

# Tunbridge Wells Borough

## Retail and Leisure Study

on behalf of Tunbridge Wells Borough Council

April 2017



Tunbridge Wells Borough  
Retail and Leisure Study  
on behalf of Tunbridge Wells Borough Council  
April 2017

## Contents

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Current and Emerging Retail Trends .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Planning Policy and Regeneration Context .....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Assessment of Key Retail Centres.....</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Population and Expenditure .....</b>	<b>76</b>
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Original Market Research.....</b>	<b>85</b>
<b>7.0</b>	<b>Retail Capacity .....</b>	<b>95</b>
<b>8.0</b>	<b>Leisure &amp; Other Town Centre Uses.....</b>	<b>111</b>
<b>9.0</b>	<b>Recommendations and Future Retail Strategy .....</b>	<b>130</b>
	<b>Glossary of Terms.....</b>	<b>145</b>

## Appendices

**Appendix A | Study Area and Zones Plan**

**Appendix B | Experian GOAD Plans**

**Appendix C | Household Survey Results**

**Appendix D | Statistical Tables**

**Appendix E | Pedestrian Count Points**

## 1.0 Introduction

### Instruction

- 1.1 Nexus Planning (Nexus) was commissioned by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council ('the Council') in August 2016 to undertake a Retail and Leisure Study for the Borough of Tunbridge Wells.
- 1.2 This Retail and Leisure Study (or Study) is to serve as an update to the previous study completed in 2014. This Study will form part of the evidence base upon which the emerging Local Plan for the Borough (up to 2033) will be established.
- 1.3 A fundamental objective of this Study is to deliver an appraisal of the retail, leisure and hotel needs and capacity in the period to 2033, and to review the current performance of Royal Tunbridge Wells, Southborough, Paddock Wood, Cranbrook and Hawkhurst centres across the Borough. The comprehensive appraisal of these elements is of particular importance given recent instabilities in the UK economy. The economic recession, which spanned the period 2008-2013 (approximately) had a significant impact on many town centres and the UK retail and leisure sectors as a whole.
- 1.4 The approach adopted by Nexus has been refined to reflect the latest Government guidance provided in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (March 2012) and National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) (2014).
- 1.5 The aims and objectives for this Study therefore include the following:
  - i. Conduct a Telephone Household Survey to establish the current shopping patterns of respondents and market shares of retail and leisure facilities across the Study Area;
  - ii. Provide context for the Study through a review of the National Planning Policy position and an appraisal of economic, retail and leisure trends in shopping patterns at a national and regional level and how this might affect future policy recommendations;
  - iii. Undertake a comprehensive assessment as to the existing vitality and viability of Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre and its neighbouring centres to establish the retail and leisure needs of the current population to refresh the 2014 Retail and Leisure Study Update. This would include an assessment of:
    - Diversity of uses;
    - Proportion of vacant street level property;
    - Customers' views and behaviour;
    - Retailer representation;

- Vacant units;
  - Pedestrian flows;
  - Accessibility;
  - Perception of safety and occurrence of crime; and
  - State of town centre environmental quality.
- iv. Produce a flexible model of the retail expenditure and floorspace projections across the Study Area on the basis of housing and population growth forecasts and recommendations for how this will affect retail and leisure needs across the authority areas. This will also take account of the potential impact of the increase in online shopping (sometimes referred to as 'e-tailing');
- v. Produce a quantitative assessment of the future demand for retail floorspace across Royal Tunbridge Wells and the key centres of Southborough, Paddock Wood, Cranbrook, and Hawkhurst up until 2035 (although the Plan period is proposed to be until 2033, the Council has asked that the requirements are projected forward to 2035 in order provide consistency with other evidence base that is being prepared by the Council) based on the household survey, along with current information regarding population retail expenditure and its projected growth. This will establish the expenditure and floorspace capacity of retail centres to meet projected growth scenarios or identify where provision may need to contract due to changes in demand based on national/ local trends in retail spending and trading and a comparative assessment of changes since the previous Tunbridge Wells Retail and Leisure Study Update (2014). This would take into account the need for both convenience and comparison goods shop floorspace;
- vi. A review of locations where currently 'leakage' is occurring in order to provide recommendations on the potential of the Study Area's centres to meet the identified retail and leisure needs and an overview of potential development opportunities to help facilitate 'claw back' of lost expenditure;
- vii. Provide recommendations for the location of future retail growth for Royal Tunbridge Wells, out-of-centre locations and the surrounding centres of Southborough, Paddock Wood, Cranbrook, Hawkhurst. This would include a review of the existing town centre boundary and primary shopping area designations to inform the approach to retail and leisure development in respect to the emerging Local Plan. The review would include potential edge or out-of-centre locations if retail and leisure needs cannot be met within the existing town centres and consideration of the implications if provision should be provided in alternative locations;
- viii. Provide recommendations on the potential of Tunbridge Wells to meet the identified retail

and leisure needs, in addition to a qualitative review and 'gap analysis' of current retail and commercial leisure provision in the centres to identify whether there are any key uses or specific occupiers not currently represented in the centres; and

- ix. Review the Retail and Leisure Study Update - Hotel Futures Update (2014) including a qualitative review of existing hotel stock and 'gap analysis' on current and future hotel need in Tunbridge Wells.
- 1.6 Nexus has engaged NEMS Market Research Limited (NEMS) to undertake a survey of 1,600 households within a defined Study Area in September 2016. The Study Area for the household survey encompasses 16 zones, which are based on postcode sectors grouped to reflect areas that are expected to exhibit similar patterns of shopping behaviour. The definition of the adopted Study Area and individual zones replicates that of the Council's previous Retail Study in 2014, in order to allow for comparisons and to identify any emerging trends in shopping patterns across the Study Area over the past two years.
- 1.7 To complete this Study, Nexus has completed a wide-ranging examination of existing operators within the Borough and studied available published data sources, such as Experian GOAD and Venuescore. Nexus has also referred to the latest Experian population and expenditure data (published by Experian in 2016) in order to establish the up-to-date position with regard to both convenience and comparison goods capacity.

## Structure of Report

- 1.8 We have structured our report as follows:
- **Section 2** summarises key current and future retail and leisure trends, providing the context for this Study and how it can be used to guide plan-making;
  - **Section 3** provides an abridged explanation of relevant national and local planning policy as it relates to retail and leisure;
  - **Section 4** comprises a synopsis of the vitality and viability of Tunbridge Wells' centres;
  - **Section 5** details our assessments of the current and future population and expenditure levels within the Study Area;
  - **Section 6** comprises a review of the survey research and considers the key findings with regard to shopping trip patterns throughout the Study Area;
  - **Section 7** provides our analysis in respect to the quantitative and qualitative need for further

---

convenience and comparison goods retail floorspace over the assessment period (to 2035);

- **Section 8** details the existing leisure provision in Tunbridge Wells and considers future leisure capacity over the plan period; and
- **In Section 9** we identify our recommendations in respect of the Council's future strategy for retail, town centre and leisure development.

---

## 2.0 Current and Emerging Retail Trends

- 2.1 Nexus has reviewed recent research completed by a number of retail research providers, including but not limited to: Office for National Statistics (ONS), Colliers International, Experian, and Verdict. Through the analysis of this research we can ascertain information on recent trends and future forecasts for the UK retail market.
- 2.2 Since the 1950's, the UK retail market has, in general, experienced expansive growth. The rate at which this growth is occurring has increased in speed in recent years. The level of growth is resultant of several influencing factors. These factors are summarised in brief below:
- a. Improving standards of living;
  - b. A population with higher disposable incomes;
  - c. The popularity of obtaining fiscal credit;
  - d. Changes in modes of transport; and
  - e. New (digital) technologies, including online retailing.
- 2.3 The key identified trends are summarised in brief below, and expanded within the subsequent sections:
- i. An economic climate that prevailed during the recent recession (circa 2008 to 2013) had substantial impacts on the retail market; by restricting resident incomes and reducing standards of living. In consequence, the level of spending retracted. Since 2013 (recognised as being the end of the recession in the UK) the economy has been slowly regaining momentum and economic reports released in early 2016 indicate a return to pre-recession levels. The most recent release from the ONS on Retail Sales (published in March 2016)<sup>1</sup> identified that March 2016 represented the 28<sup>th</sup> consecutive month of growth for retail sales UK wide.
  - ii. As with the retail market, the retail property landscape in the UK has dramatically developed over the last 50 years. The post-war years saw a significant redevelopment effort focused on town centres. However, in more recent times, and most notably during the 1990s, the retail landscape changed following the introduction of expansive out-of-town regional shopping malls as well as retail parks. Nevertheless, as will be explained later in in this section, new retail development is once again becoming more focused on town centre locations.

---

<sup>1</sup> 'Statistical bulletin: Retail Sales' ONS, March 2016

- 
- iii. The physical location of where consumers are spending has also undergone a significant shift over the past 15 years. Recent findings of Verdict Retail demonstrate this shift. Verdict's 2013 research identified that spending within town centres as a proportion of overall spending declined from 50.7% in 2003 to 45.0% at 2013. In contrast, spending in out-of-centre locations increased over the same period (2003 to 2013); rising from 31.5% in 2003 to 36.2% in 2013<sup>2</sup>. The movement towards out-of-centre locations has directed recent governments to endorse their commitment to UK town centres through the nationwide promotion of the 'town centre first' policy approach. The 'town centre first' approach is outlined at Paragraph 23 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (March 2012). Further Government support for directing new retail development towards town centres is set out in the March 2014 publication of the 'Ensuring the Vitality of Town Centres' National Planning Practice Guidance.
- iv. Another factor that has led to notable changes in the retail market is the rise in "E-tailing" (or "E-commerce"). The popularity and increased availability of the internet, as well as the growing confidence of consumers in making purchases online, has led to a distinctive change in the way in which goods and services are purchased. Reports on "E-tailing" suggest it currently accounts for somewhere between one in every five to ten pounds that are spent in the UK<sup>3</sup> (taking account of monthly fluctuations). One report released in March 2016 stated that 20% of retail sales in the UK were now completed online<sup>4</sup>.
- v. Consumer expectations are also continually evolving, producing a dynamic and unstable retail market. Retail providers are required to evolve as a result of numerous dynamic factors, including – the characteristics of the UK population, consumer demands, popularity in private car ownership, planning policy and digital advances. The diverse nature of the factors that form consumer expectations is forcing retailers to pursue new innovative development proposals. Consumers are seeking more out of their shopping experience and wanting it now.
- 2.4 Additionally, it is important to recognise the recent results of the public referendum for the UK to leave the European Union in late June 2016 ('Brexit'). The impact on the UK economy, and in particular the retail and leisure markets, is currently unknown and commentary on the topic is changing weekly. As such, it may be appropriate to issue an Addendum to this Study report at the time the effects (positive or negative) are more developed and predicted trends can be supported by observed evidence. For example, it will be important to monitor industry forecast data provided by experts such as Experian.

---

<sup>2</sup> 'British High Streets: from Crisis to Recovery? - A Comprehensive Review of the Evidence', Economic and Social Research Council and the University of Southampton, March 2015

<sup>3</sup> 'UK online retail sales to reach £62.7bn in 2020', Verdict Retail, 17 September 2015

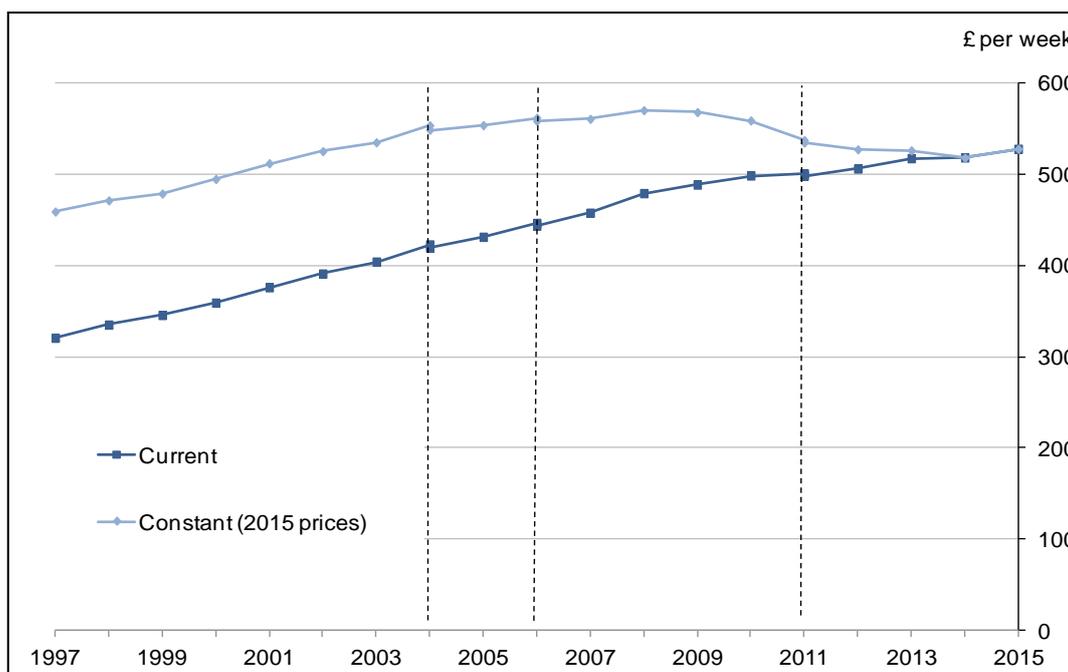
<sup>4</sup> 'More than 20% of UK retail sales took place online in February, as consumers moved more spending to the internet', Chole Rigby, Internet Retailing Online, 6 March 2016

## Current Retail Picture

### Household Spending and Labour Trends

2.5 In their August 2015 Retail Report, Colliers International documented that, since Quarter 1 2011, household spending has steadily increased each year<sup>5</sup>. Following 2.3% year-on-year growth in Quarter 1 2015, growth in household spending has reached the pre-recession levels of 2006 and 2007. Notably, trends in real wages have been supporting the increase in spending. Real wages reached a 4.5% year-on-year growth rate in March 2015. This is the highest level since March 2007<sup>6</sup>. The Centre for Retail Research published their Retail Forecast for 2016-2017 in January 2016, which supports Colliers findings. In this forecast, they confirm the UK retail sector has enjoyed uninterrupted growth since 2013<sup>7</sup>.

**Figure 2.1 | Median full-time gross weekly earnings in current and constant (2015) prices, UK, April 1997 to 2015**



Source: 'Statistical bulletin: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings: 2015 Provisional Results', ONS, 18 November 2015

- 2.6 Domestic economic drivers of UK retail performance are linked to two key factors:
- i. Low inflation: drives growth in real wages, strengthens household confidence and disposable income.
  - ii. Low interest rates: lead to low mortgage rates, which in turn results in more money in the pockets of borrowers.

<sup>5</sup> 'Midsummer Retail Report', Colliers, August 2015

<sup>6</sup> 'Midsummer Retail Report', Colliers, August 2015

<sup>7</sup> 'The Retail Forecast for 2016-2017', Centre for Retail Research, 5 January 2016

- 2.7 Both of the factors set out above have a significant influence on the public's general confidence, and in turn their tendency to spend their earnings on retail goods. Reports on consumer confidence indicate that it is currently the strongest it has been for over a decade<sup>8</sup>. Total recorded spending for Quarter 4 2015 was £279.1 billion<sup>9</sup> according to the ONS. This is indicative of considerable increases in spending when considering the low level of spending which occurred in 2009. Notably, in Quarter 2 2009 spending hit a low of £250.8 billion<sup>10</sup>, as reported by the ONS.
- 2.8 Also of note are current trends in the labour market. This information is sourced from the ONS. The median gross earning for full-time employees in the UK has increased and as at April 2016 sat at £528 per week, an increase of 1.9% from £518 per week a year earlier (April 2015)<sup>11</sup>. Figure 2.1 illustrates how earnings have increased since 1997, and further exemplifies the deceleration in year-on-year growth that occurred since the start of the recession in 2008.
- 2.9 Since the year 2010 taxation rates and levels have increased (including VAT, national insurance contributions, and capital gains tax). As a direct result of these increases, consumers' spending power is reduced, affecting households' spending. Therefore, the gross increase of pay in consumers' pockets cannot be used as a direct comparison.
- 2.10 What is more, the employment rate (the proportion of people aged 16 to 64 who were in work) was 74.1% in March 2016. This is the highest rate of employment since records began in 1971. The unemployment rate was recorded as being 5.1% at March 2016<sup>12</sup>. When considering this figure against the 2014-2015 rates it indicates a decreasing trend. The UK unemployment rate was recorded as being 5.7% between October and December 2014<sup>13</sup>.

### **UK Retail Property Market**

- 2.11 In 2011, Colliers CRE reported that economic conditions were resulting in significant structural changes to the UK high street, with many retailers displaying signs of caution by decreasing the size of their property portfolios, completely abandoning weaker towns and putting a concerted effort into acquiring sites in city centres and major regional shopping centres<sup>14</sup>. At this time comparison goods retailers were finding it increasingly difficult to justify being represented in every town in the UK. However, over the five years to 2016, the circumstances inflicted upon UK town centres have changed dramatically. More recent reports, including those published by Colliers, Verdict, PwC, provide a more positive picture for high street retail. Most notably, Colliers declare that high streets are 'no longer dead or dying'. Representative of this is the fact that in 2014 investment into high

<sup>8</sup> 'UK Economic Outlook', PwC, March 2016

<sup>9</sup> 'Statistical bulletin: Retail Sales' ONS, March 2016

<sup>10</sup> 'Midsummer Retail Report', Colliers, August 2015 and 'Statistical bulletin: Retail Sales' ONS, March 2016

<sup>11</sup> 'Statistical bulletin: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings: 2015 Provisional Results', ONS, 18 November 2015

<sup>12</sup> 'Labour Market Statistics' ONS, 16 March 2016

<sup>13</sup> 'Labour Market Statistics' ONS, 16 March 2016

<sup>14</sup> 'Great Britain Retail: Autumn 2011', Colliers CRE, 2011

- street assets jumped by circa 30% to £2.39 billion on the previous year<sup>15</sup>. There have been fewer retailer failures on the high street and its retailers' requirements continue to increase, report Colliers.
- 2.12 In 2014, Colliers acknowledged that recent improvements to the economic outlook were beginning to show positive results for town centres<sup>16</sup>. For example, increased consumer confidence and retailer expansion was resulting in a reduction in vacant retail space. However, Colliers remained cautious at this time. In their 2014 report, they explained that, even though the speed at which a significant amount of vacant space was being taken off the market and the positivity of the current economic indicators suggested a return to normalcy, as during the recession online retailing was flourishing and high street stores were continuing to struggle. As such, they warned retailers to continue with caution when deciding to build upon their existing physical store networks in light of online competition<sup>17</sup>.
- 2.13 In terms of current vacancy rates, the UK average rate of retail shopping pitches as at June 2016 was identified by Experian as 11.2%<sup>18</sup>. The rate of vacancies is described by Colliers as being 'stubbornly high' as it is not typical or reflective of the total economic or retail climate. Colliers explains that in light of recent advances in the performance of the UK economy it should have improved a lot more against its 2012 peak of 16.3%. Perhaps we should expect the vacancy rate to drop to a figure that is more akin to pre-recession time – for example in 2006 the vacancy rate dropped to 7.3%<sup>19</sup>. In terms of actual quantities, reports suggest some 46,000 UK shops lie unoccupied, and around a third of those have been empty for more than three years<sup>20</sup>.
- 2.14 It is vital to distinguish that this high level of vacancies is driven mainly by non-prime units<sup>21</sup>. Colliers identify that the prime unit vacancy rate sits around 7.5% while non-prime is as high as 17%<sup>22</sup>. As a consequence of the recent economic difficulty and subsequent lack of investment into retail property, we have seen demand drop considerably for 'poorer quality stock'. Such stock is often found in secondary shopping frontages within smaller towns. As a result, this poorer quality stock suffers from a proportionate reduction in value (and often rent)<sup>23</sup>.
- 2.15 The significantly high number of vacant spaces during the recession and the lack of investment in premises, including upkeep, led to a harmful impact on the overall attractiveness of town centres. As set out within the recommendations of Mary Portas' December 2011 Review into the future of UK high streets, there is a recognised necessity to encourage the redevelopment of high street retail space. To do this Portas explained it is important to empower local authorities to address

<sup>15</sup> 'Midsummer Retail Report: 2015', Colliers, August 2015

<sup>16</sup> 'National Retail Barometer: Summer 2014', Colliers, September 2014

<sup>17</sup> 'National Retail Barometer: Winter 2013', Colliers, 2013

<sup>18</sup> 'Experian Category Report', Experian March 2016

<sup>19</sup> 'Midsummer Retail Report: 2015', Colliers, August 2015

<sup>20</sup> 'Where have all Britain's shoppers gone?', The Guardian, 26 April 2016

<sup>21</sup> Prime units defined as high-quality properties for investment, see Glossary for further details.

<sup>22</sup> 'Midsummer Retail Report: 2015', Colliers, August 2015

<sup>23</sup> 'National Retail Barometer Autumn 2015', Colliers, Autumn 2015

negligent property owners, especially those of long-term vacant units<sup>24</sup>.

- 2.16 In short, the incessantly high average vacancy rate, despite improving economic conditions, is representative of a discernible divergence between in-demand high quality units and diminishing demand for secondary premises in smaller 'non-prime' locations.

### **Other Factors Influencing the Improving Town Centre Environment**

- 2.17 It is important to recognise that the improving high street environment is not solely driven by 'pure' retail offerings. The food and beverage sector is a significant contributing factor to the recent success and growth of UK high streets. Colliers explains the desire of UK shoppers to 'graze' while they shop has seen a significant boost in the quantity of coffee shops, restaurants, bars and grab-and-go convenience food outlets on UK high streets<sup>25</sup>. In addition to this, the popularity of going out to eat also brings more visitors to the town centre<sup>26</sup>.
- 2.18 Further to this, as digital technologies continue to advance, the importance of understanding and operating within the digital world of retail shopping is becoming just as essential as trading in the traditional physical shopping world. The challenges and competition set by online retailing are irrefutable. However, large cities, towns, or shopping centres, which offer an 'experience' and choice continue to be attractive to customers. Growing investments in physical retail development is indicative of retailers' acknowledgment that shoppers desire to have a physical retail experience and not just make all of their retail purchases online.
- 2.19 To conclude, the performance of UK town centres and high streets provide highly visible and empirical evidence of the scale of the economic downturn (2008 to 2013). Recent improvements in the economy (as evident when reviewing household spending and average earnings statistics) have seen increased investment into town centre retail stores and a drop in prime unit vacancy rates.

### **Trends in Comparison Goods Retailing**

- 2.20 Available research suggests that the comparison retail sector saw the biggest drop in trade during the 2008 – 2013 economic recession. The Economic and Social Research Council, in their March 2015 report, attribute the drop in sales to two corresponding factors – (1) consumers' general reluctance to spend on comparison 'big-ticket' items, and (2) the fact comparison retailers are often more susceptible to online price comparison<sup>27</sup>. In recent years, consumers are growing more confident in making online purchases of comparison goods and town centre comparison stores

<sup>24</sup> 'Portas Review – An independent review into the future of our high streets', Mary Portas, 2012

<sup>25</sup> 'Midsummer Retail Report: 2015', Colliers, August 2015

<sup>26</sup> 'The Deloitte Consumer Review – Role of the High Street', Deloitte, 2013

<sup>27</sup> 'British High Streets: from Crisis to Recovery? - A Comprehensive Review of the Evidence', Economic and Social Research Council and the University of Southampton, March 2015

continue to suffer in consequence. The strong performance of comparison online retailing is supported by reports showing high levels of year-on-year growth in the sector.

- 2.21 There are two types of comparison goods retailers that are identified as suffering the most – (1) those whose trade has been fundamentally changed by competition from online providers (e.g. music and video retailers, book shops – which consumers happily use in a virtual form) and (2) those whose products are bulky and space-consuming, meaning high operational costs for high street stores has left them uncompetitive in contrast to out-of-centre and online retailers with much lower tenancy rates and overheads<sup>28</sup>. That said certain types of comparison-goods retailers have increased their share of town centre trade. For example, Verdict data indicated that clothing and footwear retailers increased their share from 20.5% to 25.4% from 2007 to 2013, and department stores saw their market share increase from 7.4% to 9.5%<sup>29</sup>.
- 2.22 Against this background, Colliers predicts that comparison retailers are searching for high quality retail units with larger floorplates where they can provide a wider range of items<sup>30</sup>. This is driven by the need to provide consumers with a high-quality shopping environment, coupled with their expectations for a wide selection of goods being available in store. Retailers must meet these demands in order to compete with the rise of E-tailing for comparison goods.
- 2.23 The recent liquidation of British Home Stores (BHS) in April 2016, further illustrates the struggles facing comparison retailers. Reports on the reasons for the failure of BHS identify the following issues facing the company – (1) the internet, (2) international competition, (3) the on-going impacts of the recession and (4) their failure to keep up with the demands of consumers for innovation in retailing<sup>31</sup>.
- 2.24 In summary, comparison retailing is fuelled by fierce competition, in particular that made possible by the internet. Companies operating in the comparison market need to fight for their sales through adapting to the new and modern desires and needs of the consumer, and most importantly acknowledge the fact they are likely to compare prices over the internet. How to combine a physical and online store is essential to success, as will be established later on under the sub-title “E-Tailing”. The option of ‘click and collect’ is one such combination being introduced in response to growing popularity<sup>32</sup>. In order to attract customers into a physical store it is vital that it is both (1) physically and aesthetically pleasing and exciting, making for an enjoyable experience for the shopper, as well as (2) providing for a wide array of different products that they can see and touch.

<sup>28</sup> ‘British High Streets: from Crisis to Recovery? - A Comprehensive Review of the Evidence’, Economic and Social Research Council and the University of Southampton, March 2015

<sup>29</sup> ‘British High Streets: from Crisis to Recovery? - A Comprehensive Review of the Evidence’, Economic and Social Research Council and the University of Southampton, March 2015

<sup>30</sup> ‘Colliers Midsummer Retail Report’, Colliers, August 2015

<sup>31</sup> ‘Mary Portas: how I would have saved BHS’, Mary Portas, The Guardian Online, 25 April 2016

<sup>32</sup> ‘The Deloitte Consumer Review – Digital Predictions 2015’, Deloitte, 2015

---

## Trends in Food and Grocery Retailing

- 2.25 A 2015 study by Retail Economics reported that spending on food accounted for approximately 40% of all retail spend nationwide<sup>33</sup>. Consequently, trends in food retailing have a significant influence on retail trends in general.
- 2.26 Instability currently prevails in the food retailing market and supermarkets are most affected. Numerous supermarket chains are currently in the process of consolidating their assets; selling stores, pulling construction programmes, and letting go of sites already with planning permission. Nevertheless, as explained below, instability and structural change in food and grocery retailing has been occurring for a number of years, and predates the recent challenges presented by the recession (2008 to 2013).

