supported by high quality residential development and small offices to meet the local demand. Bedworth town centre will be easily accessible by a choice of transport modes. The Station Gateway will form an improved access point to the town for visitors arriving in Bedworth by train, which will lead them to the heart of the centre. Residential development outside the heart of the town will be supported to increase footfall and activity in the town centre. New residential development will be well connected to the centre. Connections between the Residential Arc and the inner quarters will be improved and well signposted.

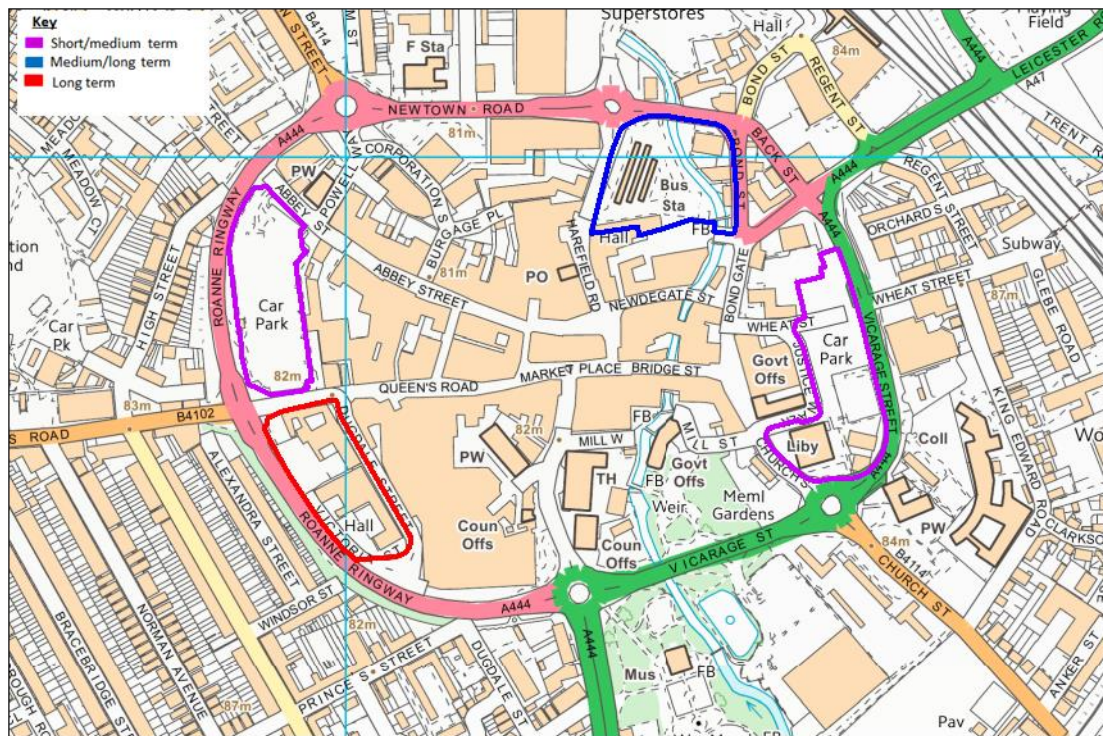
Delivery Mechanisms

The creation of a distinctive, attractive and multi-functional town centre for people of all ages at all times is the key aspiration for both towns. The evidence suggests Nuneaton is the Principal Town Centre, where the majority of the development will go. However, it is important to recognise the role Bedworth plays. The policy needs to create a distinctive retail experience in Bedworth, not competing with other neighbouring areas, but complementing and building on its strengths for its catchment area. The town centres requirements are delivered through the Scale of Growth policy, whereas the vision and aspirations are delivered through the Nature of Town Centre Growth policy. The evidence suggests that there is potential for more provision of cafés, restaurants and bars. The provision of more cafes and restaurants will help to strengthen the towns overall vitality and viability as it will encourage shoppers and visitors to dwell longer in the town centre, spend more money and increase footfall to the benefit of other shops, businesses and facilities as well as developing the evening economy. The development of the café quarter in Nuneaton Town Centre will help to provide a focus area for these uses. This area is well linked to the taxi rank, bus station and train station and various car parks so will be easily accessible by a range of transport methods. The policy aims to increase the abundance of eateries in this area of the town, developing a mix of independent and chain cafes, restaurants and bars. Four key development sites have been taken forward from the background evidence to help regenerate the town centre, these are identified in the key developments sites maps below. The Council will work with partners to help deliver the vision for both town centres. The delivery mechanisms for this policy are as follows:

- Prepare a Town Centres Area Action Plan to identify sites for development and specific requirements such as the design and infrastructure requirements
- Partnership working with developers and landowners to ensure delivery of the proposals in line with the Area Action Plan
- Monitoring of the “health” of the Town Centres
- Delivery of aspirations through economic development strategy.







Monitoring

5.1 The indicators and targets that will be monitored for this policy are outlined below.

Indicator	Target
Additional floorspace for 'town centre uses'	<p>Increase in A1, A2, B1a, and D2 floorspace in the town centres, including:</p> <p>15,00sqm of office floorspace</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nuneaton 13,000sqm - 14,000sqm • Bedworth 1,000sqm - 2,000sqm <p>13,470sqm - 16,460sqm of comparison floorspace</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nuneaton 11,420sqm - 13,950sqm • Bedworth 1,570sqm - 1,925sqm <p>1,750sqm - 3,580sqm of convenience floorspace</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nuneaton 910sqm - 2500sqm • Bedworth 460sqm - 540sqm <p>2,666sqm - 3,065sqm of café, restaurant and bar floorspace</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nuneaton 2,324sqm - 2,672sqm • Bedworth 324sqm - 393sqm
Relevant planning permissions inside and outside of identified centres	Increase town centre uses given permission in defined centres and reduce town centre uses given permissions outside defined centres
The net gain and losses of commercial floorspace	Minimise the loss of retail units to non-retail uses within the defined district centre boundaries
The diversity of uses	Maintain a good mixture of

(e.g. retail, leisure and services offer)	uses in the town centre
Retailer representation and demand	Increase the amount of national retailers present in the town centres
Commercial property indicators (such as Prime Zone A rents)	Increase the number of prime zone a rents.
Changes in vacancy levels	Maintain a low rate of vacant retail premises in all centres
Accessibility and parking provision	Maintain availability of parking provision and improve provision for sustainable transport
The quality of the town centres environment	Maintain the current standards of the town centres and seek to improve where necessary.
Town centre footfall	Increase town centre footfall in both centres.