### Food Retailing Back in the Heart of Town Centres

- 2.27 The structure of food and grocery retailing has changed significantly since the departure from large format out-of-centre foodstores. It was during the 1990's that a significant number of out-of-centre foodstores with large floorplates were developed and provided cheap rent when compared to town centre locations<sup>34</sup>. The success of these developments was dependent on the dominant transport culture, which at that time was much more accepting of the reliance on the motorcar and people were generally happy to travel greater distances to shop.
- 2.28 As out-of-centre foodstores thrived, town centres suffered. However, following recognition of these detrimental impacts, central Government enforced stricter local planning rules that make these types of development harder to gain planning permission. Foremost was the 'town centre first' approach prescribed by the NPPF in 2012 and NPPG in 2014. Application of this policy considerably reduced the number of new out-of-town foodstores obtaining planning permission.
- 2.29 Food and grocery retailers have had to return to town centres and adopt alternative methods of retailing. The most common approach taken is to offer lower cost product ranges. Following that, we also see retailers offering much more flexible models, including protracted opening hours (sometimes staying open 24 hours), online shopping, home delivery, as well as 'click and collect'. Some retailers have also diversified into non-food items including fuel. Also in a bid to keep and win new customers, many retailers have opted to put a concerted effort into branding, marketing, including presence on social media. Tapping in to the modern consumer's desire to purchase food on the go, several food retailers now have a presence in dense town centre locations where their stores are accommodated over much smaller floor plates (Sainsbury's Local, Tesco Express).
- 2.30 Growth in the sales of food and groceries within UK town centres are evidence that food and

---

<sup>33</sup> 'UK Retail Sales', Retail Economics, March 2016

<sup>34</sup> BIS Research Paper No.188 – 'Policy Implications of Recent Trends in the High-Street/Retail Sector', Department for Innovations and Skills, December 2014

grocery stores are reasserting their presence within the town centre. Verdict Research identified that sales made in UK town centres on the food and groceries has developed from 16.9% in 2007 to 24.2% in 2013<sup>35</sup>.

### The Rise of the Food Discounter

- 2.31 In 2013, Mintel reported that the recession, along with a period of high inflation, influenced consumer behaviours and the wider dynamics of grocery retailing. Consumers who have less disposable income are likely to seek out food and grocery items that are offered at the lowest price, or more importantly, food and groceries, which represent the best value for money<sup>36</sup>. Therefore, in order to attract shoppers, food retailers have to compete not just on price points but by also offering the best in high quality good value products. The complex nature of consumer demands results in a dynamic market that is often difficult to negotiate. The rise of online food retailing adds yet another dimension to this market. Reports by Retail Economics suggest that while the general retail food market suffered, the number of online food purchases rose by 10.3% year-on-year in January 2016<sup>37</sup>.
- 2.32 The scene set above indicates the food sector is facing a number of unique structural challenges, which is causing issues for food operations and subsequently restricting growth in this sector. One of the overriding challenges comes from the intense price competition created by the foremost food discounters (Aldi and Lidl), which are taking market share away from the big four grocers (Tesco, Sainsbury's, Morrisons, Asda)<sup>38</sup>.
- 2.33 Illustrating the dynamic nature of the struggling food and grocery environment at present is the number of recent sales of a significant number of food and grocery outlets by major food retailers. For example, Morrisons let go of 140 of Morrisons' M Local Stores nationwide in late 2015, the majority of which were sold and rebranded as M Local (which has since gone into administration) in a bid to compete with other centrally located top-up convenience stores meeting the demand driven by consumer's increasingly 'hectic' lifestyles. The initial sale of the Morrisons' M Local store was forced upon Morrisons due to struggling profits, even though convenience stores are the fastest-growing format in the UK<sup>39</sup>. Making the sale of the Morrisons' M Local Stores and subsequent collapse of the rebranded My Local retailer even more surprising are the 2013 reports from providers such as Mintel who suggested there has been a massive shift away from superstores to more convenient shopping<sup>40</sup>. The first Morrisons' M Local Store was only opened in 2011, but after reporting an annual operating loss of £36m on the stores; contributing to the

<sup>35</sup> Verdict research as reported in 'British High Streets: from Crisis to Recovery? - A Comprehensive Review of the Evidence', Economic and Social Research Council and the University of Southampton, March 2015

<sup>36</sup> 'Food & Drink Retailing', Mintel, March 2013

<sup>37</sup> 'UK Food and Grocery', Retail Economics January 2016

<sup>38</sup> 'UK Retail Sales', Retail Economics, March 2016

<sup>39</sup> 'Morrisons sells its chain of convenience stores', BBC Online, 9 September 2015

<sup>40</sup> 'Food UK', Mintel, April 2016

company's total annual loss of £792m, the initial decision to sell was made<sup>41</sup>. Similarly, in early 2016 Sainsbury announced they would be closing down all 16 of their Netto discount grocery stores nationwide<sup>42</sup>. The majority of the former Netto stores are located in the north of England and their closure illustrates that this time of uncertainty still prevails.

- 2.34 While the food retail market is still generally described as struggling, up-to-date March 2016 research produced by Retail Economics showed that grocery sales are continuing with their recent run of better performance with sales up 1.5%, year-on-year, the strongest since February 2014. March 2016 sales represent the third consecutive month of growth<sup>43</sup>.
- 2.35 Notwithstanding this, the food and grocery market is predicted to remain fiercely competitive, meaning retailers will be forced to keep their sales margins as compressed as possible.
- 2.36 As recently as September 2015, Retail Economics reported that the struggles of the UK's largest retailer, Tesco, are predicted to continue. Retail Economics predicts that competition from the discounters Aldi and Lidl, in particular that will continue to diminish Tesco's market share. While broader market trends, such as consumers' desire to eat-out and purchase only 'grab and go' food at their convenience, will stifle growth across Tesco's core large format superstores – reducing sales by as much as 50%<sup>44</sup>. In April 2016, the Tesco Chief Executive hailed the supermarkets £162 million statutory pre-tax profit for the 2015/2016 as “significant progress” when compared to the retailers reported £6.2 billion loss of the 2014/2015. However, the Chief Executive stressed that recovery would not be a straightforward process as the food retailing market remained “challenging, deflationary and uncertain”<sup>45</sup>. In order to be successful in the market retailers are forced to cut prices. This means discount food retailers remain the fastest growing supermarkets in UK town centres at present<sup>46</sup>.
- 2.37 When analysing the performance of Aldi, who are considered a food and grocery discounter, Retail Economics describes that they have “attacked the heartland of UK grocery” by undercutting the ‘big four’ with highly competitive prices and investing in more high quality premium produce. This approach has broadened Aldi's appeal to more affluent customers. In the same way, Lidl has adopted an aggressive growth programme including ambitious store expansion. To date, the strategy has achieved what it has intended by growing Lidl's market share. The widening of product ranges assists to broaden market appeal of the stores while a focus on stocking more alcohol helps to support sales for their stores<sup>47</sup>.
- 2.38 In late 2015, reports on Lidl and Aldi's success suggested their joint share of the groceries market

<sup>41</sup> 'Morrisons sells its chain of convenience stores', BBC Online, 9 September 2015

<sup>42</sup> 'Sainsbury's to close Netto stores', BBC Online, 4 July 2016

<sup>43</sup> 'UK Retail Sales', Retail Economics, March 2016

<sup>44</sup> 'UK Food and Grocery', Retail Economics, September 2015

<sup>45</sup> 'Tesco shares hit by warning profit growth to slow', BBC Business Online, 13 April 2016

<sup>46</sup> 'Tesco shares hit by warning profit growth to slow', BBC Business Online, 13 April 2016

<sup>47</sup> 'UK Food and Grocery', Retail Economics, September 2015

doubled to 10% in just three years<sup>48</sup>. Even so, Tesco remains the UK's largest supermarket with a 27.9% market share, while Sainsbury's has 16.6%, with Asda on 16.4%. Followed by – Morrisons 10.8%, The Co-operative 6.3%, Aldi 5.6%, Waitrose 5.2%, and Lidl 4.4%<sup>49</sup>.

### **Consumer Behaviours When Making Food and Grocery Purchases**

- 2.39 The UK food market has been shaped in recent years by the broad change in shopping habits with many customers opting to complete smaller but more frequent grocery shops. Fewer households now complete the traditional once-a-week “big shop”. In their March 2015 report, the University of Southampton (published as part of an Economic and Social Research Council study) predicts that forecasts for 2019 will see the convenience store grocery sector account for almost a quarter (24.1%) of total UK grocery sales, up from 21.4% in 2014<sup>50</sup>.
- 2.40 An additional demand-driven factor shaping the UK food retail market relates to consumers' desire to purchase locally sourced food. A 2013 Ethical Consumers Market report provides<sup>51</sup> evidence to suggest that the number of shoppers specifically looking to buy local produce increased from 15% in 2005 to 42% in 2012. Of particular note, the survey found more than 40% of local shoppers said they were prepared to pay a premium for locally produced foods. Tesco benefited from this trend through the promotion of a 'Love British Food', which in 2011/2012 saw Tesco sales of local produce reach of £1 billion and over 50% of Tesco customers purchasing more locally sourced food than they were five years ago<sup>52</sup>. Other larger chain supermarkets have recognised the desire of shoppers to buy locally. Sainsbury released a British classic range of ready meals, while Morrisons promoted a range called the 'Best of British'.
- 2.41 To summarise, the competitive nature and price driven market for food and grocery retailing continues to force supermarkets to adapt and seek out how they can do things differently in order to attract consumers.

### **Trends in Leisure**

- 2.42 Leisure is often considered a discretionary activity, and as such, consumer spending on leisure is greatly influenced by the economic climate and in particular average levels of disposable incomes. However, when assessing the average spend of UK households on leisure activities it becomes clear that even in light of an economic downturn consumers in the UK have shown a growing desire to engage in leisure activities.

<sup>48</sup> 'Aldi and Lidl double market share in three years', BBC Online, 17 November 2015

<sup>49</sup> 'Aldi and Lidl double market share in three years', BBC Online, 17 November 2015

<sup>50</sup> 'British High Streets: from Crisis to Recovery? - A Comprehensive Review of the Evidence', Economic and Social Research Council and the University of Southampton, March 2015

<sup>51</sup> 'Ethical Consumer Market Report', Ethical Consumer Research Association, 2013

<sup>52</sup> 'Love British Food', <http://www.lovebritishfood.co.uk/taking-part/retailers>, 2012

**Figure 2.2 | ONS Weekly Household Spending Data on Leisure Items**

Leisure Item / Activity	2006	2011	2014
<b>Sports admissions, subscriptions, leisure class fees and equipment hire</b>	£5.80	£6.70	£6.90
<b>Cinema, theatre and museums etc.</b>	£2.00	£2.40	£2.80
<b>Admissions to clubs, dances, discos, bingo</b>	£0.60	£0.60	£0.50
<b>Gambling payments</b>	£3.60	£2.70	£2.90
<b>Restaurants and café meals</b>	£12.80	£14.70	£16.60
<b>Take away meals/food and other snack food</b>	£8.10	£8.40	£8.80
<b>Total</b>	<b>£32.90</b>	<b>£35.50</b>	<b>£38.50</b>

Source: 'Family Spending, 2015 Edition', ONS, released on 8 December 2015  
'Family Spending, 2012 Edition', ONS, released on 4 December 2012  
'Family Spending, 2006 Edition', ONS, released on 28 January 2008

- 2.43 Figure 2.2 illustrates changes in UK average weekly household spending on leisure before the recession (2006), during the recession (2011) and after the recession (2014). ONS have adjusted all the figures to strip out the effects of inflation, so that true like-for-like comparisons can be made.
- 2.44 The most recent ONS data (for the 2014 year) identified that an average household would spend £38.50 on leisure activities, including £6.90 on 'sports admissions, subscriptions, leisure class fees and equipment hire' and £2.80 on going to 'cinemas, theatres and museums'<sup>53</sup>. This is out of a total of £531.30 spent on average per week by UK households. It is interesting to assess the data on average household spending from the ONS for the years both preceding (2006) and during the recession (2011). The ONS average household spending figures for 2011 identify that out of the average weekly spend of £483.60, households spent – £6.70 on 'sports admissions, subscriptions, leisure class fees and equipment hire', £2.40 on going to 'cinemas, theatres and museums'. What is more, ONS data from 2006 confirms that on average households spent £455.90 per week, and of that £5.80 was spent on 'sports admissions, subscriptions, leisure class fees and equipment hire' and £2.00 on the 'cinema, theatre and museums' etc. The significant increases in spending from 2006 to 2014 illustrate the popularity of spending on leisure activities.
- 2.45 Research completed by the Economic and Social Research Council assessing the diversity of uses within 1,100 centres and high streets during 2000 to 2006 (the years preceding the recession) provides a clear indication that during this time, when the economy was strong the leisure service industry was thriving. They found that the total number of leisure service units within UK town centres increased by 23% between 2000 and 2006<sup>54</sup>.

<sup>53</sup> 'Consumers spending more on cars and leisure, says ONS', Brian Milligan, BBC Business News Online, 8 December 2015

<sup>54</sup> 'British High Streets: from Crisis to Recovery? - A Comprehensive Review of the Evidence', Economic and Social Research Council and the University of Southampton, March 2015

- 2.46 As evident when assessing consumer spending figures (recorded by the ONS) as at 2014 the leisure industry had strengthened since previous years (2006). Mintel calculated that this industry was estimated as worth £80 billion in 2015, approximately 15% higher than the 2010 total expected worth<sup>55</sup>.
- 2.47 A significant challenge that may soon face the industry is anticipated to occur in response to the introduction of the National Living Wage. From 1 April 2016, the UK government introduced a new mandatory National Minimum Wage (NMW) for workers aged 25 and above, initially set at £7.20 - a rise of 50p relative to the previous National Minimum Wage rate. That represents a £910 per annum increase in earnings for a full-time worker on the current National Minimum Wage. A National Minimum Wage rate of £6.70 continues to apply for those aged 21 to 24.
- 2.48 The increased base level wage will improve living standards for low-paid workers but, in the process, seems certain to push up leisure operators' wage costs, since they largely rely on unskilled workers.

### **Out-of-Centre**

- 2.49 The Portas Review, among other reports, highlighted that in the last decade (2001 to 2011) the amount of out-of-town retail floorspace has risen by 30% whilst that in-town has fallen by 14%<sup>56</sup>.
- 2.50 However, growth of out-of-centre retailing has been constrained by the 'town centre first' policy regime enforced through the NPPF since its publication in March 2012. As a consequence of the prevailing policy regime, traditionally out-of-centre retailers (for example supermarkets) are being re-focussed back into the centre of UK centres. Most notable, are the number of larger food retailers who now occupy smaller units within the high streets and local centres of the UK<sup>57</sup>, for example Sainsbury's Local, Tesco Extra, and Little Waitrose.
- 2.51 In 2013, Deloitte highlighted that there is a limit to how much an out-of-centre shopping centre can fully meet the daily needs of consumers<sup>58</sup>. Deloitte reported the drive of consumers to out-of-centre locations is primarily motivated by their desire to seek out lower prices, convenience and the wide range of goods available at out-of-centre locations by virtue of their larger store formats<sup>59</sup>. However, changes in consumer habits has driven a return to smaller format shops in more centrally located and accessible locations. As consumer habits become more aligned, the draw of out-of-centre shopping venues is weakened.
- 2.52 One obvious result of new consumer behaviours has led to larger retailers opting to provide 'click

<sup>55</sup> 'Leisure Review', Mintel, October 2015

<sup>56</sup> 'Portas Review – An independent review into the future of our high streets', Mary Portas, 2012

<sup>57</sup> 'British High Streets: from Crisis to Recovery? - A Comprehensive Review of the Evidence', Economic and Social Research Council and the University of Southampton, March 2015

<sup>58</sup> 'The Deloitte Consumer Review – Role of the High Street', Deloitte, 2013

<sup>59</sup> 'The Deloitte Consumer Review – Role of the High Street', Deloitte, 2013

and collect' services within their smaller retail units. This service enables consumers to have a much wider variety of goods available to them, but for collection to take place in an easily accessible and convenient location suitable for their busy lifestyles – likely to be a town centre location. Similarly, the Economic and Social Research Council reported that rising numbers of consumers are less convinced by the costs versus benefits balance available at an out-of-centre superstore/retail park and value convenience at the local/community level<sup>60</sup>.

## Shopping Centre Development and Investment

- 2.53 Since the previous Retail and Leisure Study was completed, the level of shopping centre development in the UK has seen some progression, following a number of years of minimal development. In 2011, Colliers reported that shopping centre development was at a standstill and little activity was anticipated over the next four years to 2015<sup>61</sup>.
- 2.54 More recent reports suggest that we should not expect an inundation of new shopping centres to open in the UK (i.e. we will not see the peak levels of new development that were reached during the 1980's to 1990's). Colliers research (released in August 2015) has recently reported that the shopping centre market has assumed a dramatic shift, changing from an investment no one was interested in procuring to a "must-have" for investors within a very short time period<sup>62</sup>.
- 2.55 However, some caution is still advised as demand and investment in shopping centre units is focused on prime and regionally dominant assets. In this current climate, it is only those high quality tenants that can deliver the much desired high-quality shopping experience<sup>63</sup>.
- 2.56 Shopping centres considered to be in the secondary market (i.e. not 'A' Grade or prime shopping centre) should be addressed with a lot more caution. Tenants are currently seeking shorter lease terms and secondary shopping centres have been described as being in structural decline<sup>64</sup>.
- 2.57 As eluded to above in paragraph 2.17, the draw of shopping centres includes the experience, and not the retail offer alone. Consumers' willingness to travel to larger out-of-town shopping centres for an overall shopping experience and to use the leisure facilities appears to be increasing. In response to this, the split between retail and leisure units present within UK shopping centres is shifting; with more experiential offers of leisure now being provided. In 2012, the Portas Review recognised this shift highlighting that:

*"...Epic and immersive experiences offered by today's new breed of shopping mall. Modern shopping centres; for example Westfields, bring together cinema premieres, worldclass*

<sup>60</sup> 'British High Streets: from Crisis to Recovery? - A Comprehensive Review of the Evidence', Economic and Social Research Council and the University of Southampton, March 2015

<sup>61</sup> 'Midsummer Retail Report', Colliers CRE, 2011

<sup>62</sup> 'Colliers Midsummer Retail Report', Colliers, August 2015

<sup>63</sup> 'Colliers Midsummer Retail Report', Colliers, August 2015

<sup>64</sup> 'Colliers Midsummer Retail Report', Colliers, August 2015

*restaurants, bowling alleys, art galleries and luxury brands – replacing the lightless, soulless experiences of the past”<sup>65</sup>.*

- 2.58 When comparing the operation of shopping centres in comparison to high streets, it is useful to reference the submission of the British Property Federation on the Portas Review, in which the Federation stated:

*“Shopping centres and other out-of-town formats often have the advantage of single ownership. The landlord is able to create an identity for the centre, choose the retail mix, manage the centre so that it reinforces the brand, co-ordinate marketing and refresh the centre through regular reinvestment. Single ownership is rare on our high streets, but that shouldn’t stop some of these elements being replicated. Our high streets need to plan their identity and shape their retail offer accordingly. They need leadership, business plans and day-to-day delivery.”*

- 2.59 It is this ‘*managed*’ experience delivered by a shopping centre that continues to prove attractive to customers. Therefore, as consumers continue to seek out high quality shopping experiences the growth and success of prime shopping centres is set to continue. In consequence, town centre managers and local authorities will need to continue to monitor the impact the draw of such centres, whether within their Borough or within adjoining authorities, may have on the health of their centres.
- 2.60 However, as clarified within Experian’s October 2015 Retailer Planner Briefing Note, as people work longer hours the idea of completing a weekly shop at an out-of-centre superstore has become less attractive<sup>66</sup>. As we have addressed earlier in this section, the rise of smaller and more regular shopping trips has been apparent in recent years.

## Neighbourhood Shopping

- 2.61 Limited retail research is available on current trends and forecasts addressing the performance of “neighbourhood parades”, as defined by the Department for Communities and Local Government<sup>67</sup> (DCLG).
- 2.62 The very term for neighbourhood shopping areas often varies, making it difficult to track and predict trends. Illustrating this point is the fact that what research is available makes reference to a myriad of terms: ‘*neighbourhood retailing*’, ‘*parades of shops*’, ‘*local shopping centres*’, ‘*local shops*’, ‘*convenience retailing*’, and ‘*secondary retailing*’. Nexus consider the best place to start is the report produced by DCLG entitled ‘Parades of Shops - Towards an understanding of performance and prospects’, in which they explain that for the purposes of consistency they adopt the

<sup>65</sup> ‘Portas Review – An independent review into the future of our high streets’, Mary Portas, 2012

<sup>66</sup> ‘Retail Planner Briefing Note 13’ Experian, October 2015

<sup>67</sup> ‘Parades of shops - Towards an understanding of performance & prospects’, Department for Communities and Local Government, 2012

- terminology of 'neighbourhood parade'<sup>68</sup>. The justification being based on the predominance of a locally focused role. In addition to the fact that, in many cases, the original core functions for 'shopping' has become differentiated.
- 2.63 The DCLG report explains that most neighbourhood parades offer a diverse and complementary occupier mix, providing essential goods and services, which are, in most cases, highly valued by the resident community they serve. Neighbourhood parades tend to be dominated by convenience stores. In these locations, convenience retail stores are typically found alongside local service outlets including pubs, take-away outlets, personal services (nail and hair salons) and other niche operators specific to that location.
- 2.64 2012 research by Verdict suggests the market share held by neighbourhood parades has remained relatively stable over the past ten years and this is generally reliant on the fact that they serve a very vital role in the provision of local needs to a local catchment<sup>69</sup>. Verdict released data confirming that in 2003, 17.9% of all UK retail sales took place at the neighbourhood level, which has not changed significantly at 2013, growing slightly to 18.8% of all sales<sup>70</sup>. Accordingly, very little physical change has occurred on these types of parades over those ten years.
- 2.65 In terms of the type of uses typically found in neighbourhood centres, in consequence to the average needs/desires of a shopper coming to such a centre, convenience remains the dominant retail type. Illustrating this point is the fact 70% of expenditure in neighbourhood centres is taken by food based retailers, including convenience stores<sup>71</sup>. Furthermore, 2012 research by Verdict suggested that almost 55.0% of retail expenditure undertaken at a neighbourhood level is in convenience stores<sup>72</sup>.
- 2.66 Neighbourhood retailing as a whole is predicted to grow but it is expected that there will remain considerable pressure on independent shops. Supporting the success of neighbourhood shops is the desire of consumers to do a lot less shopping in terms of volume but on a much higher frequency. In particular, neighbourhood parades that are close to transport hubs and links benefit the most, as workers often shop close to home and on their way back from work for the day<sup>73</sup>.
- 2.67 The DCLG, in 2012, reported that even though some parades remain specifically focused shopping locations, a number of other parades have advanced and now comprise new local services,

---

<sup>68</sup> 'Parades of shops - Towards an understanding of performance & prospects', Department for Communities and Local Government, 2012

<sup>69</sup> BIS Research Paper No.188 – 'Policy Implications of Recent Trends in the High-Street/Retail Sector', Department for Innovations and Skills, December 2014

<sup>70</sup> 'British High Streets: from Crisis to Recovery? - A Comprehensive Review of the Evidence', Economic and Social Research Council and the University of Southampton, March 2015

<sup>71</sup> 'Parades of shops - Towards an understanding of performance & prospects', Department for Communities and Local Government, 2012

<sup>72</sup> Research by Verdict on Neighbourhood Retail Markets as detailed in 'Parades of shops - Towards an understanding of performance & prospects', Department for Communities and Local Government, 2012

<sup>73</sup> 'British High Streets: from Crisis to Recovery? - A Comprehensive Review of the Evidence', Economic and Social Research Council and the University of Southampton, March 2015

including health, education, leisure and other community facilities. The plethora and diversity of uses have increased their role as 'community hubs'. This has had the effect of extending their role and increasing their value in local 'place-shaping'<sup>74</sup>. Leisure uses are particularly beneficial for positively contributing to the vitality and vibrancy of a neighbourhood centre during the evening as many operate after retail outlets shut their doors for the day. These add to the draw and diversity of neighbourhood parades, extending their role as a focus for residential communities.

- 2.68 In summary, the essential role and function of neighbourhood parades has endured over recent years. This is particularly interesting given structural shifts and drastic changes in consumer trends affecting a number of retail sectors. Essentially, neighbourhood parades continue to operate not only as a shopping destination but as a 'hub' to which people come for leisure services as well as providing public space in which social exchanges and events occur<sup>75</sup>. Finally, the size of these centres has remained stable, suggesting that overall, they have undergone little or modest physical change in response to broader trends, such as the recession<sup>76</sup>.

### **Growth in E-Tailing (or 'E-Commerce')**

- 2.69 As has already been established in the preceding sections, the rise of "E-tailing" has significantly altered the way in which the average consumer makes purchases across multiple retail sectors. Between 2008 and 2014, online sales as a proportion of total retail spend (excluding fuel) rose by more than 2.5 times – from under 4.7% in June 2008 to 11.7% in mid-2015 (as reported by the ONS<sup>77</sup>). The most recent data from the ONS on Retail Sales (published in March 2016)<sup>78</sup> identified that the amount spent online accounted for 13.2% of all retail spending (excluding fuel), a further increase from the previous year.
- 2.70 In the current retail environment, reports on "E-tailing" suggest it accounts for one in every five to ten pounds that are spent in the UK<sup>79</sup>. To keep up with the spending patterns of the typical consumer, almost all retailers now have an online presence. Over time, online shops are becoming more and more advanced and easy to use. This supports the growing attraction for consumers to make their purchases online.
- 2.71 It is important to acknowledge that there is a substantial variation between the kinds of purchases that are most likely to be made online. The ONS report that 4.4% of all 'food' purchases were made online in March 2016, whereas 11.5% of all 'textile, clothing, and footwear' purchases and 8.8% of 'household good purchases' were made online<sup>80</sup>. Figure 2.3 illustrates the penetration of online

<sup>74</sup> 'Parades of shops,' Department for Communities and Local Government, 2012

<sup>75</sup> 'British High Streets: from Crisis to Recovery? - A Comprehensive Review of the Evidence', Economic and Social Research Council and the University of Southampton, March 2015

<sup>76</sup> BIS Research Paper No.188 – 'Policy Implications of Recent Trends in the High-Street/Retail Sector', Department for Innovations and Skills, December 2014

<sup>77</sup> 'Retail Planner Briefing Note 13' Experian, October 2015

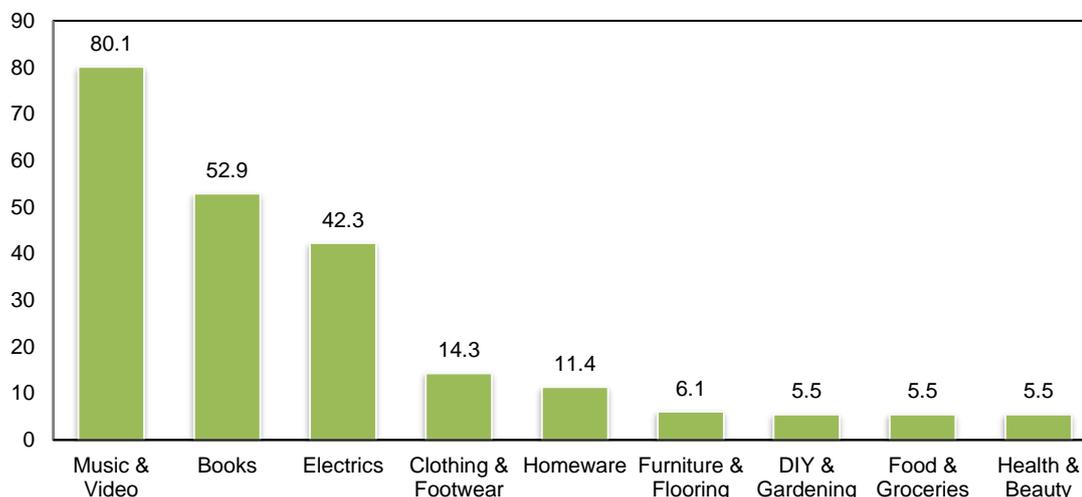
<sup>78</sup> 'Statistical bulletin: Retail Sales' ONS, March 2016

<sup>79</sup> 'UK online retail sales to reach £62.7bn in 2020', Verdict Retail, 17 September 2015

<sup>80</sup> 'Statistical bulletin: Retail Sales' ONS, March 2016

sales by sector based on 2013 data. Most notable is the large proportion of music and video, books and electrics that are purchased online.

**Figure 2.3 | Online Sales Penetration by Sector %**



Source: Verdict and SAS - *How the UK will shop: 2013*

- 2.72 The popularity of making online purchases is predicted to not only continue, but to grow. Experian predict that by 2020 online (non-store) purchases will account for 17.8% of total retail expenditure, rising to 19.9% in 2035<sup>81</sup>. This is a significant increase in contrast to the March 2016 ONS figure of 13.2%. However, it is important to recognise that the increasing internet user base which drove the significant leaps in online sales observed each year from the mid-2000s will no longer be the key contributing factor as 88.5% of the UK population are now internet users (or 57.3 million people)<sup>82</sup>. Nevertheless, growth is expected to be maintained, although through new, more portable technology such as smartphones and tablets.
- 2.73 In addition, a more co-ordinated approach to retail offers is expected with the online and physical world working together – an approach that is coined “omni-channel”. Indicative of the relationship between an online retail presence producing in-store purchasing is research produced by Deloitte in 2015, which estimated that digital technology influenced 33% of in-store retail sales in the UK in 2014, equivalent to £100 billion<sup>83</sup>. In future, Deloitte predict this will continue to grow with 50% of all in-store purchases being influenced digitally at the end of 2015<sup>84</sup>.
- 2.74 The rise in popularity of ‘click and collect’ is another example of online influenced sales resulting in visits to a physical store. Deloitte estimates that approximately one third of all online shoppers make use of ‘click and collect’ services<sup>85</sup>. A variety of retail research providers suggest that the popularity of ‘click and collect’ is set to grow exponentially in the next few years. Interestingly, the

<sup>81</sup> ‘Experian Retail Planner Briefing Note 13’, Experian, October 2015

<sup>82</sup> ‘Experian Retail Planner Briefing Note 13’, Experian, October 2015

<sup>83</sup> ‘The Deloitte Consumer Review – Digital Predictions 2015’ Deloitte, 2015

<sup>84</sup> ‘The Deloitte Consumer Review – Digital Predictions 2015’ Deloitte, 2015

<sup>85</sup> ‘The Deloitte Consumer Review – Digital Predictions 2015’, Deloitte, 2015

ONS highlight that ‘click and collect’ is a complimentary service to the success of the UK high street<sup>86</sup>.

- 2.75 As recently as 1 September 2016 Amazon released a new kind of purchasing passage – called Amazon ‘Dash’, which provides customers with a small ‘Dash button’ to have in their home, which when pressed orders refills of a certain product to be delivered to their home (usually the next day). Product suppliers such as ‘Play-Doh’, ‘Finish’ dishwashing liquid, ‘Whiskers’ cat food, and ‘Pedigree’ dog food have all joined the range. The buttons were launched in the United States in 2015 and have seen swift success since their release with many more brands joining over time<sup>87</sup>. Their success in the UK is yet to be confirmed<sup>88</sup>.
- 2.76 In summary, the rise of the online retail world is unquestionable. As the influence of “E-Commerce” continues to accelerate, we can expect retailers to react and start prioritising how they will make sure the relationship between real world retail stores and their online presence become more integrated.

## Conclusion

- 2.77 The retail market has experienced significant changes in recent years. The prevailing retail environment continues to be volatile and unstable. In response to the unpredictability those operating in the market are forced to adapt quickly or otherwise face failing profits and potential collapse altogether.
- 2.78 Poor economic conditions facing the UK (i.e. the economic downturn over the period 2008 to 2013) led to a marked deterioration in established town centres as well as other retail formats, of note secondary shopping centres. The overarching cause of decline resulted from restrictions in available expenditure due to suppressed disposable incomes.
- 2.79 However, 2016 has, to date, brought a return to economic conditions more akin to pre-recession times (pre 2008). In consequence, consumers are recovering their confidence. The main drivers are considered to be (1) the improved economic outlook (as a result of decreasing unemployment and rise in real wages) and (2) the availability of credit, which has seen expenditure growth rates rising. Therefore, whilst forecasts are still below pre-recession levels, they are significantly higher than those recorded over the last three to four years.
- 2.80 The evolution into “E-tailing” has reduced the recognised need for new tangible floorspace in recent years. However, with the retail industry embracing innovative ‘omni-channelling’ strategies, that are not restricted but supported by online-influenced sales, this provides an opportunity for town

<sup>86</sup> ‘ONS Statistical Bulletin (2014) Internet Access – Households and Individuals’, ONS, 2014

<sup>87</sup> ‘Amazon Dash Button Continues Rapid Growth—Orders Increase; Brands, Categories and Selection Expand’, Business Wire, 28 June 2016, <http://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20160628005870/en/>

<sup>88</sup> ‘Amazon Dash: does the world really need more little pieces of plastic?’, Senay Boztas, The Guardian online, 2 September 2016

---

centres to regain some of the custom they have lost. To make sure the growing spend actually takes place within UK town centres, it is critical that town centres embrace digital solutions whilst also providing well-maintained retail floorspace that provides for a high quality shopping experience.

- 2.81 It is well recognised that town centres must be open to a holistic retail strategy if they are to secure future vitality and viability.
- 2.82 To conclude, as the Council progresses with their new Local Plan it will be vital that they take account of retail and leisure trends. Of note, the Local Plan should appropriately address the rise of internet retailing and how planning policies could support a positive relationship between town centres and this new form of making purchases. One such way could be through the promotion of internet collection points in prime locations, as this is likely to draw a significant amount of people to visit a centre. Further commentary on our recommendations for the Local Plan is set out in Section 9.0 of this report.

---

## 3.0 Planning Policy Context

### Introduction

- 3.1 This Retail and Leisure Study provides evidence that will support and inform the production of the emerging Tunbridge Wells Borough Council Local Plan. As such, it is important to analyse and understand how adopted and emerging national planning documentation may shape the context for local policy-making, in particular those policies that relate to retail and leisure.
- 3.2 The following section of this Study report establishes the planning policy context for the Borough including the Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan 2006 and Development Plan Documents, including the Core Strategy and the Site Allocations Local Plan, in addition to associated Neighbourhood Plans, supporting documents, studies, and appraisals have been reviewed and a summary is provided below.

### National Planning Policy Framework

- 3.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2012, coming into force with immediate effect for plan-making and development management decisions. Subsequent to this, the National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) was produced and published on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2014 as an online tool to support the implementation of the NPPF.
- 3.4 The NPPF is unashamedly pro-growth with a “presumption in favour of sustainable development”. It effectively instructs decision makers to make positive decisions and support development unless there are clear adverse environmental, social and/or economic impacts. The NPPF provides the national guidance against which all planning applications should be considered.
- 3.5 The NPPF directly addresses economic development and acknowledges how planning can proactively drive and support economic development and, in turn, deliver homes, business, industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that England needs. Further, the NPPF emphasises that every effort should be made to objectively identify and then meet business development needs.
- 3.6 The NPPF stresses the Government’s commitment to securing economic growth in order to create jobs and prosperity. Paragraph 17 asserts the planning system should do everything it can to support sustainable economic growth. Additionally, Paragraph 19 explains significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth through the planning system and that planning should operate to encourage development and not act as an impediment to sustainable growth. Paragraph 20 details that local planning authorities should plan proactively to meet the development needs of business and support a “21<sup>st</sup> century economy”. Further to this, Paragraph 21 explains that investment in business should not be over-burdened by the requirements of

planning policy.

- 3.7 To ensure the continued vitality of town centres, Paragraphs 23 to 27 of the NPPF promote and support new development and investment within the settlement boundaries of town centres, recognising that town centres are the heart of communities. Where town centres are in decline, the NPPF directs local planning authorities to plan positively for their future to encourage economic activity.
- 3.8 The NPPF recognises the need for local authorities to promote the vitality and viability of their towns and cities through the promotion of competition and growth management. Specifically, Paragraph 23 of the NPPF provides guidance for local planning authorities in drawing up Local Plans, it indicates that they should:
- a. Recognise town centres as the heart of their communities and pursue policies to support their viability and vitality;
  - b. Define a network and hierarchy of centres that is resilient to anticipated future economic changes;
  - c. 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;
  - d. Promote competitive town centres that provide customer choice and a diverse retail offer and which reflect the individuality of town centres;
  - e. Retain and enhance existing markets and, where appropriate, re-introduce or create new ones, ensuring that markets remain attractive and competitive;
  - f. 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;
  - g. 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 identified needs in other accessible locations that are well connected to the town centre;
  - h. Set policies for the consideration of proposals for main town centre uses which cannot be

accommodated in or adjacent to town centres;

- i. 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; and
  - j. Where town centres are in decline, local planning authorities should plan positively for their future to encourage economic activity.
- 3.9 Furthermore, Paragraph 24 requires local planning authorities to enforce a sequential approach when assessing planning applications for main town centre uses that are not in an existing centre or in accordance with an up to date Local Plan. To do this, local authorities should require applications for main town centre uses to be located in town centres, then in edge of centre locations and only if suitable sites are not available should out-of-centre sites be considered. When reviewing edge of centre and out-of-centre proposals, they should give preference to accessible locations well connected to the town centre.
- 3.10 Paragraph 26 specifies that local planning authorities should require an impact assessment for retail, leisure and office development outside of town centres that are not in accordance with an up to date Local Plan and if the development is over a proportionate, locally set threshold. Where there is no locally defined threshold, the default threshold will be 2,500 sq m. The impact assessment should assess – (1) 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 (2) 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.
- 3.11 In summary, the NPPF endorses a ‘town centre first’ approach to all retail activity (including leisure). It stipulates that where retail and leisure proposals cannot be accommodated within, or, adjacent to the town centre applicants have to demonstrate, through the dual application of the impact test and the sequential test, that the development will not affect negatively upon the vitality and viability of town centres.

### **Ensuring the Vitality of Town Centres Planning Practice Guidance**

- 3.12 National Planning Practice Guidance (referred to as the NPPG) entitled ‘Ensuring the Vitality of Town Centres’ was published in March 2014 and replaced the previous Planning for Town Centres Practice Guidance. The online tool provides a succinct synopsis of how retail and main town centre planning policy should be applied in practice.
- 3.13 In short, the specific objectives of the NPPG remain similar to those of its predecessor. For example, it directs local planning authorities to plan positively and support town centres. In addition to setting out objectives that aim to generate local employment, promote competition within and

between town centres, and create attractive and diverse places for users.

- 3.14 In addition to the enforcement of a 'town centre first' approach in order to meet local needs, the NPPG sanctions that this should be delivered through a positive vision or strategy that is communicated through the development plan. In summary, local authorities should use development plan documents, policies and supporting guidance documents to address the following matters:
- a. The appropriate and realistic role, function and hierarchy of town centres in the area for the duration of the plan period. This should involve an audit of the vitality and viability of existing town centres and their ability to accommodate new development;
  - b. Encapsulate a clear vision for the future of each town centre and the most appropriate mix of uses;
  - c. Ability for the town centre to accommodate the scale of assessed need through new development;
  - d. Timeframe for the delivery of new retail floorspace;
  - e. Any other complementary approaches which are necessary or appropriate to enhance the town centre to deliver the vision for its future; and
  - f. How the car parking provision can be enhanced in order to encourage town centre vitality.
- 3.15 Of specific relevance to this Retail and Leisure Study, Paragraph 005 of the NPPG 'Ensuring the Vitality of Town Centres' categorises a series of key indicators to be used when assessing the health of a centre over time. It is these indicators that we have based our health checks of the vitality and viability of Tunbridge Wells centres on, as set out in detail in Section 5 of this Report.
- 3.16 Paragraph 005 also explains that it is often the case that successful town centre regeneration initiatives involve a range of improvements such as renewed public realm, parking, and accessibility and other partnership mechanisms, rather than being purely led by retail schemes or focused on substantial new development.

### **The Portas Review - An Independent Review into the Future of Our High Streets**

- 3.17 The Portas Review was published in December 2011 and since that time has been referenced as a key guiding document for town centre planning policy and regeneration efforts. The Review was undertaken by Mary Portas, as an independent adviser and retail expert, and assessed, on behalf of central Government, the state of Britain's high streets and town centres.

- 3.18 The review provided a critical assessment of the factors contributing to a third of high streets degenerating or failing. In addition, the Report analysed the reasons why, over the previous decade, out-of-town retail floorspace had increased by 30% while in town floorspace had actually shrunk by 14%. As part of the Review, Portas made 28 recommendations, including actions that government, businesses and other organisations should take in order to bring back life into their high streets and town centres. Portas put out a challenge to re-imagine them as social hubs, not only just for shopping but also for learning, socialising and fun.
- 3.19 In March 2012, the Government issued a formal written response to the Portas Review. In their response, the Government (Rt. Hon Grant Shapps MP, Minister for Housing and Local Government) acknowledged that in retort to the challenges being faced by the UK high street; including shoppers going to out-of-centre retail developments, in addition to online retailing, the high street must provide something new and different for its visitors. As part of this response, the Government acknowledged a number of recommendations, including:
- i. Introduction of Town Teams (defined by Portas to be visionary, strategic and strong operational management teams for high streets) – Town Teams should not restrict their imagination;
  - ii. Funding for pilot areas (known as Portas Pilots) which are judged to have the best concepts for town centre and high street improvements;
  - iii. A £10 million High Street Innovation fund allocated to councils in areas blighted by empty voids;
  - iv. Support for a new National Market Day to be held on 23 June; and
  - v. £500,000 investment into the development of new Business Improvement Districts.
- 3.20 It is interesting to look back on this response now, given a number of these recognised initiatives are no longer being actively pursued by the Government.
- 3.21 In summary, the Government's response sought to encourage local planning authorities to adopt inspirational thinking in order to ascertain concepts for town centre enhancement and improvement. The overriding goal local authorities were tasked with is to encourage their residents back into the town centre, in both the daytime and night-time hours. However, given on-going challenges and competing priorities for both the Government and local authorities a number of the schemes are not currently considered feasible.

### **Relaxation of Permitted Development Rights**

- 3.22 Over the past few years, the Government has supported the nation's town centres by adopting

flexible policies that allow the diversification of town centre units.

- 3.23 In May 2013 changes were made to the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 in response to the Portas Review's (see above) recommendation to make it easier to convert surplus space in order to provide for the effective re-use of town centre units. The May 2013 amendments provided for a period of three years during which the change of use of B1 offices to C3 residential uses could take place without the need for formal planning permission. Under this order, applicants are simply required to apply for a prior approval notice from the relevant local planning authority.
- 3.24 The 2013 Order also provides for the temporary change of use (for up to two years) of uses falling within Use Classes A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, B1, D1 and D2 to uses falling within Classes A1, A2, A3 and B1. Prior approval for this type of use would be given when it relates to no more than 150 sq m of floorspace and the temporary provision has not formerly been relied upon.
- 3.25 In April 2014, permitted development rights were further extended to provide for certain additional changes of use without the need for formal planning permission. The changes introduced two new classifications of permitted development for commercial premises, as follows:
- a) The first provides for the change of use of premises and land from Use Class A1 to use as a 'deposit taker' (effectively comprising banks, building societies, credit unions and friendly societies).
  - b) The second provides for the change of use from Use Classes A1 and A2 to C3 residential.
- 3.26 Again, there are certain restrictions as to where and when the rights can be exercised. Most notably, the change of use must relate to no more than 150 sq m of floorspace.
- 3.27 Further extensions to the permitted development rights came into force two years later on 4 April 2016. The key changes introduced by this 2016 Order include:
- a) Removal of the 31 May 2016 deadline altogether (being the end of the previously identified three-year period), thereby making the permitted rights permanent; and
  - b) Allowing laundrettes to change to residential uses.
- 3.28 The intended consequence of such measures is to secure the redevelopment and reuse of premises and diminish long-term vacancies. To this end, the rights are expected to support town centres to be comprised of well-utilised units

## **Tunbridge Wells Borough Council Development Plan**

- 3.29 The current Tunbridge Wells Borough Development Plan is made up of the following relevant

documents:

- Tunbridge Wells Local Plan (2006);
- Tunbridge Wells Core Strategy (2010); and
- Tunbridge Wells Site Allocations Local Plan (2016).

- 3.30 Paragraph 215 of the NPPF explains that due weight can be given to relevant policies in the above plans, according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF. The closer the policies in the plans are to the policies in this National Framework, the greater the weight that may be given.
- 3.31 Tunbridge Wells Borough Council has commenced work on preparing their new Local Plan that will guide future development up to 2033 and is currently working on the evidence base to inform the plan. The new Local Plan will eventually replace and supersede the 'saved' Local Plan (2006), Core Strategy (2010) and Site Allocations Local Plan (2016) to form the Development Plan Document for Tunbridge Wells Borough.
- 3.32 Relevant Policies within Tunbridge Wells' existing Local Development Plan are summarised below.

#### **Tunbridge Wells Local Plan (2006)**

- 3.33 The Local Plan outlines that Royal Tunbridge Wells is the main town centre and the largest shopping area within the Borough, referring to the town as a 'Sub-Regional Centre.'
- 3.34 The Local Plan identifies Southborough as a 'Small Urban Centre' and Paddock Wood, Cranbrook and Hawkhurst are considered to be 'Small Rural Towns'. All centres have a 'primary shopping area' as allocated by the Local Plan proposals map.
- 3.35 The Local Plan recognises that Royal Tunbridge Wells primary shopping area has a diverse character and function and subdivides it into ten character areas including:
- Character Area 1: Royal Victoria Place, Market Square and Ely Court
  - Character Area 2: Calverley Road (west)
  - Character Area 3: Monson Road and Camden Road
  - Character Area 4: Calverley Road (east)
  - Character Area 5: Grosvenor Road and Goods Station Road
  - Character Area 6: Mount Pleasant Road (north)
  - Character Area 7: Mount Pleasant Road (south) including the Great Hall Arcade
  - Character Area 8: Vale Road/ Grove Hill Road
  - Character Area 9: High Street, Castle Street and Chapel Place
  - Character Area 10: The Panties and Union Square.

3.36 The following relevant policies are outlined in Chapter 5 of the Local Plan:

- Policy CR1 outlines that proposals for large-scale A1 (retail) uses will be permitted on sites within the defined primary shopping area, outlining a criteria to which large scale development for A2, A3, A4, A5, B1, C1, D1 or D2 use must satisfy. This includes impact on the vitality and viability of the defined shopping areas.
- Policy CR2 outlines criteria for proposals outside of the primary shopping areas.
- Policy CR3 outlines criteria for the development of small-scale development within the primary shopping area; including that the proposal would not have a detrimental impact on the vitality and viability of the defined primary shopping areas.
- Policy CR5 outlines criteria for development within Royal Tunbridge Wells primary shopping area. The policy outlines appropriate percentages of non-A1 use in each Character Area.
- Policy CR7 specifically relates to Southborough primary shopping area and outlines that proposals should not result in non-A1 uses exceeding 40% of the ground floor measured frontages, as defined on the proposals map. The policy outlines that proposals should not result in the excessive concentration of non A-1 uses.
- Policy CR9 specifically relates to Paddock Wood primary shopping area and outlines that proposals should not result in non-A1 uses exceeding 40% of the ground floor measured frontages, as defined on the proposals map. The policy outlines that proposals should not result in the excessive concentration of non A-1 uses.
- Policy CR12 specifically relates to Hawkhurst primary shopping area and outlines that proposals should not result in non-A1 uses exceeding 40% of the ground floor measured frontages, as defined on the proposals map. The policy outlines that proposals should not result in the excessive concentration of non A-1 uses.

#### **Tunbridge Wells Core Strategy (2010)**

- 3.37 The Tunbridge Wells Core Strategy is the overarching plan in the Tunbridge Wells Local Development Framework and sets the capacity for retail development across the Borough to 2026, divided across the settlements.
- 3.38 In relation to retail hierarchy, the Core Strategy outlines Royal Tunbridge Wells as a Primary Regional Centre, Cranbrook, Paddock Wood and Southborough as Town Centres and Hawkhurst as a District Centre.

- 3.39 The Core Strategy outlines Royal Tunbridge Wells as a centre of strategic importance in the South East: a 'regional hub' of economic, social and cultural activity. It goes on to say that retail expansion and the provision of leisure and cultural facilities have helped to maintain the competitiveness of the high street. In addition, greater ease of movement between the different parts of the town, and better connectivity with the pantiles to the south, has supported independent retailers, bringing vitality to previously underused areas and variety to visitors and customers. Local entrepreneurs are taking advantage of new, flexible accommodation to open and expand small business, particularly on the North Farm/ Longfield Road Industrial Estate, which offers an alternative range of employment opportunities to those found in the town centre.
- 3.40 The Core Strategy identifies Southborough as a 'support town centre' to the regional hub of Royal Tunbridge Wells. While smaller independent traders continue to thrive, contributing to a strong sense of place, a proposed mixed use 'Community Hub' development in the centre has the potential to enhance the services and facilities available to residents.
- 3.41 Paddock Wood, Cranbrook and Hawkhurst are identified as 'local hubs' for a wider rural hinterland, with vibrant centres that provide a range of high quality local services.
- 3.42 Core Policy 8 'Retail, leisure and Community Facilities provision' outlines that new retail and leisure provision should be provided within the borough in accordance with the following approach:

#### **Retail**

- New retail and leisure and other town centre uses will be directed to the defined centres in the Borough, in line with the retail hierarchy.
  - Appropriate proposals for new retail development will deliver in the order of 26,500 sq m net of comparison floorspace across the Borough up until 2017. This was identified by the Tunbridge Wells Borough Retail Study 2006 (with the caveat that an updated capacity may be identified through a future Retail Study). Development is to be directed towards the defined town and district centres, where it should contribute to their vitality and viability.
  - Proposals for main town centre uses on sites not within the defined centres will not be permitted unless it has been demonstrated that (a) there are no sequentially preferable sites and (b) there are no adverse impacts to the defined centres.
- 3.43 In relation to retail floorspace allocated specifically to the centres, the core strategy outlines the following:
- Core Policy 9: 'Development in Royal Tunbridge Wells': In the order of 23,500 sq m (net) comparison retail floorspace (to include, but not restricted to, the planned extension of Royal Victoria Place) will be provided in the town centre by 2017, unless a different need is identified

in a future Retail Study.

- Core Policy 10 'Development in Southborough': In the order of 500 sq m (net) additional comparison floorspace will be delivered by 2017, unless a different need is identified in a future Retail Study, in order to increase the vitality and viability of the centre.
- Core Policy 11 'Development in Paddock Wood': In the order of 900 sq m (net) additional comparison floorspace will be delivered by 2017, unless a different need is identified in a future Retail Study, in order to increase the vitality and viability of the centre.
- Core Policy 12 'Development in Cranbrook': In the order of 1,150 sq m (net) additional comparison floorspace will be delivered by 2017, unless a different need is identified in a future Retail Study, in order to increase the vitality and viability of the centre.
- Core Policy 13 'Development in Hawkhurst': In the order of 450 sq m (net) additional comparison floorspace will be delivered by 2017, unless a different need is identified in a future Retail Study, in order to increase the vitality and viability of the centre.

#### **Tunbridge Wells Site Allocations Local Plan (2016)**

- 3.44 The Site Allocations Local Plan identifies locations for development within the main settlements of Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough (including the Rural Fringe), Paddock Wood, Cranbrook and Hawkhurst and within the remaining Villages and Rural Areas. Outside these settlements, no site allocations have been made other than bringing forward some existing Local Plan allocations/designations.
- 3.45 The boundaries of the primary shopping areas are defined spatially within the Site Allocations Local Plan through Policy AL/RTW 28 (Tunbridge Wells), Policy AL/SO 5 (Southborough), Policy AL/PW 6 (Paddock Wood), Policy AL/CR 7 (Cranbrook) and Policy AL/HA 7 (Hawkhurst), while policies referring to the uses within these areas are set out in the Local Plan.
- 3.46 In terms of retail allocations throughout the Borough; the following is outlined:
- Policy AL/RTW2A: 'Civic Complex/ Crescent Road Area of Change' will include retail development incorporating approximately 15,000 sq m (net) additional comparison retail floorspace (A1) which may include a new department store and other units of varying sizes. Retail uses should be provided on the ground floor to ensure retail active frontages. Other appropriate uses that may be delivered as part of the redevelopment include restaurants and cafes, market facilities and hotel and conference facilities.
  - Policy AL/RTW2B: 'Former Cinema Site Area of Change' outlines acceptable uses on the site to include; retail development of approximately 3,500 sq m (net) additional A1 comparison to

include the creation of an active frontage to Mount Pleasant Road; hotel facilities and restaurants and cafes.

- Policy AL/RTW 3: 'Vale Avenue Area of Change' includes the retention of the existing retail convenience floorspace and the potential addition of hotel and conference facilities.
- Policy AL/RTW 4A: 'Eridge Road' is allocated for a mixed-use development and considers hotel and conference uses, leisure and cultural uses and retail use (the re-provision of comparison retail floorspace in the area closest to the pantiles).
- Policy AL/RTW4B: 'Land at Montacute Gardens' identifies leisure and cultural facilities and hotel and conference uses as acceptable as part of a mixed-use development.

3.47 The Site Allocations Local Plan identifies a number of potential sites for development, redevelopment or refurbishment inside the built up area of Royal Tunbridge Wells. Those of relevance to this study include:

- Policy AL/RTW6: 'Former Plant and Tool Hire' will provide for a range of uses including residential and/ or A1 retail and/employment use.
- Policy AL/RTW 19: 'Land at Royal Victoria Place' is allocated for additional 13,000 sq m (net) or comparison retail (A1) floorspace and includes exploring opportunities for infilling and redevelopment of the food hall, Market Square, Ely Court and Calverley Road.
- Policy AL/RTW 23 is allocated for mixed-use development including 200 sq m (net) A1 retail uses.
- Policy AL/RTW 24: 'Auction House and Car Park, Linen Park Road' is allocated for mixed-use development comprising employment, retail, residential, hotel, leisure and health retail uses.
- Policy AL/RTW 25: 'Kenwood House, Upper Grosvenor Road' is allocated for mixed-use development, which shall re provide for the existing quantum of retail and office floorspace including an A1 retail frontage to Grosvenor Road.

3.48 The Site Allocations Local Plan identifies one potential site for development within Southborough as follows:

- Policy AL/SO2: 'Southborough Hub (Area 1)' is allocated for a mixed use development and as well as 50-60 residential units is expected to deliver flexible community floorspace, including space for assembly and leisure uses (Use Class D2) or theatre (Sui Generis use).

3.49 The Site Allocations Local Plan identifies one potential site for development within Paddock Wood

as follows:

- Policy AL/PW1: 'Land off Station Road/ Commercial Road and Commercial Road West Car Park' is allocated for a mixed use development including retail development to meet retail (A1) requirements including at least 400 sq m (net) of comparison retail, restaurants and cafes (A3), drinking establishments and at least the same revision of existing public parking; unless this can be re provided at a suitable alternative location within the Town Centre. Other town centre used including leisure (D2) and health and community (D1) uses are considered acceptable.

3.50 The Site Allocations Local Plan identifies one potential site for development within Cranbrook as follows:

- Policy AL/CR5: 'Post Office Delivery Depot and Land at Stone Street/ High Street/ Crane Street' allocates a mixed-use development to include the delivery of comparison retail (A1) uses at street level along Stone Street.

### **Neighbourhood Plans**

- 3.51 The examination of Hawkhurst Neighbourhood Plan (NP) commenced in late October 2016 and, following receipt of an Interim Report dated 21 November, was suspended pending receipt of Screening Determinations. The examination subsequently recommenced and the Council has now received the examiner's report, which is being considered. The report and recommendations will be reported to Cabinet in summer 2017.
- 3.52 Once adopted the Hawkhurst Neighbourhood Plan will form part of Tunbridge Wells Development Plan Document and as such, any relevant policies will need to be considered in determining any planning applications in the future.
- 3.53 Of note, Paddock Wood are in the early stages of producing a Neighbourhood Plan, which is moving forward alongside the production of the Tunbridge Wells Local Plan. Cranbrook & Sissinghurst are also in the early stages of producing a Neighbourhood Plan and the application for a Neighbourhood Area was approved on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2016.

### **Evidence Base**

- 3.54 This Retail and Leisure Study will supersede the existing evidence base for Tunbridge Wells, which is currently the 'Tunbridge Wells Borough Council Retail & Leisure Study Update'. Peter Brett Associates (PBA) undertook the Study in 2014.
- 3.55 Conclusions from this 2014 study are highlighted in the following section.

## Tunbridge Wells Borough Council Retail & Leisure Study Update 2014 (PBA)

### Quantitative Need

- 3.56 PBA identify a quantitative capacity for new retail floorspace, across each of the Borough's centres during the plan period at 2026, as follows:

Capacity for new retail floorspace at 2026 (sq m net)			
	Convenience Goods Floorspace	Comparison Goods Floorspace	
<b>Royal Tunbridge Wells</b>	1,700	22,600	30,900 <i>(market share uplift scenario)</i>
<b>Paddock Wood</b>	200	400	-
<b>Cranbrook</b>	100	400	-
<b>Hawkhurst</b>	100	100	-
<b>Southborough</b>	0	0	-
<b>Other Centres</b>	100	100	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,300</b>	<b>23,600</b>	<b>30,900</b>

Source: PBA Retail & Leisure Study Update 2014 (Volume 1), Table 11.1

- 3.57 Based on the conclusions within their report, PBA made the following strategic recommendations for additional retail capacity for the Borough over the local plan period to 2026 (which are reflected in the Site Allocations Local Plan):

### Borough Wide Recommendations

- Make provision for the development of between 23,600 sq m (net) and 30,900 sq m (net) comparison goods floorspace over the plan period with new comparison floorspace primarily directed towards Royal Tunbridge Wells.
- Make provision for the development of up to 2,300 sq m (net) convenience goods floorspace. This should be directed towards meeting qualitative gaps in the provision, ideally including enhancing provision in the north west Royal Tunbridge Wells area.
- Make provision for up to 6,200 sq m (net) A3, A5 and A5 floorspace. This should be directed towards Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre.
- Examine the scope to accommodate new hotel floorspace within Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre as a first priority, with potential scope for further provision on the edge of the town, close to the A21.

### Royal Tunbridge Wells Recommendations

- Seek and promote improvements to the retail provision in the town centre, in line with the

identified capacity for between 22,600 sq m (net) and 30,900 sq m (net) comparison goods floorspace.

- Provision of a new cinema could be supported, as well as additional family dining restaurants and fitness facilities.
- Fully utilise the opportunity sites identified within the town centre to support the requirements for new comparison goods, commercial leisure floorspace and hotel uses.
- There is not considered to be qualitative capacity for additional convenience goods floorspace.

## Summary

- 3.58 The NPPF recognises and stresses the importance of promoting the vitality and viability of town centres through a 'town centre first' approach to development and a defined retail hierarchy. Town centres play an essential contributing role in the nation's economy as well as acting as the heart of local communities – where both social and commercial exchanges take place.
- 3.59 As a direct result of the NPPF coming into force, all planning applications for main town centre uses must provide a full assessment of the impact of the proposal on the vitality and viability of protected centres (for applications greater than 2,500 sq m, or a locally set threshold). It is on the basis of this impact assessment that local planning authorities consider the overall impact of the planned development on their existing retail provision as well as pipeline retail developments.
- 3.60 Both the Tunbridge Wells Local Plan (2006) and Core Strategy (2010) were adopted prior to the enactment of the NPPF. Even so, they still comprise a number of planning policies that, by and large, comply with the guidance set out for local planning authorities by the NPPF as they relate to the promotion of town centres. Notably, the adopted Plans set out a hierarchy of the town and district centres as well as identifying primary shopping areas, town centre boundaries and shopping frontages to be protected for retail use. In addition, the plans include policies that seek to promote town centre competitive performance and the recently adopted Site Allocation Local Plan allocates retail development throughout the Borough as well as specifically within the centres.
- 3.61 The emerging Tunbridge Wells Local Plan is currently being progressed. The new Local Plan will replace the existing Local Plan (2006), the Core Strategy (2010) and the Site Allocations Local Plan (2016). The emerging Local Plan will set out a new hierarchy for the centres of Royal Tunbridge Wells, Southborough, Paddock Wood, Hawkhurst and Cranbrook, as well as establishing what capacity might exist for future retail and leisure provision across the Borough. The Local Plan will also include policies that seek to protect the vitality and viability of town centres.

---

## 4.0 Assessment of Key Retail Centres

- 4.1 This section of the Nexus Retail and Leisure Study details our assessment of the vitality and viability of the centres within Tunbridge Wells Borough in order to obtain a clear picture of the health of these centres.
- 4.2 The analysis focuses on the five centres of Royal Tunbridge Wells, Southborough, Paddock Wood, Cranbrook and Hawkhurst. Each of these centres fulfils a vital role in Tunbridge Wells by serving the needs of the immediate local community and often residents from the wider area. These centres also function as focal points of activity, by virtue of the range of services accessible to the local populations, comprising retail, employment, leisure and education facilities.
- 4.3 The extent of our assessments of the centres of Royal Tunbridge Wells, Paddock Wood and Cranbrook have been determined by Experian Goad Plans, in order to provide consistency and allow for comparison against the findings of previous studies. Whereas the boundaries of Southborough and Hawkhurst have been taken from the Council's adopted Local Plan Proposals Maps<sup>89</sup>.
- 4.4 Section 4.0 concludes with an appraisal of pipeline schemes in adjoining authority areas where data has become available. The quantum of future capacity and pipeline schemes in nearby competing centres has the potential to consolidate and enhance the retail offer, augmenting their market share. Nexus worked in collaboration with Tunbridge Wells Borough Council officers to contact neighbouring local authorities, in order to identify prominent pipeline schemes within the neighbouring competing centres.

### Methodology

- 4.5 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) of March 2012 states at Paragraph 23 that local planning authorities should:
- i. Set out policies for the management and growth of town centres over a defined plan period;
  - ii. Recognise town centres as the heart of their communities; and
  - iii. Pursue policies to support their viability and vitality.
- 4.6 Paragraph 23 also recognises that town centres are the heart of communities and local planning authorities should pursue policies to support their viability and vitality, in addition to promoting competitive town centres that provide customer choice with a diverse retail offer that is reflective of the individuality of each town centre.

---

<sup>89</sup> Due to the size of these centres there are no Experian GOAD Plans available.

4.7 While the NPPF does not provide a precise list of criteria to be used to assess the health of a centre, the Government's 'Ensuring the Vitality of Town Centres' National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) of March 2014 offers a helpful set of indicators. The NPPG explains these indicators should be monitored on a regular basis in order to judge the health of a centre and its performance over time.

4.8 Below is a list, and accompanying brief descriptions, of the indicators that have been used by Nexus to complete their assessment of the health of the Tunbridge Wells' centres:

- **Diversity of Uses** - Data on the diversity of uses in each of the Tunbridge Wells Borough's centres was collated during the Retail Surveys completed by Nexus in September/ October 2016. The collected data includes the number, type and quantum of floorspace provided in these locations.
- **Proportion of Vacant Street Level Property** - Vacant properties were also identified during the 2016 Nexus Surveys.

The volume of vacant floorspace within a centre can provide an indication of how well the centre is performing. However, it is important to acknowledge that a degree of vacancy is inevitable and indeed desirable. Some 'churn' is expected in the market as units alter and change, as new businesses come in, and others leave. In this context, vacant units can be found in even the strongest of town centres. Equally, a low vacancy rate does not necessarily mean a centre is performing well; as the quality and performance of the occupied units may be relatively poor.

- **Commercial Yields on Non-Domestic Property** - Whilst this can be an indicator of centre performance over time, data on commercial yields of the centres is not available publicly at this time.
- **Customers' Views and Behaviour** - Information on customers' views is based on the results of the comprehensive NEMS Household Survey (completed in September 2016). These results provide an indication of how a centre is both used and viewed by local residents.
- **Retailer Representation and Intentions to Change Representation** - Information on the current strength of centres and retailer representation have been derived from Javelin Venuescore UK, Shopping Venue Rankings, Experian GOAD Category Reports and other published sources.
- **Commercial Rents** - Zone A rental data can provide information on historic trends, however, data on commercial rent is not available publicly at this time.

- **Pedestrian Flows** - General footfall and pedestrian flows were observed by Nexus during site visits to the Tunbridge Wells centres in September 2016. The centres were visited on different days of the week and at different times of the day. Therefore, Nexus were able to obtain a comprehensive understanding of pedestrian flows through observation at these varying times.
- **Accessibility** - Consideration of access to and around each centre was informed by the Nexus site visits. This was in addition to stakeholder engagement, and a desktop review of data pertaining to access to public transport and parking facilities.

The accessibility of a centre is determined by the ease and convenience of access by a variety of transport means including pedestrians, cyclists and disabled people.

- **Perceptions of Safety and Occurrence of Crime** - General perceptions of safety were gathered by Nexus during the site visits and supplemented by a review of existing data.
- **State of Town Centre Environmental Quality** - Consideration of the quality of the buildings and public realm in each of the centres was informed by Nexus's site visits to each of the centres.

- 4.9 Experian Goad plans, updated by Nexus Planning, are provided for each town centre at **Appendix B**. Goad plans are defined by Experian, and whilst they are broadly in line with Town Centre boundaries shown on Proposals Maps, they are not always identical.

### Stakeholder Engagement

- 4.10 Nexus undertook stakeholder engagement with local representatives to understand the local context, including issues and concerns affecting local residents and businesses. This involved discussions with representatives of Royal Tunbridge Wells Together and the Paddock Wood Business Association.
- 4.11 The meetings covered the vitality and viability of the centres, vacancies, mix of retail, parking, street environment, crime and security and town centre events.

### Sub-Regional Hierarchy

- 4.12 The plan included as Figure 5.1 in Section 5 (and in a larger format at **Appendix A**) illustrates the location of the Study Area relative to the main settlements in the sub-region.
- 4.13 The Core Strategy (2010) defines the settlements of Royal Tunbridge Wells as a 'Primary Regional Centre', Cranbrook, Paddock Wood and Southborough as 'Town Centres' and Hawkhurst as a 'District Centre'.

- 4.14 Figure 4.1 ranks the sub-region's principal centres based on the Javelin Venuescore UK Shopping Venue Rankings 2014/15. The index details from 2010/11 and 2013/14 are also shown as they represent the time during which the previous Retail Studies (discussed in Section 3) were completed.
- 4.15 Javelin Venuescore's index ranks 3,077 retail venues within the UK (including town centres, stand-alone malls, retail warehouse parks and factory outlet centres) based on the strength of their current retail provision. Towns and major shopping centres are graded using a scoring system taking account of the presence of multiple retailers in each location – including anchor stores, fashion operators and non-fashion multiples. It is important to acknowledge that the Venuescore index does not include an assessment of independent operators, or other town centre health indicators, identified in the NPPG i.e. these factors do not affect the score.

**Figure 4.1 / Comparison of Venuescores for Competing Regional Centres**

Centre	Classification	2014-15 Score	2014-15 Rank	2013-14 Rank	2010-11 Rank	Market Position Classification	Market Position Index (Average 100)
Guildford	Major Regional	304	32	33	31	Upper Middle	127
Maidstone	Major Regional	248	51	52	48	Middle	99
<b>Royal Tunbridge Wells</b>	<b>Major Regional</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>52</b>	51	59	<b>Upper Middle</b>	<b>123</b>
Crawley	Regional	203	87	70	65	Middle	96
Canterbury	Regional	208	79	75	82	Upper Middle	116
Hastings	Sub-Regional	133	188	185	187	Middle	98
Ashford	Sub-Regional	128	196	188	177	Middle	93
Tonbridge	Sub-Regional	80	345	320	293	Middle	94
Sevenoaks	Major District	73	388	374	442	Upper Middle	125
<b>Fountains Retail Park, RTW</b>	<b>District Minor District (2014)</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>898</b>	<b>805</b>	-	<b>Middle</b>	<b>105</b>
<b>Great Lodge/Longfield Retail Park, RTW</b>	<b>Minor District</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>1,361</b>	<b>1,204</b>	<b>2,142</b>	<b>Middle</b>	<b>99</b>
<b>Paddock Wood</b>	<b>Local</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>2,010</b>	<b>1,907</b>	<b>1,915</b>	<b>Middle</b>	<b>99</b>
<b>Linden Park Road, RTW</b>	<b>Local</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>2,306</b>	<b>2,216</b>	-	<b>Middle</b>	<b>105</b>
<b>Kingstanding Retail Park, RTW</b>	<b>Local</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2,775</b>	-	<b>2,142</b>	<b>Upper Middle</b>	<b>115</b>

Source: Venuescore, 2010/11, 2013/14, and 2014/15 (Centres in Tunbridge Wells Borough shown in bold)

- 4.16 As illustrated in Figure 4.1, Royal Tunbridge Wells is the highest scoring of any centre in the Borough and is classified as a Major Regional centre by Venuescore. The centre is ranked 52<sup>nd</sup> of all the centres surveyed and has remained relatively stable since 2011, rising just 7 places over this period, while Paddock Wood climbed 95 places from 2011 to 2015. None of the other centres

---

in the Borough are included within the index, which is limited to the top 3,077 centres in the UK.

- 4.17 The large major regional centre of Guildford (ranked 32<sup>nd</sup>) is located approximately 30 miles west of Tunbridge Wells Borough boundary and Maidstone (51<sup>st</sup>) is approximately 7 miles north east of the border.
- 4.18 It is also worth noting that Royal Tunbridge Wells is ranked (in some cases) significantly higher than the large regional centres of Crawley, Canterbury, Hastings, Tonbridge and Sevenoaks, though this is likely a quirk of the way in which Javelin calculates the Venuescore rankings on the basis of national multiple retailers and, as such, should be treated with caution. Royal Tunbridge Wells has a greater proportion of national multiples than the other centres. Shopping patterns in the Study Area will, nonetheless, be influenced to some degree by the strength, diversity, attractiveness and accessibility of the retail offer at these regional centres.
- 4.19 We now go on to consider the health of each of the Borough's five centres of Royal Tunbridge Wells, Southborough, Paddock Wood, Cranbrook and Hawkhurst in turn, utilising the criteria set out in the NPPF.

## Royal Tunbridge Wells

### Description

Royal Tunbridge Wells is the primary retail and leisure destination in the Borough of Tunbridge Wells, providing a range of services and amenities not widely available in the other smaller settlements in the Borough and surrounding areas, attracting shoppers from across the region.

The centre is broadly linear in nature, anchored by the Royal Victoria Place Shopping Centre and the pedestrianised Calverley Road to the north and the Pantiles parade of retailers and facilities to the south, with a number of town centre facilities including Council offices and a train station located along the central retail parade of Mount Pleasant Road.

### Current Status

Primary Regional Centre (Core Strategy, 2010) / Major Regional Centre (Javelin Venuescore, 2015)

### Photos



Figure 4.2: Fiveways entrance to Royal Victoria Place



Figure 4.3: Royal Victoria Place Shopping Centre



Figure 4.4: Millennium Clock at Fiveways Plaza



Figure 4.5: Calverley Road



Figure 4.6: Camden Road, views north



Figure 4.7: Camden Road, views north



Figure 4.6: Opera House, Mount Pleasant Road



Figure 4.7: Monson Road



Figure 4.8: Tunbridge Wells Borough Town Hall



Figure 4.9: Hoopers Department Store



Figure 4.10: Chapels Place



Figure 4.11: The Pantiles

Figure 4.12 | Diversity of uses

Royal Tunbridge Wells	Units 2014* (%)	Units 2016 (no.)	Units 2016 (%)	Floorspace 2016 (%)	Units UK Avg. (%)	Floorspace UK Avg. (%)
Convenience	6	39	5.9	5.0	8.6	15.2
Comparison	41	316	47.9	57.5	32.0	35.9
Retail Services	-	64	9.7	5.2	13.9	6.7
Leisure Services	-	78	11.8	9.1	23.3	24.4
Financial and Professional Services	-	48	7.3	6.3	10.6	8.0
Vacant	12	109	16.5	16.5	11.2	9.0
Miscellaneous	-	6	0.9	0.4	0.4	0.1
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>73</b>	-	-	-	-

Source: Experian Goad Data (2016) and PBA (2014)

\* PBA data does not specify the proportion of Service and Miscellaneous units and is provided as whole numbers

### Overall Composition

Royal Tunbridge Wells has a Venuescore ranking of 52 (out of a possible 3,077) in 2014-15, which is considered to be a high ranking region when compared against other shopping destinations across the region.

The only other regional centres that compete with Royal Tunbridge Wells (in terms of the proportion of national multiple retailers) within the southeast area are Guildford and Maidstone. Notably, in terms of market position classification, both Tunbridge Wells and Guildford's retail offer is considered to be 'Upper Middle', whilst Maidstone's offer is classified as 'Middle', suggesting that Tunbridge Wells' retail offer is more closely matched by Guildford as a competing regional centre.

In terms of out-of-centre provision, a number of Retail Parks are located along Longfield Road alongside the North Farm Industrial Estate providing both convenience and comparison goods:

- **Great Lodge Retail Park** | Currys & PC World, B&Q, Toys R Us and DFS.
- **Longfield Road Retail Park** | Asda, Magnet and Hobbycraft.
- **Fountains Retail Park** | Marks & Spencer Food & Home, Dreams, Haldfords, Pets at Home, HomeSense, Staples, Costa, Subway, Greggs, KFC and McDonalds.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Tunbridge Wells Shopping Park</b>   Next, New Look, TK Maxx and Argos.</li> <li>• <b>Kingstanding Business Park</b>   Booker Cash &amp; Carry and John Lewis Home.</li> <li>• <b>Knights Park</b>   Odeon, Bowlplex, Nuffield Health and Frankie &amp; Benny's.</li> </ul> <p>A total of 18.1% of all expenditure on convenience goods in Tunbridge Wells Town Centre and the surrounding area is spent at foodstores in the Retail Parks in the Longfield Road/ North Farm area, while 32.8% of spending on comparison goods is to retailers at the Longfield Road/ North Farm Retail Parks.</p>
<p><b>Convenience</b></p>	<p>There were 39 convenience units within the town centre at the time of the Nexus Planning site visits, which equates to 5.9% of all units in the town centre (below the UK average of 8.6%). This is unchanged from the PBA Study, which showed 6% in 2014.</p> <p>The convenience retail units offer a range of shops including butchers, bakers, grocers and frozen foods. There are only two supermarkets within the town centre, being Marks &amp; Spencer and Tesco Metro, an Iceland frozen food specialist, as well as a number of smaller convenience stores including a Sainsbury's local, health food stores, grocers, butchers and bakers.</p> <p>The amount of convenience floorspace in the centre is just 5.0% of the overall floorspace which is less than a third of the UK average of 15.2%. This is indicative of the strength of the competing edge and out-of-centre convenience retail offer.</p> <p>Notably, the Sainsbury's at Linden Park Road has a gross floorspace of 6,897 sq m, which equates to 127.3% of the total quantum of convenience floorspace in the town centre.</p> <p>The Asda and Marks &amp; Spencer Food &amp; Home stores in the Longfield Road/ North Farm Retail Parks cover 5,451 sq m of convenience goods floorspace, which provides as much as the total convenience provision within the town centre.</p>
<p><b>Comparison</b></p>	<p>At present, the proportion of comparison retailer units in the town centre is 47.9%, having risen from 41% since 2014. This is higher than the UK average of 32.0%.</p> <p>However, comparison units actually account for 57.5% of the overall floorspace, which is significantly higher than the UK average of 35.9% and would indicate that comparison retailers typically occupy larger units across the town centre.</p> <p>The comparison offer is made up of a wide variety of high street retailers, product specific stores and department stores (including Fenwicks in the Royal Victoria Place Shopping Centre and Hoopers opposite the train station). Comparison goods retailers within Royal Victoria Place represent a large portion of the comparison offer with 23,740 sq m of floorspace, equating to approximately 38.4% of overall comparison retail floorspace across the town centre.</p> <p>The comparison retail offer is varied and well represented across Royal Tunbridge Wells. In particular, the centre provides a wide range of clothing and</p>

## Services

footwear retailers, attracting 43.3% of spending across the Study Area, with Maidstone the closest competing centre with a market share of 10.9%.

The Pantiles and the High Street feature a range of high quality independent retailers that complement the national multiple retailers to the north of the centre, particularly within the Royal Victoria Place Shopping Centre and along Calverley Road.

Services (retail, leisure, and financial and professional) comprise a total of 28.8% of units (and 20.6% of all floorspace) in Royal Tunbridge Wells. This is significantly lower than the national average for service facilities within town centres (47.8% of units and 39.1% of floorspace). However, as noted in the previous Study, it is considered that this is due to the proportionately higher representation of comparison goods retailers, rather than any significant shortcomings in the services offer of the town.

Leisure services within the town centre include restaurants, cafes, fast food and take away units and represent 11.8% (78) of the units or 9.1% of the overall floorspace. Spatially, a higher proportion of cafes and restaurants are located towards the south of the town centre, particularly within the Pantiles.

Retail service units make up 9.7% (64) of the overall number of units within the Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre and 5.2% of the overall floorspace across the town, including a significant proportion of health and beauty facilities.

Financial and Professional Services account for 7.3% (48) of the units and 6.3% of the floorspace. This includes a wide range of banking options in the town centre, as well as number of estate agents.

## Vacancies

At the time of the Nexus site visits in September/ October 2016, Royal Tunbridge Wells had 109 vacant units. This represents a somewhat significant vacancy rate of 16.5% of all units, which has increased from 12% in 2014 and is higher than the UK average of 11.2% of all units. The same is true of the amount of vacant floorspace (16.5%) when compared to the UK average of 9.0%.

During the Nexus site visit it was identified that over 20% of vacant units were located within Royal Victoria Place Shopping Centre (particularly towards the east of the centre) and the adjoining parade of Ely Court.

Notably, the area currently benefits from planning permission (ref: 15/509551) for a comprehensive redevelopment to provide a revised pedestrian access, as well as new larger and more flexible retail units, restaurants and cafes and a multi-screen cinema. As such, the vacancies are likely due to expiring leases and retailers waiting for the redevelopment to go ahead, rather than any specific indicator of the health of the centre.

It is particularly relevant to note that this Study represents a 'snapshot' of the current health of the Borough's centres at the time of the site visits and household survey. Given the context of the ongoing redevelopment of the Royal Victoria Place Shopping Centre, we do not consider the current vacancy rate represents a cause for concern. Nonetheless, we would recommend that the Council continue to monitor the vacancy rate of the centre to establish the success of the proposed development and the impact on the proportion of vacant units.

## Pedestrian

During the Nexus site visits there was a high level of footfall throughout the

## Flows

town, as would be expected for a centre of this size.

Nexus and officers of the Council undertook a number of footfall counts over a half an hour period (multiplied by 12 to provide estimates for a six hour period) in order to compare the current popularity of the centre with previous pedestrian footfall counts undertaken by PMRS on behalf of the Council in 2012 and previous years.

The exercise, summarised below, indicated that the number of shoppers visiting the centre has grown over the past four years and that footfall is greater towards the north of the centre, particularly along the pedestrianised Calverley Road.

Count Points	2012	2016
<b>6 (Calverley Road)</b>	11,070	11,880
<b>15 (Camden Road)</b>	1,020	1,152
<b>21 (Mount Pleasant Road)</b>	3,030	3,552
<b>22 (Mount Pleasant Road)</b>	2,010	2,352

It is important to note that these counts are not comprehensive but just a snapshot taken on a particular day and given the limited data (which does not account for differences in seasons, weather, local events etc.) this information is purely indicative of the popularity of Royal Tunbridge Wells and particular locations within the town centre. Maps detailing the locations of the pedestrian count points are provided at **Appendix E**.

## Accessibility

Royal Tunbridge Wells' Train Station is located in the centre of the town, along Mount Pleasant Road and offers direct services to London and Hastings, via Sevenoaks and Tonbridge. The station is served by Southeastern Trains.

There are 12 car parks located in the centre, all of which operate as paid facilities:

Short Stay shopper car parks:

- Great Hall (199 spaces)
- Linden Park Road (54 spaces)
- Meadow Road (440 spaces)
- Royal Victoria Place - Levels 1-8 (1,244 spaces)
- Torrington (243 spaces)

Long Stay commuter car parks:

- Beech Street (38 spaces)
- Camden Road (65 spaces)
- Crescent Road (1,085 spaces)
- Little Mount Sion (18 spaces)
- Mount Pleasant Avenue (80 spaces)
- Royal Victoria Place - Levels 8a and above
- Town Hall Yard (100 spaces)
- Union House (114 spaces)

Opportunities for parking appeared to be plentiful within the town, making the centre popular by car. The NEMS Household Survey indicates that the majority

	<p>of patrons travel to Royal Tunbridge Wells by car as the driver or passenger (83.1%), walk (7.3%) or by bus (6.7%).</p> <p>However, during Nexus site visits to the centre, frequent congestion was noted to the north of the town originating from the high levels of traffic and popularity of the Longfield Road/ North Farm Retail Parks. Local representatives echoed this observation during the stakeholder consultations, as referenced below.</p>
<p><b>Perception of Safety</b></p>	<p>The perception of crime across Royal Tunbridge Wells was low when Nexus carried out their site visits.</p> <p>The centre was busy, with high levels of pedestrian footfall (and associated passive surveillance) along most streets within the centre. There appeared to be a reasonable provision of street lighting along the centres' pedestrianised routes.</p>
<p><b>Environmental Quality</b></p>	<p>The urban environment across the whole of the town centre is generally of a high quality, with a degree of variation in each of the distinct areas of the centre.</p> <p>4.6% of respondents that visit Royal Tunbridge Wells most frequently identified the environmental quality of the town as their primary reason for visiting the centre.</p> <p>Royal Victoria Place and the pedestrianised Calverley Road features plenty of street furniture and vegetation, which appeared clean and well maintained offering an attractive shopping environment that links well with the recently completed improvements to the public realm at Fiveways Plaza.</p> <p>However, shop frontages towards the east of the shopping centre and Ely Court appear more run down, as would be expected given the proportion of vacant units and lack of occupiers to maintain the units and the ongoing plans to develop the Royal Victoria Place Shopping Centre</p> <p>Mount Pleasant Road and the High Street benefit from street furniture, high quality trees and wide pavement to break up a well-used roadway and provides a pleasant shopping environment that is clearly demarcated from the vehicular traffic.</p> <p>The Pantiles to the south of the centre provides a pedestrian dominated shopping environment, which emphasises the character and quality of the shop frontages. The historic townscape and communal outdoor area for visitors and local residents significantly enhances the overall aesthetic of the town centre.</p>
<p><b>Customer Views and Behaviours</b></p>	<p>The NEMS household survey results identify that Royal Tunbridge Wells is, as would be expected, the most popular shopping destination for residents of the Study Area, with 76.3% of respondents visiting Royal Tunbridge Wells more frequently than Southborough, Paddock Wood, Cranbrook or Hawkhurst.</p> <p>62.7% of respondents identified that they primarily visited Royal Tunbridge Wells because of the choice and range of shops, while 11.2% stated that it is close to home.</p> <p>Just 13.8% of respondents visit Royal Tunbridge Wells either daily or at least twice a week, while 17.0% visit at least once a week, 13.1% once a fortnight and 20.0% once a month. 33.3% of respondents visit the centre between once</p>

## Stakeholder Consultation

every 2 months and once every 6 months.

In terms of measures that would encourage more frequent visits, 14.2% of respondents stated cheaper parking facilities and 5.8% stated less congestion, whilst 9.4% stated increased general choice and range of shops.

A meeting with representatives of the Royal Tunbridge Wells Together Town Centre Partnership was carried out on the 26<sup>th</sup> September. The following thoughts and views were shared in relation to the health of the town centre.

Royal Tunbridge Wells is considered to be a healthy town centre, with a strong mix of independent and national multiple retailers. Whilst there have been a number of high profile vacancies in recent years, including the former Morrisons foodstore (now The Range), the former Cinema site and BHS, a number of significant investments in the town centre are anticipated over the next 5 years.

The centre has a popular night time economy and restaurant offer, with facilities in the Pantiles, to the south of the centre and high end restaurants such as Thackeray's drawing visitors from a wide catchment.

Accessibility was identified as a key weakness of the centre, primarily due to congestion resulting from traffic jams and bottlenecks to the north of the centre on the A264 (Pembury Road) coming in to the town, as well as the A26 through Southborough. This was considered to emphasise the lack of a 'gateway' into the centre.

Parking was also raised as a concern for visitors to Tunbridge Wells. Whilst it was acknowledged that there is good parking availability throughout the centre, it was noted that accessibility to the car parks and wayfinding signage could be improved.

Stakeholders suggested that the natural topography and slope of the centre has historically prevented linked trips between the north and the south of the town centre.

Town centre events have been successful in attracting shoppers to the centre, with notable examples including farmers and Sunday markets, jazz and other music festivals in the Pantiles, annual Christmas markets and grottos in the Royal Victoria Place Shopping Centre and the Christmas Ice Rink in Calverley Grounds.

## Healthcheck Assessment Key Issues

- Strength of the competing out-of-centre Longfield Road/ North Farm Retail Parks
- Traffic congestion when arriving to the town centre from the north by car, due to the popularity of the town centre and out-of-centre retail offer
- The linear nature of the town and the topography between the north and south of the centre reduce shoppers likelihood to link trips between retailers at either end of the centre
- Lack of town centre convenience goods offer following the closure of Morrisons at Vale Road

## Southborough

### Description

Southborough is a small, linear centre located to the north of the Borough, which comprises a number of local retail and leisure facilities that cater for the day-to-day needs of local residents.

The retail provision in the centre is primarily located along the western edge of London Road, with residential and sheltered accommodation, the Town Council Offices, the Royal Victoria Hall and vacant land and buildings along the eastern frontage of London Road.

### Current Status

Town Centre (Core Strategy, 2010) / N/A (Javelin Venuescore)

### Photos



Figure 4.13: Tesco express, London Road



Figure 4.14: View south along London Road



Figure 4.15: Costcutter, London Road



Figure 4.16: London Road Parade, north of Southborough

Figure 4.17 | Diversity of uses

Southborough	Units 2014* (%)	Units 2016 (no.)	Units 2016 (%)	Units UK Avg. (%)
Convenience	9	4	7.5	8.6
Comparison	43	21	39.6	32.0
Retail Services	-	10	18.9	13.9
Leisure Services	-	8	15.1	23.3
Financial and Professional Services	-	3	5.7	10.6
Vacant	2	6	11.3	11.2
Miscellaneous	-	1	1.9	0.4
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>53</b>	-	-

Source: Experian Goad Data (2016) and PBA (2014)

\* PBA data does not specify the proportion of Service and Miscellaneous units and is provided as whole numbers

### Overall Composition

Southborough is one of the smallest centres in the Borough, currently made up of 53 units.

A Tesco express convenience store, located to the north of the main parade, anchors the town centre. The Tesco is outside of the primary shopping area boundary identified on the recently adopted Site Allocations Local Plan Proposals Map. The only other national multiple retailer in Southborough is the Costcutter convenience store to the south of the centre.

To the east of the centre, the current Town Council Offices, Royal Victoria Hall and surrounding vacant land is subject to a planning application for the development of a Community Hub (comprising new Town Council Offices, a replacement theatre, library, cafe and medical centre), as well as a new sports pavilion and associated retail unit. The application (ref: 16/06081/HYBRID) was granted Planning Permission (subject to the completion of a legal agreement) in November 2016.

### Convenience

7.5% of town centre units in Southborough were convenience stores (4 units), having decreased from 9% in 2014 and less than the UK average of 8.6%.

The convenience offer is primarily provided by the Tesco express, which features dedicated car parking and an atm cash machine, this is also supplemented by a local butcher, an off licence and a Costcutter convenience store. This provision is considered suitable for a centre of Southborough's size, catering for day-to-day convenience needs whilst also attracting pass-by trade from traffic travelling along London Road, which runs through the centre of

	Southborough.						
<b>Comparison</b>	<p>There are 21 comparison goods retailers in Southborough Town Centre, which equates to 39.6% of units in the centre. This is higher than the UK average of 32.0%, but less than the 43% recorded in 2014, at the time of the previous Study.</p> <p>Southborough has a strong supply of independent retailers offering a wide variety of comparison goods to the surrounding catchment area; with a limited number of national multiple retailers in the town.</p>						
<b>Services</b>	<p>Services account for 39.7% of units within Southborough, which is significantly lower than the UK average of 47.8%.</p> <p>Of this, leisure services make up 15.1% (8) of the units, the majority of which are cafes, fast food and take away restaurants. This provision is significantly lower than the UK average of 23.3%.</p> <p>Retail services (primarily made up of uses in the health and beauty sector) accounts for 18.9% (10) of all units, higher than the UK average (13.9%) for retail services.</p> <p>The provision of financial service units is particularly low in the town centre, with all 3 units (5.7%) occupied as estate agents. This is almost half of the UK average of 10.6%. Notably, for a centre of this size, there are no banks or building societies in the centre, with 2 having closed since the previous Study. Local residents are now likely to be required to travel to nearby Royal Tunbridge Wells for such facilities.</p>						
<b>Vacancies</b>	<p>The number of vacant units in the centre has significantly increased from 2% in 2014, at the time of the previous Study, to 11.3% (6 units) at 2016.</p> <p>However, a number of these units are located to the east of London Road at the site of the proposed Community Hub development, and as such is not considered to be a cause for concern, particularly given that the current provision is broadly in line with the UK average (11.3%).</p>						
<b>Pedestrian Flows</b>	<p>During the Nexus site visits there was observed to be a strong pattern of pedestrian traffic from the main parade of shops along the western edge of London Road to the Tesco express to the north of the centre.</p> <p>Nexus undertook a footfall count in the centre over a half an hour period and multiplied by 12 to provide an estimate for a six hour period, in order to compare the current popularity of the centre with previous pedestrian footfall counts taken by the Council in 2011.</p> <p>The exercise, summarised below, indicates that the number of shoppers visiting the centre has grown since 2011.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="646 1848 1157 1948"> <thead> <tr> <th>Count Points</th> <th>2011</th> <th>2016</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>A (London Road)</td> <td>756</td> <td>948</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>It is important to note that these counts are not comprehensive but just a snapshot taken on a particular day and given the limited data (which does not</p>	Count Points	2011	2016	A (London Road)	756	948
Count Points	2011	2016					
A (London Road)	756	948					

	<p>account for differences in seasons, weather, local events etc.) this information is purely indicative of the popularity of the town centre. Maps detailing the location of the pedestrian count points are provided at <b>Appendix E</b>.</p>
<p><b>Accessibility</b></p>	<p>Southborough Town Centre does not benefit from a dedicated train station, having built up as a linear centre, serving traffic along London Road. However, the centre is located just 1 mile from High Brooms Train Station, which offers connections to Tunbridge Wells, London (Charing Cross) and Hastings.</p> <p>The main parking provision in the centre is provided at the Tesco express to the north of the centre and Yew Tree Public Car Park (81 spaces). Notably, Yew Tree Public Car Park forms part of the site of the access to the new Community Hub, which will increase parking provision to 94 spaces when constructed.</p> <p>The centre also benefits from a good bus service, connecting local residents to the town centre along the A26 and on to other nearby centres including Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge.</p> <p>Notably, the household survey indicates that the majority of shoppers walk to the centre (56.4%), while less visit the centre by car (36.6%) or by bus (2.5%). This emphasises the catchment of the centre, primarily serving local residents within walking distance.</p>
<p><b>Perception of Safety</b></p>	<p>At the time of the Nexus site visit, the perception of safety was reasonably high. The presence of residential dwellings to the east of the centre provides natural passive surveillance, whilst the proposed Community Hub will offer a focal point for the town and for pedestrians and vehicles to congregate.</p>
<p><b>Environmental Quality</b></p>	<p>The urban environment across the whole of the town centre is of a reasonable quality, despite the prominence of London Road dissecting the centre. There have been noticeable recent improvements to local traffic crossing points.</p> <p>The proposed Community Hub development will provide investment to town centre facilities, as well as extensive hard and soft landscaping, sports pitches and facilities and a proposed Market Place and Town Square with the potential to increase the attractiveness of the centre as a whole.</p>
<p><b>Customer Views and Behaviours</b></p>	<p>The household survey undertaken by NEMS sought to identify how frequently respondents visited a particular centre and what their views were in respect of the centres they visit.</p> <p>The NEMS household survey results identified that 23.1% of respondents from Zone 6 (Southborough) visited Southborough Town Centre the most often, with 75.6% visiting Royal Tunbridge Wells most frequently.</p> <p>45.2% of those respondents identified that they visited the centre at least once or twice a week, while 38.6% stated they visited the centre on a daily basis.</p> <p>When asked what measures would encourage respondents to visit the town centre more often, 15.9% stated that a better environment would be valuable, 7.9% stated more food shops, and 4.9% stated improved leisure facilities.</p>
<p><b>Healthcheck Assessment Key</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The primary convenience goods offer at Tesco express is located to the north of the centre, within the Town Centre Boundary but outside of</li> </ul>

---

**Issues**

the primary shopping area boundary

- There are currently no high street bank facilities within the town centre
- The proposed Community Hub will replace vacant and underutilised units with new town centre uses, as well as public realm improvements

## Paddock Wood

### Description

Paddock Wood Town Centre is located to the north west of Tunbridge Wells, providing a range of services and amenities not widely available in the smaller settlements to the east of the Borough. The town centre is predominantly surrounded by residential land uses.

The retail and service provision in the centre is primarily located along Commercial Road, with a large anchor Waitrose foodstore and Paddock Wood Train Station to the north of the centre.

### Current Status

Town Centre (Core Strategy, 2010) / Local Centre (Javelin Venuescore, 2015)

### Photos



Figure 4.18: Waitrose Supermarket



Figure 4.19: Barnsley's Department Store



Figure 4.20: Commercial Road, north western view



Figure 4.21: Commercial Road, south eastern view

Figure 4.22 | Diversity of uses

Paddock Wood	Units 2014* (%)	Units 2016 (no.)	Units 2016 (%)	Floorspace 2016 (%)	Units UK Avg. (%)	Floorspace UK Avg. (%)
Convenience	9	7	11.3	31.7	8.6	15.2
Comparison	33	23	37.1	37.6	32.0	35.9
Retail Services	-	11	17.7	6.4	13.9	6.7
Leisure Services	-	9	14.5	9.3	23.3	24.4
Financial and Professional Services	-	9	14.5	12.0	10.6	8.0
Vacant	0	2	3.2	2.0	11.2	9.0
Miscellaneous	-	1	1.6	1.1	0.4	0.1
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>62</b>	-	-	-	-

Source: Experian Goad Data (2016) and PBA (2014)

\* PBA data does not specify the proportion of Service and Miscellaneous units and is provided as whole numbers

<b>Overall Composition</b>	<p>Paddock Wood Town Centre consists of 62 units, anchored by a large Waitrose to the north with significant car parking. Other national multiples include Tesco express, Greggs, Costa Coffee, British Red Cross, Cancer Research UK, Scope, Barclays, Natwest and Nationwide.</p> <p>The town centre is linear in structure, primarily located along Commercial Road; with a number of residential dwellings interspersed amongst the town centre units towards the south of the centre.</p> <p>The town centre is categorised as a Local Centre by Javelin Venuescore, and has slightly fallen in the rankings at 2014/15 with a rank of 2,010 from a high of 1,907 in 2013/14.</p>
<b>Convenience</b>	<p>There are 7 convenience retail units in Paddock Wood, which make up 11.3% of all units, having grown from 9% in 2014.</p> <p>Whilst the number of convenience units in the centre remains slightly above the UK average, the total amount of convenience floorspace (31.7%) is over double the UK average (15.2%).</p> <p>In addition to the Waitrose and Tesco express foodstores, the convenience provision in the centre is supplemented by an independent butcher, a grocer, Greggs bakery, an off licence and McColl's convenience store, which also includes the centre's post office.</p>

## Comparison

There are 23 comparison retail units in the centre, equating to 37.1% of overall retail units, higher than the UK average of 32.0%. This provision has increased from 33% at the time of the previous Study (2014).

The NEMS Household Survey identified that 6.4% of respondents from Zone 10 (Paddock Wood) identified that their last comparison goods shopping trip was undertaken in Paddock Wood, while 55.0% last shopped at Royal Tunbridge Wells.

The centre's comparison goods offer is provided by a number of independently run stores comprising home supplies, opticians, florists and Barsley's department store, as well as charity shops (the majority of which are national multiple retailers).

## Services

Overall, services equate to almost 60% of the units in Paddock Wood. There are 11 retail services (17.7%), 9 leisure services (14.5%) and 9 finance and professional services (14.5%) across the centre.

Health and beauty facilities account for the vast majority of retail services in the centre. In terms of the number of units, Paddock Wood has a greater proportion of retail services than the UK average of (13.9%); however, this is broadly in line with the UK average (6.7%) in terms of the proportion of total floorspace (6.4%) in Paddock Wood.

The number of leisure services (being fast food and takeaways, cafes and restaurants) in Paddock Wood is lower than the UK average of 23.3% and even less in terms of floorspace (9.3%) when compared to the UK average (24.4%).

Paddock Wood has a high proportion of finance and professional services units, in the form of high street banks and building societies, estate agents and a travel agent. This is higher than the UK average of 10.6% in terms of units, and in terms of floorspace (12.0%) when compared to the UK average (8.0%).

## Vacancies

The number of vacant units in Paddock Wood has increased from the previous Study, where no vacant units were identified, to 3.2% (2 units) at 2016.

As discussed above, vacant units are necessary in a centre in order to allow for a degree of 'churn', providing space for new retailers, for businesses to grow and for investment in the centre. As such, we would not consider the increase in vacant units since 2014 as cause for concern.

The vacant former bank at 11 Commercial Road occupies a prominent position to the north of the centre, adjoining the local library, and as one of the only vacant existing buildings in Paddock Wood is likely to be attractive to retailers seeking to move to the centre.

## Pedestrian Flows

During the Nexus site visits, there was observed to be a relatively steady footfall along the main parade of shops along Commercial Road and across Church Road to Waitrose to the north of the centre.

Nexus undertook a footfall count in the centre over a half an hour period and multiplied by 12, to provide an estimate for a six hour period, in order to compare the current popularity of the centre with previous pedestrian footfall counts taken by the Council in 2011.

Maps detailing the location of the pedestrian count points are provided at **Appendix E**.

Count Points	2011	2016
<b>A (Commercial Road)</b>	4,836	2,784
<b>B (Church Road)</b>	1,872	1,584

The footfall count indicates that the number of pedestrians visiting the centre has fallen since 2011, particularly along Commercial Road, suggesting that retailers in this location provide less of a draw.

However, it is important to note that these counts are not comprehensive and given the limited data (which does not account for differences in seasons, weather, local events etc.) this information is purely indicative of the popularity of the town centre.

### Accessibility

Paddock Wood Train Station is located to the north of the centre, providing direct services to London (Charing Cross), Strood (Kent), Tonbridge and Dover as well as a sizable car park (est. 310 spaces).

There are 3 other car parks located in the town centre all of which are free of charge and without time restrictions. The car parks are:

- Waitrose car park (est. 190 spaces)
- Commercial Road car park, east (est. 45 spaces)
- Commercial Road car park, west (est. 79 spaces)

At the time of the Nexus site visits, there were car parking spaces available within these car parks; however, the location of the car parks were not well signposted which may deter non-local visitors to the centre.

Bus services in the centre provide access to Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells in the west, Cranbrook and Hawkhurst to the south east and East Peckham to the north.

The NEMS Household Survey results identified that residents who generally travelled to Paddock Wood most frequently, primarily travelled by car (82.4%) or walked (14.4%).

### Perception of Safety

When Nexus carried out their site visits the perception of crime was low, with pedestrian activity within the town providing natural surveillance.

### Environmental Quality

Paddock Wood Town Centre is urban in nature and dissected by Commercial Road, which detracts from the otherwise high environmental quality of the centre.

The centre is well provided for in terms of seating and street furniture and is well maintained, but would benefit from a greater provision of trees and soft landscaping.

### Customer Views and Behaviours

The household survey undertaken by NEMS sought to identify how frequently respondents visited a particular centre and what their views were in respect of the centres they visit.

## Stakeholder Consultation

The survey identified that for respondents that visited Paddock Wood most frequently; their main reason for visiting the centre was the choice and range of shops (32.6%), followed by close to home (19.3%), choice of services (9.9%) and strength of supermarket provision (9.7%).

When asked what measures would encourage them to visit the centre more often, 7.7% of respondents identified an increased choice and range of shops, 7.0% identified more parking, 4.2% identified cheaper parking and 4.2% identified improved leisure facilities.

On the 27th September 2016, Nexus met with representatives of the Paddock Wood Business Association, the Paddock Wood Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group and the Paddock Wood Town Council. The following thoughts and views were shared in relation to the health of the town centre.

Retail facilities to the south of Commercial Road are considered to form part of the functional town centre, despite being located outside of the town centre boundary, which has recently been extended southwards with the adoption of the Site Allocations Local Plan in 2016.

The town centre is considered vital and vibrant, with stakeholders noting that vacant units are often occupied quickly after becoming available. However, the centre was found to lack suitable facilities for younger residents, despite the presence of Costa Coffee, with stakeholders identifying insufficient clothing and fashion retailers in the centre. The centre was also considered to lack an evening economy, with the restaurant offer comprising primarily of take aways.

In terms of Paddock Wood's street furniture, stakeholders acknowledged the recent investment in the public toilet facilities, yet suggested that a lack of a clear strategy has resulted in unnecessary clutter, restricting pedestrian and vehicular permeability through the centre.

Stakeholders have observed a pattern of shoppers using the Waitrose store car park and linking trips to retailers along Commercial Road, however, there is less accessibility between the town centre and the Woodland Health Centre to the west.

There are no regular markets in the town centre. However, a weekly fruit and vegetable market is held outside of the centre, which local residents do link with visits to town centre retailers. There was also said to be a notable increase in trade and spending in the centre during the Paddock Wood Half Marathon, Chilled in a Field Festival and Christmas markets

## Healthcheck Assessment Key Issues

- The town centre has a very low vacancy rate
- High proportion of independent comparison retailers, but a lack of clothing stores
- Lack of restaurants and other leisure facilities that would contribute towards an evening economy

# Cranbrook

## Description

Cranbrook is an attractive, traditional market town located within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) to the east of Royal Tunbridge Wells.

Cranbrook is linear in nature, with the retail and service provision in the centre stretching up The Hill, along Stone Street and around a corner on to the High Street where a large Co-operative foodstore serves as an anchor to the centre.

## Current Status

Town Centre (Core Strategy, 2010) / N/A (Javelin Venuescore)

## Photos



Figure 4.23: The Co-operative foodstore



Figure 4.24: The Vestry Hall and St Dunstan's Church



Figure 4.25: High Street, eastern view



Figure 4.26: Stone Street, southern view

Figure 4.27 | Diversity of uses

Cranbrook	Units 2014* (%)	Units 2016 (no.)	Units 2016 (%)	Floorspace 2016 (%)	Units UK Avg. (%)	Floorspace UK Avg. (%)
Convenience	11	10	10.6	25.7	8.6	15.2
Comparison	50	40	42.6	33.5	32.0	35.9
Retail Services	-	12	12.8	5.9	13.9	6.7
Leisure Services	-	9	9.6	8.4	23.3	24.4
Financial and Professional Services	-	12	12.8	13.3	10.6	8.0
Vacant	5	9	9.6	9.0	11.2	9.0
Miscellaneous	-	2	2.1	4.2	0.4	0.1
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>94</b>	-	-	-	-

Source: Experian Goad Data (2016) and PBA (2014)

\* PBA data does not specify the proportion of Service and Miscellaneous units and is provided as whole numbers

### Overall Composition

There are currently 94 retail and service units in Cranbrook, the largest of which is the Co-operative foodstore to the west of the High Street. Car parking facilities are provided at either end of the centre.

In addition to the Co-op, other national multiples in the centre include Lloyds Pharmacy, Oxfam, Natwest, Barclays, Lloyds (bank), Nationwide, Savills and Jackson-Stops.

The Study is intended to provide a snapshot of the current health of the centre. The forthcoming development of a new retail store, Community Centre and 28 residential dwellings (ref: 16/503953/FULL and 16/503954/LBC) at the former Cranbrook Engineering Site and Wilkes Field in the town centre is likely to benefit the vitality and viability of Cranbrook going forward.

### Convenience

There are 10 convenience retail units in Cranbrook (10.6% of all units), which has remained unchanged since the previous Study in 2014.

Whilst the number of convenience units in the centre is just above the UK average, the total amount of convenience floorspace (25.7%) is significantly higher than the UK average (15.2%).

In addition to the Co-op, the convenience provision in the centre comprises 3 independent bakers, 2 independent butchers, a local deli, a health foods store, an off licence and a Welcome convenience store.

**Comparison**

There are 40 comparison units located in Cranbrook. The comparison offer makes up 42.6% of the centre, which is significantly higher than the UK average of 32.0%. The majority of comparison units are independent stores offering a variety of goods, ranging from clothing to gifts to DIY and homeware.

The NEMS Household survey identified that 7.4% of respondents from Zone 15 (Cranbrook and Hawkhurst) last bought comparison goods in Cranbrook, down from 13.6% in 2013 (at the time of the household survey for the previous Study).

Whilst there has been a reduction in Cranbrook's market share of comparison spending since the previous Study, the centre continues to provide a significant independent comparison goods offer, reflecting the specialist nature of retailers in Cranbrook in contrast to larger competing neighbouring centres.

**Services**

Overall, there are 33 service units in Cranbrook, which accounts for 35.2% of all town centre units (less than the UK average of 47.8%).

The provision of retail services in the centre is broadly in line with the UK average (both in terms of units and total floorspace) and is predominantly covered by the health and beauty sector, which occupies 11 of the 12 retail service units in the centre.

The weakest service sector in Cranbrook is the leisure services sector (being cafes, restaurants and take away units), which made up 9.6% of all units, far less than the UK average of 23.3%. This trend is even more pronounced when considering the proportion of total floorspace (8.4%) compared to the UK average (24.4%).

The finance and business sector accounts for 12 units, including 7 real estate agents, 4 banks/ building societies and a travel agent. This provision is just less than the UK average in terms of number of units, but in line with the UK average in terms of the proportion of total floorspace.

**Vacancies**

The number of vacant units in Cranbrook has increased from 5% at the time of the previous Study, to 9.6% (9 units) at 2016, which remains less than the average UK vacancy rate of 11.2%. Nonetheless, in terms of the proportion of the total floorspace that is vacant, the centre is in line with the UK average of 9.0%.

Notably, the application for the development of the vacant units at the former Cranbrook Engineering Site has recently been granted planning permissions (ref: 16/503953/FULL and 16/503954/LBC). Whilst there is an extensive history of planning permission for the development of the site, the recent application would indicate that the developers intend to carry out the approved scheme.

**Pedestrian Flows**

At the time of the Nexus site visits, the majority of footfall within the town centre was observed along the High Street, with a number of residents utilising the on street parking available.

Nexus undertook a footfall count in the centre over a half an hour period and multiplied by 12 to provide an estimate for a six hour period, in order to compare the current popularity of the centre with previous pedestrian footfall counts taken by the Council in 2011.

Maps detailing the location of the pedestrian count points are provided at

**Appendix E.**

Count Points	2012	2016
<b>B (High Street)</b>	3,024	2,448

The footfall count indicates that the number of pedestrians visiting the centre has fallen since 2012. However, it is important to note that these counts are not comprehensive but just a snapshot taken on a particular day and given the limited data (which does not account for differences in seasons, weather, local events etc.) this information is purely indicative of the popularity of the town centre.

**Accessibility**

There is no train station in Cranbrook and there are limited bus services that run to Tenterden, Pembury and Tunbridge Wells.

There are 4 car parks located in the town centre:

- High Street car park (est. 150 spaces)
- Co-operative foodstore car park (est. 50 spaces)
- Jockey Lane car park (44 spaces)
- Tanyard car park (89 spaces)

There are also a number of car parking spaces available along the High Street, which offer 1 hours free parking and were seen to be frequently used over the course of Nexus' site visits.

The NEMS Household Survey results identified that residents who generally travelled to Cranbrook most frequently, primarily travelled by car (85.2%) or walked (12.2%).

**Perception of Safety**

When Nexus carried out their site visits to the centre the perception of safety was high, with pedestrian activity along the High Street providing natural surveillance.

**Environmental Quality**

Cranbrook offers a very pleasant urban environment, with wide pavements, street furniture and outdoor seating located regularly along the High Street and Stone Street further complimenting the attractive architecture of the centre's buildings.

Despite the clear benefits to the accessibility of the centre, on street vehicular parking dominated the urban environment along the High Street.

**Customer Views and Behaviours**

The household survey undertaken by NEMS sought to identify how frequently respondents visited a particular centre and what their views were in respect of the centres they visit.

The survey identified that for respondents that visited Cranbrook most frequently; their main reason for visiting the centre was the choice and range of shops (33.3%), followed by close to work (16.6%), choice of services (15.8%), close to home (13.3%) and environmental quality of the centre (7.2%).

When asked what measures would encourage them to visit the centre more often, 9.9% of respondents identified an increased choice and range of shops, 5.1% identified improved non-food shops within the town centre and 5.0%

**Healthcheck  
Assessment Key  
Issues**

identified improved food shops within the town centre.

- The centre has a strong independent comparison goods retail offer.
- The centre has a low vacancy rate, which will decrease even further should the forthcoming Cranbrook Engineering Site development proceed in place of the prominent existing vacant units.
- The centre's market share of comparison goods spending from local residents – and the indicative number of visitors to the centre from the recent Nexus pedestrian counts – have both fallen since the previous Study.

# Hawkhurst

## Description

The centre of Hawkhurst is located within the High Weald AONB, based around the busy junction of the A268 (Cranbrook Road/ Highgate Hill) and the A229 (High Street/ Rye Road).

A Waitrose supermarket to the east of the centre anchors the town centre, with a BP petrol filling station also providing a draw for passing vehicular traffic. Hawkhurst is also served by a Tesco metro foodstore on Rye Road, located further to the east of the centre and outside of the Town Centre Boundary, as defined within the Site Allocations Local Plan.

## Current Status

District Centre (Core Strategy, 2010) / N/A (Javelin Venuescore)

## Photos



Figure 4.28: New Waitrose Supermarket



Figure 4.29: Kino Cinema



Figure 4.30: The Colonnade



Figure 4.31: The Royal Oak Hotel

Figure 4.23 | Diversity of uses

Hawkhurst	Units 2014* (%)	Units 2016 (no.)	Units 2016 (%)	Units UK Avg. (%)
Convenience	11	4	10.0	8.6
Comparison	46	15	37.5	32.0
Retail Services	-	7	17.5	13.9
Leisure Services	-	7	17.5	23.3
Financial and Professional Services	-	3	7.5	10.6
Vacant	6	4	10.0	11.2
Miscellaneous	-	0	0.0	0.4
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>40</b>	-	-

Source: Experian Goad Data (2016) and PBA (2014)

\* PBA data does not specify the proportion of Service and Miscellaneous units and is provided as whole numbers

### Overall Composition

Of the 5 centres assessed across this Study, Hawkhurst is the smallest, with 40 retail units within the centre's Town Centre Boundary. The centre does not feature in the Venuescore rankings or within Experian's Goad data.

As noted above, an anchor Waitrose supermarket recently opened in place of the former Budgens foodstore on Rye Road. The town centre is primarily made up of independent retailers, with the only national multiples being Lloyds Bank and a BP Petrol Filling Station (with an associated Londis convenience store), as well as the Tesco foodstore, which falls outside of the Town Centre Boundary.

The centre also features the small, single screen digital Kino Cinema in the Victoria Lecture Hall, which draws residents to the centre from a wide catchment area. The facility is popular and well used by local residents, identified as the most frequently visited cinema by residents of Cranbrook and Hawkhurst (Zone 15).

The north of Rye Road features 'The Colonnade', an attractive row of Grade II listed timber and cast iron framed shops that were extensively refurbished in 2010.

### Convenience

There are 4 convenience stores in the centre including the Waitrose, an independent butcher, an independent baker and BP garage. Convenience units make up 10.0% of the overall composition of Hawkhurst, above the UK average of 8.6%.

	<p>The NEMS Household Survey data reflects the limits of the Hawkhurst's convenience offer, with 22.9% of respondents from Zone 15 (Cranbrook and Hawkhurst) identifying that they last undertook their main food and grocery shopping at the Tesco Metro on Rye Road, located outside of the centre.</p> <p>Only 1.4% of respondents identified they last visited other convenience facilities in Hawkhurst; however, it is noted that Zone 15 includes residents of both Cranbrook and Hawkhurst, making it difficult to distinguish between trading patterns across the two centres. Additionally, whilst the Study is intended to provide a snapshot of the trading patterns across the Study Area, it is worth highlighting that the household survey was undertaken in September 2016, following the closure of the former Budgens at Rye Road but before the opening of the new Waitrose.</p>						
<p><b>Comparison</b></p>	<p>There are 15 comparison units located in Hawkhurst. The comparison offer makes up 37.5% of the centre, higher than the UK average of 32.0%, and a decrease from 46% in 2014 at the time of the previous Study. The majority of comparison units are independent stores offering a variety of gifts, homeware and day-to-day household goods.</p> <p>The NEMS Household Survey identified that just 1.4% of respondents from Zone 15 (Cranbrook and Hawkhurst) last visited Hawkhurst for purchasing comparison goods, with 47.0% last having visited Royal Tunbridge Wells.</p>						
<p><b>Services</b></p>	<p>There are 7 retail service units in Hawkhurst, 6 of which are classed within the health and beauty category. Retail services account for 17.5% of all units across the centre, a greater proportion than the UK average of 13.9%.</p> <p>The leisure service sector also accounts for 7 units (17.5%) across Hawkhurst. This is lower than the UK average of 23.3%, and all of the leisure service units in the centre are occupied by take away restaurants.</p> <p>The finance and business sector is particularly weak in Hawkhurst. There is a single Lloyds Bank (which is open from 10am-3pm, Tuesdays and Thursdays), an estate agent and a travel agent. This equates to 7.5% of the units across the centre, less than the UK average of 10.6%. Notably, a Barclays Bank unit in the centre was closed in late 2015 and remains vacant.</p>						
<p><b>Vacancies</b></p>	<p>There are currently 4 vacant units in Hawkhurst, equating to 10.0% of all town centre units. This has increased from 6% since the previous Study in 2014, but remains below the UK average of 11.2%.</p>						
<p><b>Pedestrian Flows</b></p>	<p>At the time of the Nexus site visits, the majority of footfall within the town centre was observed along The Colonnade on Rye Road, with a number of residents utilising the parking facilities in the Waitrose (former Budgens) supermarket.</p> <p>Nexus and Council representatives undertook a footfall count in the centre over a half an hour period and multiplied by 12 to provide an estimate for a six hour period, in order to compare the current popularity of the centre with previous pedestrian footfall counts taken by the Council in 2012.</p> <p>Maps detailing the location of the pedestrian count points are provided at <b>Appendix E</b>.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="710 2000 1139 2033"> <thead> <tr> <th>Count Points</th> <th>2012</th> <th>2016</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Count Points	2012	2016			
Count Points	2012	2016					

	<b>B (The Colonnade)</b>	1,368	864
	<p>The footfall count indicates that the number of pedestrians visiting the centre has fallen significantly since 2012. However, at the time of the pedestrian counts, the Budgens foodstore had closed and the store was in the process of being refurbished prior to opening as a Waitrose. As such, the centre offered less of a draw to local residents over this particular time period.</p> <p>It is also important to note that these counts are not comprehensive but just a snapshot taken on a particular day and, given the limited data (which does not account for differences in seasons, weather, local events etc.), this information is purely indicative of the popularity of the centre.</p>		
<b>Accessibility</b>	<p>There is no train station in Hawkhurst and there are limited bus services that run to Hastings and Tunbridge Wells, with the out-of-centre Tesco having replaced the local bus depot in 2011.</p> <p>There are a total of four car parks which serve the centre: a small car park on North Grove Road; a car park adjacent to the Budgens store on Rye Road (which is intended for visitors to the store only and has a two hour limit); and car parks serving the Tesco Metro store and adjacent primary school further along Rye Road, both of which are unrestricted and within a short walk of the centre.</p> <p>There are 4 car parks located in the town centre:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• North Grove car park (34 spaces)</li> <li>• Fowlers Park, which also serves Hawkhurst Pre-School (37 spaces)</li> <li>• Waitrose, restricted to customers with a 2 hour limit (63 spaces)</li> <li>• Tesco Metro car park (82 spaces)</li> </ul> <p>The NEMS Household Survey results identified that residents who generally travelled to Hawkhurst most frequently, primarily travelled by car (88.6%) or walked (7.3%).</p>		
<b>Perception of Safety</b>	<p>The perception of crime was low during Nexus' site visits, with pedestrian and vehicular activity providing natural surveillance.</p>		
<b>Environmental Quality</b>	<p>Hawkhurst is geographically small, and dissected by busy roads that detract from the overall character of the centre. The urban environment across the centre was of a reasonable quality with The Colonnade in particular – having recently been refurbished – offering a pleasant and locally distinctive shopping environment.</p>		
<b>Customer Views and Behaviours</b>	<p>The NEMS Household Survey identified that the main reasons for visiting Hawkhurst were the choice and range of shops (34.5%), how close it was to home (22.9%) and the choice of services (15.4%).</p> <p>When asked what would encourage respondents to visit Hawkhurst more often the most common responses were improved food shops within the town centre (10.0%), less traffic congestion/ less busy (9.9%) and more parking (4.6%).</p>		
<b>Healthcheck Assessment Key</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hawkhurst is dominated by the crossroads and, as such, suffers from poor pedestrian accessibility. However, the centre will likely benefit</li> </ul>		

---

**Issues**

from trade as a result of passing-by traffic.

- The recent Waitrose store on the site of the former Budgens and the out-of-centre Tesco Metro provide a significant convenience offer, given the size of the centre, whilst the Kino Cinema also serves as a draw to Hawkhurst.

---

## Pipeline Developments

4.20 In accordance with the duty to cooperate, as prescribed in Paragraph 178 of the NPPF, Nexus has worked in collaboration with Officers from Tunbridge Wells Borough Council to contact neighbouring local planning authorities in order to identify future capacity and pipeline schemes within competing centres. The pipeline schemes of interest are those of a nature and scale which could have the effect of consolidating their retail offer and enhancing their market share. In this instance, we consider this to be developments comprising of at least 1,000 sq m of retail or leisure floorspace.

4.21 A number of forthcoming retail and leisure developments have been highlighted in the following local authority jurisdictions.

### **Sevenoaks District Council**

4.22 The recent Sevenoaks District Retail Study 2016 calculated capacity for an additional 10,400 sq m of convenience goods floorspace and 21,700 sq m of comparison goods floorspace across the District by 2035. The Study goes on to recommend that the Council consider the opportunity to deliver this capacity at the Buckhurst Car Park to the east of the High Street and the Royal Mail sorting office in Sevenoaks Town Centre, any locations that become available in Swanley Town Centre over the plan period, and the potential for additional supermarket provision in Edenbridge Rural Service Centre.

4.23 Additionally, in terms of neighbouring commitments, a recent application for a mixed-use town centre redevelopment of the Swanley Square Shopping Centre to provide up to 340 residential units and approximately 4,500 sq m of retail and commercial floorspace was submitted and withdrawn in late 2016 (ref: 16/02226).

### **Maidstone Borough Council**

4.24 The Council is currently in the process of assessing an application for a new 3,901 sq m foodstore at Eclipse Park, Sittingbourne (16/503863/FULL).

4.25 Representatives at Maidstone Borough Council also identified a number of extant planning applications for retail developments in the Borough including a 1,784 sq m Sainsbury's foodstore in Staplehurst (11/1944). A total of 1,991 sq m new retail floorspace is proposed as part of a local centre at Langley Park, comprising a foodstore and 5 additional retail units (15/508496/REM), whilst a combined 7,430 sq m is proposed across the Baltic Wharf Retail Centre development in Maidstone to provide a foodstore and a mix of other town centre uses (13/0297).

4.26 The Council commissioned the Maidstone Retail Capacity Study in 2013 to assess the quantitative need for retail development to 2031. The Study identified capacity for up to 5,800 sq m of new

---

convenience goods floorspace by 2031 and up to 28,200 sq m comparison goods floorspace over the same time period. The emerging Local Plan goes on to allocate Newnham Park, Maidstone East/Royal Mail Sorting Office and King Street Car Park for the delivery of retail floorspace over the plan period, whilst identifying The Mall Shopping Centre in Maidstone as a longer term location for redevelopment, incorporating additional retail floorspace.

- 4.27 In addition, a total of 700 sq m of retail floorspace has been lost under permitted development rights in the last 3 years.

#### **Ashford Borough Council**

- 4.28 The Council is currently assessing an amendment to the design and layout of the previously approved application (14/1402) for an extension of retail and restaurant units to the Ashford Designer Outlet Centre. In terms of leisure provision, the Council approved an application for a new cinema and restaurants in Ashford Town Centre (15/1195), whilst an application for a new Imax cinema and 2 restaurants at Eureka Leisure Park (16/00887) was recommended for approval at Planning Committee in 2016, pending the completion of a Section 106 agreement.
- 4.29 A Retail and Leisure Needs Assessment was completed in 2015, which calculated a baseline capacity for 1,127 sq m of convenience goods floorspace by 2030, and 18,807 sq m comparison goods floorspace over the same time period, though does not specifically recommend suitable sites for allocations.

## 5.0 Population and Expenditure

### Introduction

5.1 We identify below how we assess the current population and available convenience and comparison retail expenditure within the Study Area, as well as the methodology for forecasting the available expenditure across the plan period. This data has informed our quantitative model of available retail capacity in the Study Area, along with the NEMS Market Research household telephone survey, which we go on to discuss in Section 6.

### Methodology

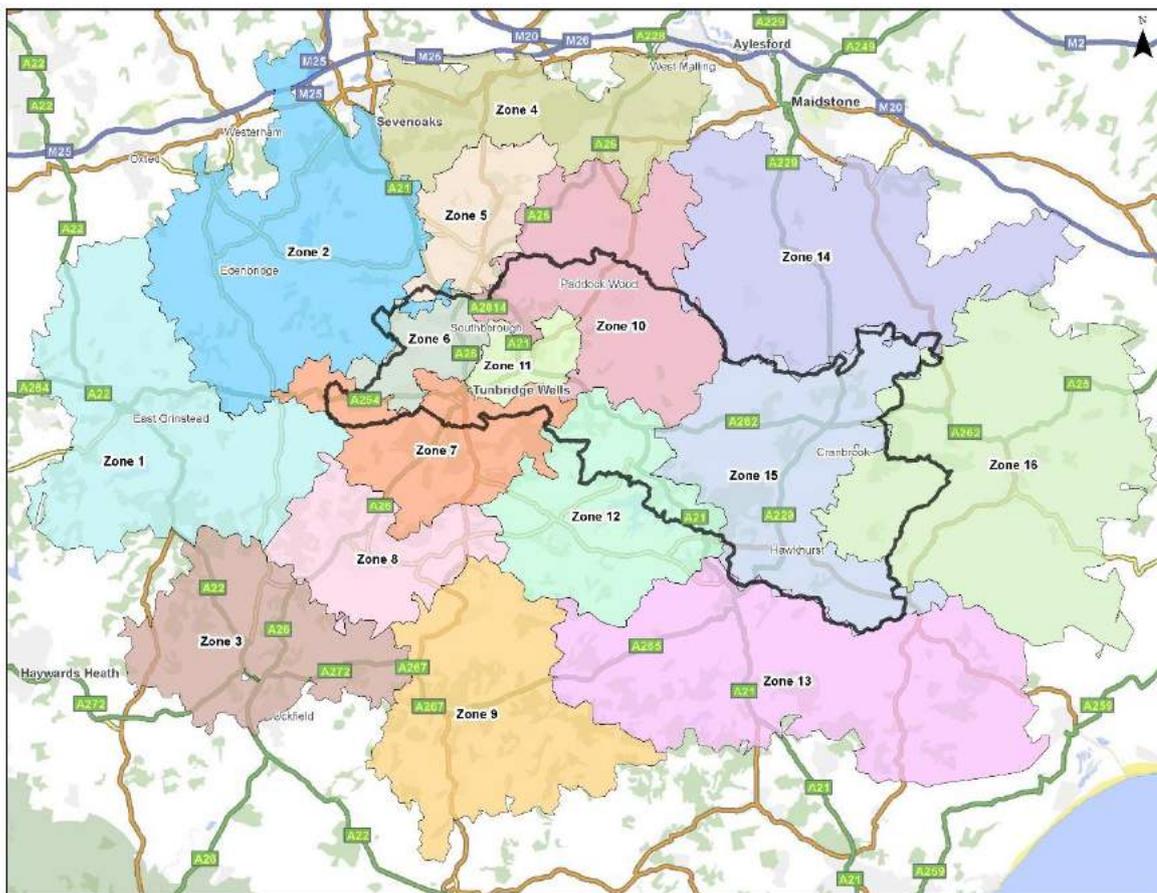
5.2 As we go on to detail through this Study at Paragraph 7.4, our assessment utilises a robust and well established methodology that is widely accepted across the industry:



## Study Area

- 5.3 A key task of this Study is to review previous findings relating to shopping patterns within the local area, most notably the household surveys undertaken by NEMS Market Research in October 2013 to inform the previous Peter Brett Associates (PBA) Tunbridge Wells Retail & Leisure Study Update produced in 2014, identifying any significant variations in shopping patterns over the past three years that may have resulted from recent retail investments in the vicinity of the Study Area or wider changes in nationwide shopping habits.
- 5.4 The Study Area adopted for the previous studies comprised of 16 zones that cover the Tunbridge Wells Borough boundary, as well as surrounding areas within Sevenoaks, Tandridge, Mid Sussex, Lewes, Wealden, Rother, Ashford, Maidstone and Tonbridge & Malling where shoppers may be attracted to Tunbridge Wells' retail and leisure offer. Nexus has adopted the same study area as the previous studies in order to enable before and after comparisons and to allow us to robustly identify any emerging trends in shopping patterns across the Study Area.
- 5.5 Figure 5.1 shows the geographical extent of the Study Area (**Appendix A**), whilst Figure 5.2 shows the definitions of the survey zones by postal sector.

**Figure 5.1 | Survey Area Zones**



Source: Appendix A

**Figure 5.2 | Definitions of Survey Area Zones**

Survey Zone	Postcode Sectors
<b>Zone 1   East Grinstead</b>	RH7 6, RH18 5, RH19 1, RH19 2, RH19 3, RH19 4, TN7 4
<b>Zone 2   Edenbridge</b>	TN8 5, TN8 6, TN8 7, TN11 8, TN13 1, TN14 6
<b>Zone 3   Maresfield</b>	TN22 1, TN22 2, TN22 3, TN22 4
<b>Zone 4   Sevenoaks</b>	ME18 5, ME19 4, ME19 6, TN15 0, TN15 8, TN15 9
<b>Zone 5   Tonbridge</b>	TN9 1, TN9 2, TN10 3, TN10 4, TN11 9
<b>Zone 6   Southborough</b>	TN3 0, TN4 0, TN4 9
<b>Zone 7   Royal Tunbridge Wells (central &amp; south)</b>	TN1 1, TN2 5, TN3 9, TN4 8
<b>Zone 8   Crowborough</b>	TN6 1, TN6 2, TN6 3
<b>Zone 9   Heathfield</b>	TN20 6, TN21 0, TN21 8, TN21 9 101
<b>Zone 10   Paddock Wood</b>	ME18 6, TN11 0, TN12 5, TN12 6, TN12 7, TN12 8
<b>Zone 11   Royal Tunbridge Wells (north)</b>	TN1 2, TN2 3, TN2 4
<b>Zone 12   Wadhurst</b>	TN3 8, TN5 6, TN5 7 100
<b>Zone 13   North Rother</b>	TN19 7, TN31 6, TN32 5
<b>Zone 14   South of Maidstone</b>	ME15 0, ME17 3, ME17 4, TN12 0, TN12 9, TN27 9
<b>Zone 15   Cranbrook &amp; Hawkhurst</b>	TN17 1, TN17 2, TN17 3, TN18 4, TN18 5
<b>Zone 16   Tenterden</b>	TN17 4, TN26 3, TN27 8, TN30 6, TN30 7

## Study Area Population

- 5.6 Nexus has utilised in-house data sourced from the Experian Micromarketer G3 system to calculate the baseline population data (2015 estimates) in the absence of up to date Local Authority housing figures.
- 5.7 Experian's population dataset utilises the 2011 Census release, and projects forwards using growth rates derived from ONS population projections and current age and gender estimates. These are accepted as the industry standard basis for long term retail planning.
- 5.8 We have taken a base date of 2016 (the year of the Study), calculating population and retail expenditure forward to 2021, 2026, 2033 (being the end of the plan period) and 2035. This is in accordance with NPPF guidance and the emerging Tunbridge Wells Local Plan to 2033, as well as the emerging Sevenoaks Local Plan to 2035, for which the Council is undertaking a number of joint

studies. It is therefore useful to provide a comparative study period alongside other relevant studies.

- 5.9 At 2016, the defined Study Area is estimated to contain a resident population of approximately 429,304, rising by 15.3% to 495,000 at 2035 (equating to 65,696 additional residents).

**Figure 5.3 | Population across the Study Area by Zone**

Zone	2016	2021	2026	2033	2035
<b>Zone 1   East Grinstead</b>	50,969	52,816	54,713	57,050	57,670
<b>Zone 2   Edenbridge</b>	27,324	28,501	29,734	31,315	31,724
<b>Zone 3   Maresfield</b>	18,378	18,978	19,694	20,572	20,804
<b>Zone 4   Sevenoaks</b>	33,088	34,940	36,821	39,282	39,862
<b>Zone 5   Tonbridge</b>	42,065	43,966	45,650	47,981	48,560
<b>Zone 6   Southborough</b>	28,664	29,903	31,074	32,674	33,107
<b>Zone 7   Royal Tunbridge Wells (C/S)</b>	27,570	28,821	30,027	31,558	31,906
<b>Zone 8   Crowborough</b>	25,589	26,379	27,219	28,362	28,648
<b>Zone 9   Heathfield</b>	20,290	20,970	21,641	22,449	22,666
<b>Zone 10   Paddock Wood</b>	26,256	27,363	28,426	29,708	30,026
<b>Zone 11   Royal Tunbridge Wells (N)</b>	26,780	28,044	29,239	30,697	31,080
<b>Zone 12   Wadhurst</b>	10,715	11,204	11,782	12,491	12,682
<b>Zone 13   North Rother</b>	16,983	17,921	18,896	20,089	20,366
<b>Zone 14   South of Maidstone</b>	33,569	35,163	36,784	38,825	39,348
<b>Zone 15   Cranbrook &amp; Hawkhurst</b>	17,899	18,617	19,303	20,198	20,424
<b>Zone 16   Tenterden</b>	23,165	24,126	24,928	25,909	26,127
<b>Total</b>	<b>429,304</b>	<b>447,712</b>	<b>465,931</b>	<b>489,160</b>	<b>495,000</b>

Source: Appendix D, Table A1

- = zones where main population centres are within Tunbridge Wells Borough
- = zones that are partly within Tunbridge Wells Borough, but main population centres are located within a neighbouring local authority area

- 5.10 The resident population (and by extension, the resident expenditure available to facilities within Tunbridge Wells) is not distributed evenly across the Zones of the defined Study Area, which is to be expected of any sample of a population. This is because residential housing is typically focussed towards urban areas within the zones and across the Study Area. By way of an example, 11.9% and 9.8% of the residents across the Study Area reside in Zone 1 (East Grinstead) and Zone 5 (Tonbridge) respectively, whilst the zone with the lowest proportion of residents is Zone 12 (Wadhurst) with 2.5%.

## Retail Expenditure

- 5.11 Retail expenditure data (in the form of convenience and comparison goods expenditure per capita) has been sourced from the in-house Experian Micromarketer G3 system.
- 5.12 The data takes account of the socio-economic characteristics of the local population to provide local consumer expenditure calculations. Experian is a robust source of population and expenditure data that is widely used for calculating retail capacity across the industry.

- 5.13 Expenditure data from Experian is provided at a base year of 2015 in 2015 prices (as is every subsequent monetary value) and has been projected forward using per capita growth forecasts derived from the latest Experian Planner Briefing Note 14 (November 2016).

**Figure 5.4 | Retail Expenditure Forecasts**

Year	Convenience growth rates	Comparison growth rates
2014	-1.7%	7.2%
2015	-1.1%	4.6%
2016	0.0%	3.3%
2017	-0.2%	1.4%
2018	-0.9%	1.0%
2019	0.0%	3.0%
2020	0.0%	3.0%
2021	0.0%	3.0%
2022	0.0%	3.0%
2023	0.0%	3.0%
2024	0.1%	3.2%
2025	0.1%	3.2%
2026	0.1%	3.2%
2027	0.1%	3.2%
2028	0.1%	3.2%
2029	0.1%	3.2%
2030	0.1%	3.2%
2031	0.1%	3.2%
2032	0.1%	3.2%
2033	0.1%	3.2%
2034	0.1%	3.2%
2035	0.1%	3.2%

Source: Table 1a, Experian Retail Planner Briefing Note 14, November 2016

- 5.14 As identified in Figure 5.4, Experian forecasts suggest that convenience goods expenditure has fallen in 2014 and (to a lesser extent) 2015, as a result of a trend towards more price conscious shopping patterns and the growth of high street discounters such as Lidl and Aldi, as discussed in further detail in Section 2. No change, followed by marginal growth, is now anticipated in the convenience goods sector with a consistent 0.1% growth per annum forecast from 2024 to 2035.
- 5.15 Comparison expenditure is shown to have risen by 7.2% and 4.6% in 2014 and 2015 respectively, before levelling off between 2019 and 2023. Experian forecasts a steady growth of 3.2% per annum over the period 2024-2035 as comparison retailers incorporate newer technologies, innovations and formats (including 'click and collect') in order to respond to the increasing competition from internet shopping.
- 5.16 Experian note that long term forecasts should be treated with caution and subject to regular reviews, given the wide range of factors that can impact on the broader national economy, such as the fallout from the EU referendum vote, changes in migration and associated spending patterns, changes in import and export costs and town centre investment.

## Non-Store Retailing or Special Forms of Trading

- 5.17 Special forms of trading (SFT) are defined by Experian as sales via the internet, mail order, stalls and markets, vending machines, door-to-door and telephone sales, including online sales by supermarkets, department stores and catalogue companies and are discussed in detail in 'Growth in E-Tailing (or E-Commerce)' in Section 2.
- 5.18 Experian Retail Planner Briefing Note 14 (November 2016) provides estimated forecasts of internet and other SFT, which allows for us to 'strip out' any expenditure that survey respondents suggest is made by SFT and instead utilise Experian's forecasts. This ensures that the proportion of SFT accounted for in our modelling increases in line with Experian forecasts as opposed to remaining constant at current levels.
- 5.19 Many stores offer online sales, but source goods from regular stores' stock as is often the case for foodstores where employees will carry out online orders from stores' shelves each morning before they open to the general public. These orders are then delivered by dedicated vans at each store and as such the online expenditure is attributed to tangible stores.
- 5.20 Experian provides forecast figures, cited at Figure 5.5, which forecasts the proportion of online sales derived from the shelves of physical stores, so as to ensure that this expenditure is counted as 'available' spend within the Study Area.

**Figure 5.5 | 'Adjusted' Special Forms of Trading Market Share Forecasts**

Year	Convenience SFT growth rates	Comparison SFT growth rates
2016	3.0%	13.2%
2021	3.9%	15.6%
2026	4.6%	16.1%
2033	5.1%	16.4 %
2035	5.3%	16.5%

Source: Appendix D, Experian Retail Planner Briefing Note 14, November 2016

## Convenience Goods Expenditure

- 5.21 Projecting forward available expenditure per capita and population growth for each survey zone in 2016, 2021, 2026, 2033 and 2035, we are able to estimate the total available convenience and comparison goods expenditure.

**Figure 5.6 | Total Available Convenience Goods Expenditure across the Study Area**

2016	2021	2026	2033	2035	Growth 2016-2035
£994.8 m	£1,016.5 m	£1,053.3 m	£1,107.7 m	£1,120.8 m	<b>£126.0 m</b>

Source: Table 2a, Appendix D

- 5.22 As identified in Figure 5.6, in 2016 it is estimated that the resident population of the Study Area spent £994.8m on convenience goods, which is expected to increase by £126.0m (12.7%) to £1,120.8m by 2035.
- 5.23 For the purpose of the Study this total available convenience expenditure is split across two sub-categories, with a Study Area average of 79.6% of spending attributed to 'main food' shopping trips and 20.4% attributed to 'top-up' shopping trips (as derived from the NEMS Household Survey on a zone by zone basis).

### Comparison Goods Expenditure

- 5.24 Experian provides comparison goods expenditure divided into eight sub-categories to allow for more detailed investigations of available expenditure. Bulky goods categories include 'DIY', 'Electrical' and 'Furniture', while non-bulky goods are made up of 'Books, CDs and DVDs', 'Chemist Goods', 'Clothing & Footwear', 'Small Household Goods' and 'Toys and Recreational Goods'.

**Figure 5.7 | Total Available Comparison Goods Expenditure across the Study Area**

2016	2021	2026	2033	2035	Growth 2016-2035
£1,484.6 m	£1,684.6 m	£2,032.2 m	£2,650.4 m	£2,853.0 m	<b>£1,368.4 m</b>

Source: Table 8, Appendix D

- 5.25 Applying the increases in population and comparison goods expenditure per capita, Figure 5.7 above estimates that the resident population of the Study Area generated £1,484.6m of comparison goods expenditure in 2016, rising to £2,853.0m in 2035 (an increase of £1,368.4m or 92.2%). Of this, bulky goods are shown to make up 29% of comparison goods spending, whilst non-bulky goods make up the remaining 71%.

### Summary

- 5.26 The Study Area has a resident population of 429,304 at 2016, rising to 495,000 by 2035. It is estimated that, at 2016, the population generates £994.8m (convenience goods) and 1,484.6m (comparison goods) of retail expenditure, which is expected to increase to £1,120.8m and £2,853.0m (respectively) at 2035.
- 5.27 The base data in this section is then utilised, in conjunction with our analysis of the market shares of retailers across the Study Area in Section 6 below, to inform our subsequent analysis of retail expenditure capacity in Section 7.

---

## 6.0 Original Market Research

### Introduction

- 6.1 In carrying out this Study, we have gathered empirical evidence through undertaking a household telephone survey of 1,600 respondents in September 2016 in order to provide up-to-date information on local shopping patterns across the Survey Area, including the trade draws of particular town centres, leisure destinations and markets.
- 6.2 Nexus has partnered with specialist consultancy NEMS Market Research Ltd in order to identify shopping patterns, preferences and trends through a comprehensive household telephone survey of residents across the Study Area. This data provides the underlying structure of our quantitative retail capacity modelling, which is used to calculate the capacity for new retail floorspace across the Study Area over the plan period.
- 6.3 It is acknowledged that there are potential limitations with such datasets, which are restricted by the number of surveys that can be carried out across the Study Area, as well as the length of the household questionnaire itself. The results of the survey were then weighted according to the population profile in each zone, as set out in Section 1.4 at **Appendix D**. As such, the results are understood to provide a broad, representative indication of the market shares of retail and leisure destinations across the Study Area.

### Household Telephone Survey

- 6.4 The previous PBS Study utilised a household telephone survey undertaken by NEMS Market Research (October 2013) across a Study Area of sixteen zones.
- 6.5 As discussed in Section 5, we have adopted the previous Study Area in order to compare and assess the changes in local trends in shopper preferences between 2013 and 2016.
- 6.6 The shopping patterns that result from the household survey provide the basis of the calculations of the retail expenditure at each retail destination by extrapolating the total available expenditure provided by Experian MMG3 (as discussed in Section 5, above). The household survey also provides details of linked trips between various destinations, the use of other town centre facilities, the most popular means of travel to each centre and the frequency of visits.
- 6.7 As noted above, a limitation of the household survey is that the results may underestimate trade to smaller centres and retail facilities. In order to counter this, we ask respondents for the destination that they last made a purchase so as to record more infrequent purchases including drive-by and impulse shopping that are more likely to be at smaller centres and stand-alone stores.

- 6.8 The full tabulations of the results of the household telephone survey are provided at **Appendix C**.

### Convenience Shopping Patterns

- 6.9 Convenience spending is categorised by Experian as low-cost, everyday food, beverages and perishable items that consumers are unlikely to be willing to travel far to buy. Convenience shopping trips are divided into two sub-categories, main food shopping and top-up shopping, which is more likely to be sourced locally to resident's homes or place of work.
- 6.10 The PBA Retail and Leisure Study Update 2014 identified that (based on October 2013 household survey data), 27.1% of the convenience goods expenditure generated within the Study Area was spent entirely at facilities located in the Borough of Tunbridge Wells. Our updated household telephone survey indicates that this has marginally fallen to 26.9%, as of September 2016.
- 6.11 Focussing on each town centre individually, at Figure 6.1 below we extract the convenience goods market shares from the 2014 Study for facilities within the Borough's assessed centres (being Royal Tunbridge Wells, Southborough, Paddock Wood, Cranbrook and Hawkhurst) and the updated convenience goods market shares in order to allow for changes in the market shares over the past three years.

**Figure 6.1 | Convenience Goods - Study Area Market Share (%)**

Destination	2013	2016
<b>Royal Tunbridge Wells</b>	20.0%	18.2%
<b>Southborough</b>	0.2%	0.7%
<b>Paddock Wood</b>	2.6%	3.2%
<b>Cranbrook</b>	1.7%	1.5%
<b>Hawkhurst</b>	1.5%	1.7%
<i>Others in Tunbridge Wells</i>	0.9%	1.6%
<b>Tunbridge Wells</b>	<b>27.1%</b>	<b>26.9%</b>

Source: Appendix D and PBA, Retail and Leisure Study Update 2014 (Appendix D, Table 12)

Figures may not total due to rounding

- 6.12 The centres have generally maintained a constant market share of convenience shopping trips in the three years since the previous household survey. Royal Tunbridge Wells' market share of convenience goods spend from residents of the Study Area has marginally decreased by nearly two percentage points, whilst the market share of Southborough, Paddock Wood and other convenience facilities across the Borough have marginally increased by less than a percentage point. The proportion of convenience spending to Cranbrook and Hawkhurst has remained relatively constant.
- 6.13 The greatest proportion of convenience expenditure in the Borough is spent at the key anchor Sainsbury's at Linden Park Road, Royal Tunbridge Wells (which accounts for 8.6% of convenience goods expenditure from residents of the Study Area). Tesco at Woodsgate Corner in Pembury

attracts 3.1% of convenience trade and 3.1% is spent at Waitrose at Church Road in Paddock Wood.

- 6.14 Outside of the Borough, major convenience destinations include the Sainsbury's at The Angel Centre in Tonbridge (5.3%) and Sainsbury's Brooklands Way in East Grinstead (4.8%).

**Figure 6.2 | Convenience Goods - Town Centre Market Share (%)**

Destination	Market Share of Total Convenience Spend from the Study Area (2016)		
	Town Centre	Edge-of-Centre	Out-of-Centre
<b>Royal Tunbridge Wells</b>	2.0%	9.8%	6.4%
<b>Southborough</b>	0.1%	0.6%	0.0%
<b>Paddock Wood</b>	3.2%	0.0%	0.0%
<b>Cranbrook</b>	1.5%	0.0%	0.0%
<b>Hawkhurst</b>	0.1%	1.6%	0.0%

Source: Appendix D

- 6.15 Notably, whilst Royal Tunbridge Wells features Tesco Metro, Marks and Spencer, Sainsbury's Local and Iceland foodstores within the town centre, the majority of convenience goods draw is to foodstores in edge-of-centre locations – such as the Sainsbury's at Linden Park Road, which has the highest convenience market share in the Borough – and out-of-centre facilities at the Fountains and Longfield Road Retail Parks attracting a significant proportion of main food shopping trips from across the Study Area.
- 6.16 The majority of convenience goods trips in Paddock Wood and Cranbrook are made to the Waitrose, Tesco Express and Co-op in the town centre boundaries, whilst the convenience offer in Southborough and Hawkhurst Tesco Express and Tesco Metro are primarily located on the edge of the centres.
- 6.17 Figure 6.3 identifies the shifting patterns of market shares in each of the key zones over the period 2013-2016. It is important to note that these market shares incorporate all edge and out-of-centre provision in addition to town centre facilities. This data is useful in identifying changing trends across the Study Area but, as population and retail expenditure varies considerably from zone to zone, Figure 6.3 on its own does not provide a complete picture when assessing the overall draw of the centres.
- 6.18 Nevertheless, it is clear that the Royal Tunbridge Wells area accounts for a significant proportion of spend across Zones 6 (Southborough), 7 (Tunbridge Wells Central & South) and 11 (Tunbridge Wells North) as well as a notable share of Zones 10 (Paddock Wood), 12 (Wadhurst) and 15 (Cranbrook & Hawkhurst).
- 6.19 Convenience goods expenditure in Royal Tunbridge Wells from residents of Zones 7 (Royal Tunbridge Wells C & S) and 14 (South of Maidstone) has increased by 10.3% and 155.0%, respectively since the last survey in 2013, whilst the proportion of residents drawn from Zones 3

(Maresfield), 8 (Crowborough), 9 (Heathfield), 12 (Wadhurst), 13 (North Rother) and 16 (Tenterden) has fallen by over 30% in the last three years.

- 6.20 As would be expected, convenience trade to Southborough is primarily drawn from its own Zone 6, capturing 6.4% of local spend, increasing from just 2.5% in 2013. Paddock Wood has also seen a rise in the proportion of convenience spend from residents of its local Zone 10, from 29.2% in 2013 to 34.7% in 2016. Notably, there has been a sharp increase in spending from residents of Zone 14, whilst the proportion of spending from residents from Zone 12 has significantly fallen since the previous survey.
- 6.21 Cranbrook and Hawkhurst both attract the majority of convenience trade from residents of Zone 15, while Hawkhurst also attracts a notable proportion of spend from residents of Zone 12. There has been a drop in the proportion of spending attracted from Zone 15 to Cranbrook since 2013 (from 31.4% to 25.9%), whilst spending to Hawkhurst has increased by the same amount over the same period (from 18.7% to 24.3%). Whilst the household survey presents a snapshot of spending patterns at the time of the questionnaire, a new Waitrose store has since opened on Rye Road in Hawkhurst which may further influence spending to the centre going forward.

**Figure 6.3 | Convenience Goods - Shopping Patterns by Zone (%)**

Zones	Royal Tunbridge Wells		Southborough		Paddock Wood		Cranbrook		Hawkhurst		Others		Total	
	2013	2016	2013	2016	2013	2016	2013	2016	2013	2016	2013	2016	2013	2016
1	2.6	2.7	0.0	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	96.8	97.3	100.0	100.0
2	5.0	5.8	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	95.0	93.3	100.0	100.0
3	3.1	1.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	96.9	98.4	100.0	100.0
4	0.7	3.0	0.0	0.0	1.6	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	97.7	96.4	100.0	100.0
5	5.4	3.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	94.6	96.1	100.0	100.0
6	72.5	67.8	0.0	6.4	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	27.4	25.8	100.0	100.0
7	71.2	78.5	0.0	1.2	0.6	1.5	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0	28.1	18.8	100.0	100.0
8	6.4	2.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	93.6	97.7	100.0	100.0
9	7.3	4.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	92.7	95.5	100.0	100.0
10	18.2	12.7	0.0	0.3	29.2	34.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.7	52.6	51.5	100.0	100.0
11	84.5	79.1	0.0	1.9	2.0	3.3	0.0	1.1	0.1	0.3	13.4	14.4	100.0	100.0
12	36.4	23.6	0.0	0.0	6.7	0.8	0.5	0.7	11.7	9.2	44.8	65.7	100.0	100.0
13	4.3	2.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.0	5.8	6.5	89.9	90.5	100.0	100.0
14	3.1	7.8	0.0	0.0	1.9	6.1	2.7	1.8	0.9	0.7	91.4	83.5	100.0	100.0
15	15.8	11.6	0.0	0.0	3.7	4.2	31.4	25.9	18.7	24.3	30.4	34.0	100.0	100.0
16	1.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.9	2.5	2.7	0.3	91.8	97.2	100.0	100.0
Study Area Total	20.0	18.2	0.0	0.7	2.6	3.2	1.7	1.5	1.5	1.7	74.1	74.7	100.0	100.0

Source: Appendix D and PBA, Retail and Leisure Study Update 2014 (Appendix D, Table 9)

## Comparison Shopping Patterns

- 6.22 Experian provides expenditure estimates divided into eight sub-categories of comparison goods,

which can be grouped as bulky goods: 'DIY', 'Electrical' and 'Furniture', and non-bulky goods: 'Books, CDs and DVDs', 'Chemist Goods', 'Clothing & Footwear', 'Small Household Goods' and 'Toys and Recreational Goods'.

- 6.23 Figures 6.4 and 6.5 identify the market share of comparison goods spending broken down by town centre and per zone, comparing the results of the 2013 and 2016 household surveys. In 2013, it was found that Tunbridge Wells claimed 47.2% of comparison goods expenditure across the Study Area, decreasing to 43.6% in 2016. Broken down by town centre, Figure 6.4 identifies that the comparison expenditure market share of Royal Tunbridge Wells has fallen from 45.1% of the Study Area in 2013 to 41.8% in 2016, whilst the market shares of the remaining centres across the Borough has remained relatively constant.

**Figure 6.4 | Comparison Goods - Study Area Market Share (%)**

Destination	2013	2016
<b>Royal Tunbridge Wells</b>	45.1%	41.8%
<b>Southborough</b>	0.1%	0.1%
<b>Paddock Wood</b>	0.8%	0.7%
<b>Cranbrook</b>	0.7%	0.5%
<b>Hawkhurst</b>	0.1%	0.1%
<i>Others in Tunbridge Wells</i>	0.4%	0.5%
<b>Tunbridge Wells</b>	<b>47.2%</b>	<b>43.6%</b>

Source: Appendix D and PBA, Retail and Leisure Study Update 2014 (Appendix D, Table 5)

**Figure 6.5 | Comparison Goods - Shopping Patterns by Zone (%)**

Zones	Royal Tunbridge Wells		Southborough		Paddock Wood		Cranbrook		Hawkhurst		Others		Total	
	2013	2016	2013	2016	2013	2016	2013	2016	2013	2016	2013	2016	2013	2016
<b>1</b>	23.4	17.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	76.5	82.3	100.0	100.0
<b>2</b>	36.7	32.8	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	63.3	66.9	100.0	100.0
<b>3</b>	27.7	28.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	72.3	71.7	100.0	100.0
<b>4</b>	10.0	6.7	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	89.1	92.5	100.0	100.0
<b>5</b>	51.9	50.8	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	47.7	49.2	100.0	100.0
<b>6</b>	81.0	87.6	<b>0.6</b>	<b>0.6</b>	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	18.2	11.9	100.0	100.0
<b>7</b>	<b>85.7</b>	<b>84.7</b>	0.4	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	13.4	15.3	100.0	100.0
<b>8</b>	62.0	62.4	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	37.9	37.6	100.0	100.0
<b>9</b>	40.4	35.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.1	0.0	59.2	64.7	100.0	100.0
<b>10</b>	57.1	61.1	0.1	0.0	<b>6.9</b>	<b>7.1</b>	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.0	36.0	31.4	100.0	100.0
<b>11</b>	<b>82.3</b>	<b>86.3</b>	0.3	0.4	1.9	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	15.5	12.8	100.0	100.0
<b>12</b>	73.4	68.4	0.0	0.0	0.7	0.3	0.6	0.0	0.5	0.3	24.8	31.0	100.0	100.0
<b>13</b>	32.3	25.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.7	0.1	66.1	74.7	100.0	100.0
<b>14</b>	13.2	9.8	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.9	0.6	0.0	0.1	85.5	89.4	100.0	100.0
<b>15</b>	55.6	47.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	3.4	<b>13.6</b>	<b>7.4</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>1.4</b>	28.6	40.8	100.0	100.0
<b>16</b>	18.3	9.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.9	2.0	0.1	0.1	80.6	88.8	100.0	100.0
<b>Study Area Total</b>	<b>45.1</b>	<b>41.8</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>53.1</b>	<b>56.9</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Appendix D and PBA, Retail and Leisure Study Update 2014 (Appendix D, Table 5)

- 6.24 As identified in Figure 6.5, Royal Tunbridge Wells captured the greatest proportion of comparison expenditure market share of any of the Borough's centre for each zone across the Study Area. Southborough, Paddock Wood, Cranbrook and Hawkhurst each attracted the greatest proportion of comparison goods trade from their own zones, respectively, as would be expected.
- 6.25 The proportion of spending to Royal Tunbridge Wells has fallen since 2013 across the Study Area, with the exception of Zones 3 (Maresfield), 6 (Southborough), 8 (Crowborough), 10 (Paddock Wood) and 11 (Royal Tunbridge Wells North). Notably, comparison goods spending in Royal Tunbridge Wells has fallen by 50.8% from Zone 16 (Tenterden) and by over 20% from Zones 1 (East Grinstead), 4 (Sevenoaks), 13 (North Rother) and 14 (South of Maidstone).
- 6.26 As noted above, comparison goods market share to each of the centres of Southborough, Paddock Wood, Cranbrook and Hawkhurst has remained relatively constant over the past three years.
- 6.27 However, notably, spending from residents of Zone 15 (Cranbrook & Hawkhurst) to facilities in Paddock Wood has increased significantly by over 600% since 2013 (growing from 0.5% to 3.4%) and has fallen by 45.8% to facilities in Cranbrook from 13.6% to 7.4% over the past three years.

## Market Share Analysis

Figure 6.6 | All Retail - Market Share by Destination (%)

Destination	Market Share by Category (%)												Total Market Share (all retail)
	Convenience Spending			Comparison Spending									
	Main Food	Top-up	Total	Clothing	Books etc.	Household	Recreation	Chemist	Electrical	DIY	Furniture	Total	
<b>Royal Tunbridge Wells</b>	19.5	13.3	<b>18.2</b>	43.3	32.5	43.6	40.4	42.6	45.6	36.4	41.1	<b>41.8</b>	<b>32.3</b>
<b>Southborough</b>	0.3	1.9	<b>0.7</b>	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.3	<b>0.1</b>	<b>0.3</b>
<b>Paddock Wood</b>	3.2	3.1	<b>3.2</b>	0.5	0.5	0.4	1.0	0.5	0.2	1.1	1.4	<b>0.7</b>	<b>1.7</b>
<b>Cranbrook</b>	1.2	2.6	<b>1.5</b>	0.2	0.0	0.3	0.4	0.4	1.2	0.8	1.0	<b>0.5</b>	<b>0.9</b>
<b>Hawkhurst</b>	1.7	1.8	<b>1.7</b>	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.2	0.1	<b>0.1</b>	<b>0.7</b>
<b>Others in Tunbridge Wells</b>	0.5	5.8	<b>1.6</b>	0.1	0.6	0.4	0.1	0.4	0.2	2.1	1.2	<b>0.5</b>	<b>0.9</b>
<b>Tunbridge Wells Sub-Total</b>	26.5	28.5	<b>26.9</b>	44.2	33.8	44.8	41.9	43.9	47.6	40.6	45.1	<b>43.6</b>	<b>36.9</b>
<b>Others in Study Area</b>	47.0	57.4	<b>49.1</b>	12.8	38.0	15.2	24.1	15.0	17.0	33.0	24.7	<b>19.7</b>	<b>31.5</b>
<b>Outside the Study Area</b>	26.6	14.1	<b>24.0</b>	43.0	28.3	40.0	34.0	41.1	35.5	26.4	30.2	<b>36.7</b>	<b>31.6</b>
<b>Total</b>	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Appendix D

---

### Convenience Goods

- 6.28 Across the Study Area, Figure 6.6 illustrates that Tunbridge Wells caters for 26.5% of main food trips and 28.5% of top-up trips of residents across the Study Area.
- 6.29 The majority of convenience goods expenditure is spent in Royal Tunbridge Wells (18.2%), while Paddock Wood receives 3.2%, Hawkhurst 1.7%, Cranbrook 1.5% and Southborough just 0.7%.
- 6.30 Royal Tunbridge Wells, Paddock Wood and Hawkhurst are identified as having either a lower or similar top-up market share as for main food shopping, suggesting that they serve as the primary convenience destinations for their local resident populations. Southborough and Cranbrook, however, cater for a greater proportion of top-up spending than on main food, reflecting the smaller convenience offer in the centres, and that local residents are willing to travel further afield to benefit from a wider convenience goods offer.

### Comparison Goods

- 6.31 As identified in Figure 6.6 above, and as would be expected, Royal Tunbridge Wells captures a greater comparison goods market share than all other facilities in the Borough combined, with the centres of Southborough, Paddock Wood, Cranbrook and Hawkhurst offering very little to counter the significant comparison goods draw of Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre and the Out-of-Centre Retail Parks.
- 6.32 Of the four other key centres in the Borough, Paddock Wood attracts over £1m of comparison goods expenditure on clothing and footwear, small household, recreation, DIY and furniture goods, indicating a strong niche comparison goods offer for local residents. Equally, Cranbrook attracts over £1m of spending on small household, electrical and furniture goods.
- 6.33 Southborough and Hawkhurst did not attract more than £1m of expenditure on any comparison goods, attracting greater than 0.1% of Study Area spending on just furniture goods (Southborough) and books and media, electrical and DIY goods (Hawkhurst), which is indicative of the more day-to-day comparison goods offer of the centres.

### Leakage

- 6.34 Notably, in terms of leakage, Tunbridge Wells is bordered to the north by Sevenoaks, Tonbridge & Malling and Maidstone, as well as Crawley and East Grinstead to the west and Ashford to the east.
- 6.35 73.1% of convenience goods expenditure made by residents of the Study Area is 'lost' from Tunbridge Wells, while 56.4% of all comparison goods expenditure from residents of the Study Area is spent outside the Borough. This is referred to as 'Study Area Leakage'.
- 6.36 The previous Study identified that, in 2013, a total of 72.9% of convenience goods spending and

52.8% of comparison goods spending from residents within the Study Area was made to facilities outside of the Study Area.

**Figure 6.8 | Study Area Leakage by Destination at 2016 (%)**

Destination	Study Area Leakage by Category (%)												Total Leakage (all retail)
	Convenience Spending			Comparison Spending									
	Main Food	Top-up	Total	Clothing	Books etc.	Household	Recreation	Chemist	Electrical	DIY	Furniture	Total	
<b>East Grinstead</b>	10.6	8.8	<b>10.2</b>	3.2	11.2	4.6	6.4	4.4	1.6	7.1	6.4	<b>5.0</b>	7.1
<b>Maidstone</b>	5.8	3.7	<b>5.4</b>	10.9	8.3	7.1	5.9	7.2	3.4	4.0	5.7	<b>7.2</b>	6.5
<b>Tonbridge</b>	11.6	10.2	<b>11.3</b>	2.1	7.7	2.9	5.1	2.7	0.8	2.8	2.8	<b>3.0</b>	6.4
<b>Ashford</b>	2.5	0.4	<b>2.0</b>	3.7	1.9	4.4	3.4	4.9	3.5	5.7	4.2	<b>3.9</b>	3.2
<b>Tenterden</b>	4.7	5.5	<b>4.9</b>	2.8	4.2	1.0	1.9	1.1	1.9	1.6	0.7	<b>1.9</b>	3.1
<b>Bluewater</b>	-	-	-	8.0	3.1	6.5	2.3	6.4	4.8	0.0	3.1	<b>5.1</b>	3.0
<b>Crawley</b>	0.7	0.8	<b>0.7</b>	4.5	0.7	2.9	3.1	2.7	7.5	0.8	0.8	<b>3.3</b>	2.2
<b>Sevenoaks</b>	4.4	3.3	<b>4.1</b>	0.1	0.6	0.4	0.3	0.4	1.0	2.4	0.5	<b>0.5</b>	2.0
<b>Others outside Tunbridge Wells</b>	33.3	38.8	<b>34.4</b>	20.5	28.5	25.5	29.6	26.2	27.8	34.9	30.7	<b>26.5</b>	29.7
<b>Total Leakage from the Study Area</b>	<b>73.5</b>	<b>71.5</b>	<b>73.1</b>	<b>55.8</b>	<b>66.2</b>	<b>55.2</b>	<b>58.1</b>	<b>56.1</b>	<b>52.4</b>	<b>59.4</b>	<b>54.9</b>	<b>56.4</b>	<b>63.1</b>

Source: Appendix D

**Figure 6.9 | Study Area Leakage by Destination since 2013 (%)**

Destination	Study Area Leakage (%)			
	Convenience Spending		Comparison Spending	
	2013	2016	2013	2016
<b>East Grinstead</b>	9.6	10.2	4.4	5.0
<b>Maidstone</b>	4.5	5.4	8.6	7.2
<b>Tonbridge</b>	11.7	11.3	4.2	3.0
<b>Ashford</b>	-	2.0	2.1	3.9
<b>Tenterden</b>	4.3	4.9	1.4	1.9
<b>Bluewater</b>	-	-	5.0	5.1
<b>Crawley</b>	-	0.7	2.6	3.3
<b>Sevenoaks</b>	5.0	4.1	2.0	0.5
<i>Others outside Tunbridge Wells</i>	<i>37.8</i>	<i>34.4</i>	<i>22.5</i>	<i>26.5</i>
<b>Total Leakage from the Study Area</b>	<b>72.9</b>	<b>73.1</b>	<b>52.8</b>	<b>56.4</b>

Source: Appendix D and PBA, Retail and Leisure Study Update 2014 (Appendix D, Table 5)  
Some figures not shown in PBS Study

- 
- 6.37 Convenience goods leakage was focussed towards Tonbridge and East Grinstead, each attracting 11.3% and 10.2% of convenience goods spending from residents across the Study Area.
- 6.38 Notably, both centres attracted a higher proportion of main food spending than top-up goods spending, suggesting that residents are regularly making the journey to these centres for their convenience goods shopping (as opposed to carrying out this shopping alongside other activities such as work commutes). Interestingly, a higher proportion of convenience goods expenditure to facilities in Tenterden was made through top-up shopping, indicating that this spending was more likely to be associated with other activities.
- 6.39 Leakage to physical retail stores is relatively consistent across each of the comparison goods categories, with the exception of books, CDs, DVDs etc. where over 66% of spending at physical retail store by residents across the Study Area is spent at destinations outside of the Study Area
- 6.40 In terms of retail destinations outside of the Borough, Maidstone draws spending on a wide variety of comparison goods, while residents travel to both Tonbridge and East Grinstead for media (such as books and CDs) and recreation goods, with Ashford and East Grinstead also drawing a high proportion of spending on DIY and furniture goods. Bluewater draws a higher proportion of clothing and footwear, small household, chemist and electrical goods spending from the Study Area, whilst Crawley would appear to have a more niche offering to residents of the Study Area, with a notable draw of clothing and electrical goods.

## Summary

- 6.41 The proportion of convenience goods expenditure from residents of the Study Area spent in the Borough of Tunbridge Wells has marginally fallen from 26.9% in 2013 to 27.1% in 2016, while the market share of comparison goods expenditure has fallen from a high of 47.2% in 2013 to 43.6% in 2016.
- 6.42 Leakage of convenience goods spending from the Study Area to the centres of East Grinstead, Maidstone and Tenterden has grown since 2013. In terms of comparison trade, leakage from the Study Area has increased to East Grinstead, Ashford, Tenterden, Bluewater and Crawley.
- 6.43 The most recent household survey identified that, in 2016, Royal Tunbridge Wells accounted for 18.2% of convenience goods spending across the Study Area. Notably, 9.8% of the convenience spending is directed to foodstores located in edge-of-centre locations, such as Sainsbury's at Linden Park Road and 6.4% is to facilities in out-of-centre locations, such as the Longfield Road and Fountains Retail Parks, whilst just 2.0% is to stores located within the boundary of the town centre.
- 6.44 Paddock Wood and Cranbrook draw a total of 3.2% and 1.5% of convenience goods spending,

respectively, all of which is located within the town centre. Hawkhurst and Southborough cater to just 1.7% and 0.7% of convenience goods spending, respectively, the majority of which is provided for by facilities in edge-of-centre locations.

- 6.45 Turning to comparison goods, spending in Royal Tunbridge Wells fell from the 2013 market share whilst the rest of the centre remained relatively constant. In 2016 Royal Tunbridge Wells made up 41.9% comparison goods trips, Southborough 0.1%, Paddock Wood 0.7%, Cranbrook 0.5% and Hawkhurst 0.1%.
- 6.46 As, the largest centre in the Borough, Royal Tunbridge Wells draws over 40% of all comparison goods categories, with the exception of books and media and DIY goods, for which it claims a market share of over 30%.
- 6.47 In terms of leakage, 73.1% of convenience goods trips from across the wider Study Area are made to facilities outside of the Borough (with Tonbridge and East Grinstead accounting for 11.3% and 10.2%, respectively). A total of 56.4% comparison goods expenditure from residents across the wider Study Area is spent outside of Tunbridge Wells Borough, with Maidstone, Bluewater and East Grinstead the most popular destinations, accounting for 7.2%, 5.1% and 5.0% of spending respectively.

## 7.0 Retail Capacity

### Introduction

- 7.1 One of the key aims of this Study is to provide recommendations on the capacity for new retail floorspace over the plan period to 2033. The use of long term projections should be treated with caution and reviewed regularly in order to test the accuracy of the forecasts against emerging datasets. External national and international factors can influence the wider performance of the economy, which can have trickle down effects on local shopping patterns. One such example has been the trend towards convenience discounters (such as Lidl and Aldi) in response to the period of economic downturn between 2008 and 2013.
- 7.2 **We would also note that any identified retail capacity across the Study Area does not necessarily equate to justification for new retail floorspace in and of itself (especially in out-of-centre locations), and any such development would be required to be assessed in line with national policy in terms of impacts on the vitality and viability of town centres, the potential to prejudice emerging town centre developments, and the ‘town centre first’ sequential approach to site selection.**
- 7.3 Detailed quantitative retail capacity tables are enclosed at **Appendix D**.

### Methodology

- 7.4 Retail capacity modelling follows a consistent, robust methodology which incorporates a number of datasets and informed assumptions:

$$\text{Expenditure (£m)} - \text{Turnover (£m)} = \text{Surplus or Deficit (£m)}$$

- 7.5 Experian MMG3 census software is used to provide localised expenditure per capita per annum for various forms of retail spending. These figures are then projected forwards on the basis of population growth, changes in expenditure over time and Special Forms of Trading (SFT) such as internet shopping.
- 7.6 The turnover of existing retailers across the Study Area is calculated on the basis of average sales densities, or turnover, per square metre. Various retail planning sources such as Verdict UK Food & Grocery Company Briefing Reports and Mintel Retail Rankings provide average (or benchmark) sales densities for all national multiple retailers.
- 7.7 The surplus or deficit equates to the difference between the available retail expenditure across the Study Area and the turnover of the existing facilities within the Study Area. If the total turnover is greater than the available expenditure then the model would identify an oversupply of retail

floorspace, whilst a surplus of expenditure would suggest capacity for additional retail floorspace.

- 7.8 Once the surplus or deficit of expenditure is calculated, it is then presented in floorspace figures (using average sales density assumptions) in order to demonstrate the findings within a 'real world' context. Often surplus figures are presented under a number of different scenarios representing various retailers, for example, considering convenience spend, discount retailers (such as Aldi and Lidl) operate at a lower sales density than the 'big 4' (Tesco, Asda, Sainsbury's and Morrisons).

### **Capacity for Future Convenience Goods Floorspace**

- 7.9 For robustness, when assessing the capacity for new convenience retail floorspace we adopt a constant market share in line with findings of the latest household survey (i.e. that stores across Tunbridge Wells Borough will continue to draw 26.9% of all convenience goods spending across the Study Area) on the basis of the comparable strength of offer of the surrounding centres.
- 7.10 In addition to allowing for growth in retail expenditure over the plan period (as considered in Section 5), we utilise data provided within the Experian Retail Planner Briefing Note in order to take account of forecast growth in efficiencies in retailers' trading (for example, through the adoption of new technologies and more efficient use of available floorspace). Floorspace efficiencies are estimated to have a greater impact on comparison retailers than convenience retailers over the plan period as the rise of food discounting continues to subdue projected efficiencies in turnover of existing convenience retail floorspace.
- 7.11 We go on to make a number of statistical assumptions through the quantitative capacity exercise in order to account for a number of variables:
- Utilising a 'goods based' approach, we strip out expenditure for non-food comparison goods such as clothing, household goods, CDs, DVDs and other media that are now commonly sold at major foodstores. These assumptions are made in line with floorspace figures sourced from Verdict UK or, where data is not available, Nexus' professional judgement based on site visits.
  - We also make assumptions as to the gross to net sales floorspace of each store, again utilising online planning records where available, Verdict UK Food & Grocery Retailers 2014 or Nexus' professional judgement.
  - Finally, we consider whether foodstores are likely to attract any additional 'inflow' from outside of the Study Area. Based on the localised nature of convenience food shopping and the significant extent of the Study Area it is unlikely that convenience destinations within Tunbridge Wells draw any significant amount of trade from outside of the Study Area. As such, we do not assume any inflow of trade from residents beyond the Study Area.

- 7.12 We then go on to calculate the anticipated turnover of all major convenience goods operators on

the basis of the published company sales data, referred to as 'benchmark' turnover. 'Benchmark' turnover is calculated from national average 'sales densities' (turnover per square metre) from sources such as Verdict UK Food & Grocery Company Briefing Reports and Mintel Retail Rankings. By comparing the turnover estimates derived from the findings of the household survey (total available expenditure distributed on the basis of each destinations market share) to the benchmark turnovers, we are able to establish where stores are trading above (overtrading) or below (undertrading) company averages. For stores located outside of designated town centres, surplus expenditure over and above benchmark turnover is considered to be available as this suggests that existing convenience goods providers in the Study Area are stretched and overproviding to meet the existing need.

- 7.13 As smaller convenience retailers and local traders may not publish annual turnover figures and there is not a standardised dataset available, local town centre stores are assumed to be trading in line with the findings of the household survey (at 2016), or 'at equilibrium'. We provide a detailed assessment of this benchmark exercise measuring the performance of convenience retailers at Table 5, **Appendix D**.
- 7.14 Discount convenience retailers have traditionally served a different market and customer base to traditional supermarkets, such as the 'big 4'. However, since the recession, there has been a growing trend towards shopping at discount retailers, or combining trips to both formats which has reduced traditional retailer's turnover, whilst increasing spending at discounters. This blending of the two markets has been reflected in the gradual decrease in the sales density (and profit margins) of the big 4 retailers over recent years, and the increase of the sales densities of discounters such as Aldi.
- 7.15 On the basis of the household survey, we identify that convenience retailers within Tunbridge Wells turnover an estimated £267.4m, more than the benchmark turnover of £184.4m at 2016. This overtrade equates to a surplus of £82.6m of expenditure across the Study Area, or 44.7% above company averages. Notably, the trading performance of each of the centres assessed suggest an overtrade above company averages, often as a result of either undersupply of convenience retailers, or the dominance of one or two particular stores.
- 7.16 Convenience retailers serving residents of Royal Tunbridge Wells and the surrounding hinterlands (being within Zones 7, 11 and part of Zone 6) are found to be overtrading by a combined £58.7m. In particular, the Sainsbury's at Linden Park Road and Tesco at Woodsgate Corner in Pembury are identified as overtrading by £40.7m and £20.2m, respectively, whilst the Asda at Longfield Road Retail Park and Tesco at Grosvenor Road are seen to be undertrading by £-5.6m and £-4.4m, respectively. Notably, convenience retailers within the town centre boundaries were shown to be undertrading by £-6.2m.
- 7.17 The Tesco Express at Southborough was seen to be overtrading by £2.3m, whilst convenience

retailers in Paddock Wood identified a surplus of £9.3m, with the Waitrose overtrading by £10.8m, whilst the Tesco Metro was seen to be undertrading by £-1.5m. The Co-op foodstore in Cranbrook and Tesco Metro in Hawkhurst were shown to be overtrading by £2.5m and £9.2m, respectively.

**Figure 7.1 | Convenience Goods Surplus in Tunbridge Wells Borough**

Year	Turnover (£m) <sup>1</sup>	Available Expenditure (£m) <sup>2</sup>	Inflow (£m)	Surplus Expenditure (£m)
2016	184.8	267.4	0.0	82.6
2021	183.0	273.3	0.0	90.3
2026	182.8	283.2	0.0	100.4
2033	184.1	297.8	0.0	113.7
2035	184.6	301.3	0.0	116.7
<b>Study Area Market Share (%)</b>		<b>26.9</b>		

<sup>1</sup> Allows for turnover efficiency as set out in Table 4a Experian Retail Planner 14 (November 2016)

<sup>2</sup> Assumes constant market share claimed by Tunbridge Wells Borough facilities at 26.9% from Study Area (allows for no inflow uplift)

Source: Table 6a, Appendix D

- 7.18 Tying the methodology together, Figure 7.1 above identifies a surplus of £82.6m expenditure in 2016 on the basis of current levels of overtrading, rising to £90.3m in 2021 taking account of increases in population and expenditure. A surplus of £100.4m available expenditure is estimated by 2026, growing to £113.7m at 2033 and £116.7m at 2035.
- 7.19 This surplus in resident spending is contrary to the turnover forecasts for convenience goods retailers across the Borough over the same time period, which are forecast to fall to 2026, with a slight uplift at 2033. This is due to continued pressures to cut costs and further reduce pricing (in response to the rising market share of discount operators), in spite of an allowance for increases in floorspace efficiency and extensions in floorspace.

**Figure 7.2 | Convenience Goods Floorspace Capacity in Tunbridge Wells Borough**

Year	Surplus Expenditure (£m)	Commitments (£m)	Residual Expenditure (£m)	Floorspace Capacity (sq m net)	
				Min <sup>1</sup>	Max <sup>2</sup>
2016	82.6	35.4	47.2	3,700	4,700
2021	90.3	35.0	55.2	4,400	5,500
2026	100.4	35.0	65.4	5,200	6,500
2033	113.7	35.2	78.5	6,200	7,800
2035	116.7	35.3	81.4	6,400	8,100

<sup>1</sup> Average sales density assumed to be £12,932/sq m (rounded) based on the average sales density of the leading four supermarkets as identified by Verdict 2015

<sup>2</sup> 50% of residual expenditure assumed to be consumed by leading four supermarkets (£12,932/sq m) and 50% assumed to be consumed by discount operators (£7,530/sq m) as identified by Verdict 2015 and Mintel 2015. This equates to £10,231/sq m.

Source: Table 6d, Appendix D

- 7.20 We go on to consider committed, emerging and extant permissions for new convenience retail

floorspace across the Borough that could come forward over the next few years. These equate to a net convenience floorspace of 2,002 sq m and an estimated turnover of £35.4m.

- 7.21 Notably, these commitments includes proposed developments for new retail floorspace, as well as floorspace that is proposed to be lost where occupiers have announced that they are to cease trading. The recent introduction of Waitrose (September 2016) to Hawkhurst is taken into account, as is the loss of the existing Budgens store, notwithstanding the fact that, since the household survey was carried out shortly before the store closed, many customers had seemingly already began to carry out their convenience goods shop elsewhere. Whilst the Morrisons foodstore in Tunbridge Wells ceased trading in April 2016, convenience trade has since dissipated and customers were shopping elsewhere by the time that the household survey was undertaken. As such, we did not need to make any adjustments to account for this closure.
- 7.22 Taking account of committed turnover, we identify a residual turnover of £47.2m at 2016, rising to £81.4m at 2035. Using average sales densities to cater for minimum (a large supermarket operator) and maximum (a combination of discount foodstores and larger supermarket operators) scenarios, we calculate that there is capacity for between 6,400 sq m and 8,100 sq m of new (net) convenience retail floorspace, should all of the committed developments come forward as identified in **Appendix D** (Table 6d).
- 7.23 As shown in Figure 7.3 below, we then go on to consider the 'likely scenario' and the committed retail floorspace that is likely to come forward over the next few years. Our assumptions are based on discussions with planning officers, company statements and media reports.
- 7.24 In producing a 'likely scenario', we disregard the proposed Tesco foodstore at Pembury Road, which has been confirmed as shelved by the developers, thereby significantly reducing the convenience turnover of the committed floorspace in 2016 from £35.4m to £17.9m.

**Figure 7.3 | Likely Convenience Goods Floorspace Capacity in Tunbridge Wells Borough**

Year	Surplus Expenditure (£m)	Commitments (£m)	Residual Expenditure (£m)	Floorspace Capacity (sq m net)	
				Min <sup>1</sup>	Max <sup>2</sup>
2016	82.6	17.9	64.7	5,100	6,400
2021	90.3	17.8	72.5	5,700	7,200
2026	100.4	17.8	82.6	6,500	8,300
2033	113.7	17.9	95.8	7,500	9,500
2035	116.7	17.9	98.7	7,700	9,800

<sup>1</sup> Average sales density assumed to be £12,932/sq m (rounded) based on the average sales density of the leading four supermarkets as identified by Verdict 2015

<sup>2</sup> 50% of residual expenditure assumed to be consumed by leading four supermarkets (£12,932/sq m) and 50% assumed to be consumed by discount operators (£7,530/sq m) as identified by Verdict 2015 and Mintel 2015. This equates to £10,231/sq m.

Source: Table 6f, Appendix D

- 7.25 Across Tunbridge Wells Borough as a whole, taking account of the turnover of commitments that are likely to come forward over the plan period, we identify a total residual turnover surplus of £64.7m at 2016, rising to £95.8m by 2033 and £98.7m at 2035.
- 7.26 Given minimum and maximum average sales densities, we calculate that there will be capacity for between 5,100 sq m and 6,400 sq m of new convenience goods floorspace at 2016, rising to between 5,700 sq m and 7,200 sq m at 2021, between 6,500 sq m and 8,300 sq m at 2026, between 7,500 sq m and 9,500 sq m at 2033 and between 7,700 sq m and 9,800 sq m at 2035.
- 7.27 We then go on to consider the location of the convenience floorspace capacity, sub-divided between the Borough's five key centres on the basis of the available expenditure and current market shares from the resident population of the Study Area.

**Figure 7.5 | Likely Convenience Goods Floorspace Capacity in Royal Tunbridge Wells**

Year	Surplus Expenditure (£m)	Commitments (£m)	Residual Expenditure (£m)	Floorspace Capacity (sq m net)	
				Min <sup>1</sup>	Max <sup>2</sup>
2016	58.7	3.1	55.6	4,400	5,500
2021	63.9	3.1	60.8	4,800	6,100
2026	70.7	3.1	67.6	5,400	6,800
2033	79.7	3.1	76.7	6,000	7,600
2035	81.8	3.1	78.7	6,200	7,800

<sup>1</sup> Average sales density assumed to be £12,932/sq m (rounded) based on the average sales density of the leading four supermarkets as identified by Verdict 2015

<sup>2</sup> 50% of residual expenditure assumed to be consumed by leading four supermarkets (£12,932/sq m) and 50% assumed to be consumed by discount operators (£7,530/sq m) as identified by Verdict 2015 and Mintel 2015. This equates to £10,231/sq m.

Source: Table 6l, Appendix D

**Figure 7.6 | Convenience Goods Floorspace Capacity in Southborough**

Year	Surplus Expenditure (£m)	Commitments (£m)	Residual Expenditure (£m)	Floorspace Capacity (sq m net)	
				Min <sup>1</sup>	Max <sup>2</sup>
2016	2.9	0.0	2.9	200	300
2021	3.1	0.0	3.1	200	300
2026	3.3	0.0	3.3	300	300
2033	3.6	0.0	3.6	300	400
2035	3.7	0.0	3.7	300	400

<sup>1</sup> Average sales density assumed to be £12,932/sq m (rounded) based on the average sales density of the leading four supermarkets as identified by Verdict 2015

<sup>2</sup> 50% of residual expenditure assumed to be consumed by leading four supermarkets (£12,932/sq m) and 50% assumed to be consumed by discount operators (£7,530/sq m) as identified by Verdict 2015 and Mintel 2015. This equates to £10,231/sq m.

Source: Table 6p, Appendix D

**Figure 7.7 | Convenience Goods Floorspace Capacity in Paddock Wood**

Year	Surplus Expenditure (£m)	Commitments (£m)	Residual Expenditure (£m)	Floorspace Capacity (sq m net)	
				Min <sup>1</sup>	Max <sup>2</sup>
2016	9.3	0.0	9.3	700	900
2021	10.2	0.0	10.2	800	1,000
2026	11.4	0.0	11.4	900	1,100
2033	13.0	0.0	13.0	1,000	1,300
2035	13.4	0.0	13.4	1,000	1,300

<sup>1</sup> Average sales density assumed to be £12,932/sq m (rounded) based on the average sales density of the leading four supermarkets as identified by Verdict 2015

<sup>2</sup> 50% of residual expenditure assumed to be consumed by leading four supermarkets (£12,932/sq m) and 50% assumed to be consumed by discount operators (£7,530/sq m) as identified by Verdict 2015 and Mintel 2015. This equates to £10,231/sq m.

Source: Table 6t, Appendix D

**Figure 7.8 | Likely Convenience Goods Floorspace Capacity in Cranbrook**

Year	Surplus Expenditure (£m)	Commitments (£m)	Residual Expenditure (£m)	Floorspace Capacity (sq m net)	
				Min <sup>1</sup>	Max <sup>2</sup>
2016	2.5	0.2	2.4	200	200
2021	3.0	0.2	2.8	200	300
2026	3.6	0.2	3.4	300	300
2033	4.3	0.2	4.1	300	400
2035	4.4	0.2	4.3	300	400

<sup>1</sup> Average sales density assumed to be £12,932/sq m (rounded) based on the average sales density of the leading four supermarkets as identified by Verdict 2015

<sup>2</sup> 50% of residual expenditure assumed to be consumed by leading four supermarkets (£12,932/sq m) and 50% assumed to be consumed by discount operators (£7,530/sq m) as identified by Verdict 2015 and Mintel 2015. This equates to £10,231/sq m.

Source: Table 6x, Appendix D

**Figure 7.8 | Likely Convenience Goods Floorspace Capacity in Hawkhurst**

Year	Surplus Expenditure (£m)	Commitments (£m)	Residual Expenditure (£m)	Floorspace Capacity (sq m net)	
				Min <sup>1</sup>	Max <sup>2</sup>
2016	9.2	14.7	-5.5	-400	-500
2021	9.7	14.5	-4.9	-400	-500
2026	10.3	14.5	-4.2	-300	-400
2033	11.2	14.6	-3.5	-300	-300
2035	11.4	14.7	-3.3	-300	-300

<sup>1</sup> Average sales density assumed to be £12,932/sq m (rounded) based on the average sales density of the leading four supermarkets as identified by Verdict 2015

<sup>2</sup> 50% of residual expenditure assumed to be consumed by leading four supermarkets (£12,932/sq m) and 50% assumed to be consumed by discount operators (£7,530/sq m) as identified by Verdict 2015 and Mintel 2015. This equates to £10,231/sq m.

Source: Table 6ab, Appendix D

- 7.28 Having taken account of the projected turnover of local commitments in **Royal Tunbridge Wells**, we find an identified residual expenditure of £55.6m in 2016, which equates to a convenience goods floorspace capacity of between 4,400 sq m and 5,500 sq m. In line with forecast population, expenditure and retail efficiency growth, this available capacity is projected to rise to between 4,800 sq m and 6,100 sq m of net convenience goods floorspace in 2021, between 5,400 sq m and 6,800 sq m at 2026, between 6,000 sq m and 7,600 sq m at 2033 and between 6,200 sq m and 7,800 sq m at 2035. We would suggest that this capacity available over the study period could be met through the development of one large (or two small - medium sized) foodstore(s) in Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre, having regard to potential to 'claw back' trade from the significant overtrading of current out-of-centre facilities.
- 7.29 In calculating the available convenience floorspace capacity in **Southborough**, we identify an available expenditure of just £2.9m in 2016, which is forecast to rise marginally to £3.7m by 2035. This equates to a convenience goods floorspace capacity of between 200 sq m and 300 sq m at 2016, rising to between 300 sq m and 400 sq m by 2035, which is not considered to be sufficient to specifically plan for any new convenience retail floorspace in Southborough over the plan period.
- 7.30 **Paddock Wood** is calculated to have an available residual expenditure of £9.3m at 2016, rising to £13.4m by 2035 due to projected population growth over the plan period, as well as overtrading of existing retailers. This gives rise to a net available capacity for between 700 sq m and 900 sq m of convenience goods floorspace at 2016, rising to between 800 sq m and 1,000 sq m at 2021, between 900 sq m and 1,100 sq m at 2026 and between 1,000 sq m and 1,300 sq m at both 2033 and 2035. Of this net available capacity, given the relative strength of the convenience retail provision in Paddock Wood (and in particular the anchor Waitrose foodstore), we would suggest that Paddock Wood would have capacity to support a medium sized convenience foodstore by 2035.
- 7.31 We identify £2.3m of surplus convenience expenditure in **Cranbrook** at 2016, rising to £4.3m by 2035. This equates to an available convenience goods floorspace capacity rising from between 200 sq m and 300 sq m at 2016 to between 300 sq m and 400 sq m by 2035. This would not be sufficient to allocate new convenience floorspace, but would support the development of a small amount of additional convenience goods floorspace in Cranbrook.
- 7.32 Taking into account the closure of the Budgens foodstore in **Hawkhurst**, and the recent opening of the Waitrose on the same site, we calculate a residual expenditure deficit of £-5.5m in 2016, falling to £-3.3m by 2035. This gives a negative available convenience goods floorspace capacity across the plan period rising from between -400 sq m and -500 sq m at 2016 to -300 sq m by 2035 and indicates that there would not be sufficient available expenditure to support new convenience retail floorspace in Hawkhurst.
- 7.33 We have also undertaken an assessment of the capacity for new convenience goods floorspace in

other rural and local shopping centres across the Borough on the basis of the market shares identified in the household survey. This shows a residual convenience expenditure of just £0.5m at 2021, rising with growth in sales efficiencies to £2.0m at 2035, suggesting a capacity for 200 sq m of new convenience goods floorspace in other rural and local centres across the Borough by 2035. This negligible capacity will likely be taken up by minor increases in retail provision across the Borough over the plan period.

**Figure 7.9 | Likely Convenience Goods Floorspace Capacity in other rural and local centres**

Year	Surplus Expenditure (£m)	Commitments (£m)	Residual Expenditure (£m)	Floorspace Capacity (sq m net)	
				Min <sup>1</sup>	Max <sup>2</sup>
2016	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0
2021	0.5	0.0	0.5	0	100
2026	1.1	0.0	1.1	100	100
2033	1.9	0.0	1.9	100	200
2035	2.0	0.0	2.0	200	200

<sup>1</sup> Average sales density assumed to be £12,932/sq m (rounded) based on the average sales density of the leading four supermarkets as identified by Verdict 2015

<sup>2</sup> 50% of residual expenditure assumed to be consumed by leading four supermarkets (£12,932/sq m) and 50% assumed to be consumed by discount operators (£7,530/sq m) as identified by Verdict 2015 and Mintel 2015. This equates to £10,231/sq m.

Source: Table 6af, Appendix D

## Capacity for Future Comparison Goods Floorspace

- 7.34 The methodology for calculating capacity for comparison goods floorspace differs from that used to model capacity for convenience goods floorspace. The principal reason for this is that there are no robust, industry standard benchmark sales densities for calculating the turnover of smaller independent retailers that typically make up the majority of the comparison provision of town centres (although it is noted that Mintel Retail Rankings do provide published sales densities for national multiple comparison retailers). Moreover, the trading levels of comparison retailers can fluctuate significantly depending on a number of localised variables, most notably the location of the retailer relative to similar providers (as customers are likely to link multiple comparison goods trips and retailers in close proximity to each other provide a greater draw).
- 7.35 As such, we adopt the approach that comparison goods retailers across the Study Area are trading 'at equilibrium' at 2016 (which adopts the survey derived turnover) and examine capacity by measuring the growth in available expenditure to 2035.
- 7.36 Based on the survey findings, we estimate that (at 2016) comparison goods retailers within Tunbridge Wells Borough turnover £647.0m, or 43.6% of available comparison goods expenditure in the Study Area. We adopt a constant market share, assuming that the performance of comparison retailers within Tunbridge Wells continues to be commensurate with its current market share. This equates to a total turnover of £1,243.4m by 2035.

- 7.37 We also make the assumption that Royal Tunbridge Wells derives 5% of additional turnover from tourists, commuters and other visitors from outside of the surveyed Study Area, as per the previous Study. This additional expenditure, or 'inflow', equates to £20.3m of additional turnover, or 1.4% of additional expenditure.
- 7.38 Taking account of population and expenditure growth and forecast floorspace efficiencies, we identify a surplus expenditure of £22.0m at 2021, rising to £91.3m by 2026, £233.9m by 2033 and £282.4m at 2035.

**Figure 7.4 | Comparison Goods Surplus in Tunbridge Wells Borough**

Year	Turnover (£m) <sup>1</sup>	Available Expenditure (£m) <sup>2</sup>	Inflow (£m)	Surplus Expenditure (£m)
2016	667.3	647.0	20.3	0.0
2021	735.3	734.2	23.0	22.0
2026	822.2	885.7	27.8	91.3
2033	957.5	1,155.1	36.2	233.9
2035	1,000.1	1,243.4	39.0	282.4
<b>Study Area Market Share (%)</b>		<b>43.6</b>		

<sup>1</sup> Allows for increased turnover efficiency as set out in Table 4b Experian Retail Planner 14 (November 2016)

<sup>2</sup> Assumes constant market share claimed by Tunbridge Wells Borough facilities at 43.6% from the Study Area

Source: Table 26a, Appendix D

- 7.39 As with convenience capacity modelling, we have taken account of committed comparison retail goods floorspace across the Borough, which equates to a total of 10,637 sq m, or an initial £51.1m of committed comparison goods turnover at 2016, rising to £76.6m by 2035.

**Figure 7.5 | Comparison Goods Floorspace Capacity in Tunbridge Wells Borough**

Year	Surplus Expenditure (£m)	Commitments (£m)	Residual Expenditure (£m)	Floorspace Capacity (sq m net)	
				Min <sup>1</sup>	Max <sup>2</sup>
2021	22.0	56.3	-34.3	-5,700	-8,900
2026	91.3	62.9	28.4	4,200	6,600
2033	233.9	73.3	160.6	20,300	32,000
2035	282.4	76.6	205.8	25,000	39,200

<sup>1</sup> Average sales density assumed to be £5,500/sq m which Nexus considers to be towards the upper end of what could be achieved in Tunbridge Wells Borough

<sup>2</sup> Average sales density assumed to be £3,500/sq m which Nexus considers to be towards the lower end of what could be achieved in Tunbridge Wells Borough

Source: Table 26d, Appendix D

- 7.40 Figure 7.5 identifies a residual expenditure deficit of £-34.3m at 2021, rising to a surplus of £28.4m at 2026, £160.6m at 2033 and £205.8m at 2035. We go on to utilise average sales densities for high street retailers (the upper end of what could be achieved) to provide assumed minimum floorspace estimates and average sales densities for bulky goods retailers (the lower end of what could be achieved) to provide assumed maximum comparison goods floorspace capacity

estimates. This available residual spend equates to a negative comparison goods floorspace capacity at 2021, rising to between an estimated 4,200 sq m and 6,600 sq m at 2026, between 20,300 sq m and 32,000 sq m at 2033 and between 25,000 sq m and 39,200 sq m at 2035.

- 7.41 We also look at the 'likely scenario' following an assessment of the likelihood of committed developments coming forward over the study period, again 'stripping out' potential turnover of schemes that developers have announced will not be coming forward, namely the Tesco foodstore at Pembury (2,190 sq m net, which equates to a comparison goods turnover of £7.2m). This has the effect of reducing the committed turnover by 14.1% to £51.1m.
- 7.42 Considering only the turnover of the comparison goods retail commitments likely to come forward over the study period provides a residual expenditure deficit of £-43.9m at 2016, rising to £-26.4m at 2021. By 2026, we estimate a residual expenditure surplus of £37.2m, rising to £170.9m at 2033 and £216.6 at 2035.
- 7.43 This available expenditure would provide a negative comparison goods floorspace capacity to 2021. By 2026, the surplus of residual expenditure would allow for an estimated comparison goods floorspace capacity of between 5,500 sq m and 8,600 sq m in 2026, rising to 21,700 sq m and 34,000 sq m at 2033 and between 26,300 sq m and 41,300 sq m at 2035 due to forecast increases in turnover efficiency such as more efficient reconfigurations to the store layouts, improvements in stores supply chains and the incorporation of new technologies (such as self-scan checkouts) in retailers over the plan period.
- 7.44 As with the convenience floorspace capacity assessment above, we go on to assess the capacity for net additional comparison goods floorspace across each of the five key centres across the Borough, taking account of the forecast population and expenditure growth on the basis of existing market share shopping patterns.

**Figure 7.6 | Likely Comparison Goods Floorspace Capacity in Tunbridge Wells Borough**

Year	Surplus Expenditure (£m)	Commitments (£m)	Residual Expenditure (£m)	Floorspace Capacity (sq m net)	
				Min <sup>1</sup>	Max <sup>2</sup>
2021	22.0	48.4	-26.4	-4,400	-6,800
2026	91.3	54.1	37.2	5,500	8,600
2033	233.9	63.0	170.9	21,700	34,000
2035	282.4	65.8	216.6	26,300	41,300

<sup>1</sup> Average sales density assumed to be £5,500/sq m which Nexus considers to be towards the upper end of what could be achieved in Tunbridge Wells Borough

<sup>2</sup> Average sales density assumed to be £3,500/sq m which Nexus considers to be towards the lower end of what could be achieved in Tunbridge Wells Borough

Source: Table 26f, Appendix D

**Figure 7.13 | Likely Comparison Goods Floorspace Capacity in Royal Tunbridge Wells**

Year	Surplus Expenditure (£m)	Commitments (£m)	Residual Expenditure (£m)	Floorspace Capacity (sq m net)	
				Min <sup>1</sup>	Max <sup>2</sup>
2021	20.1	48.4	-28.2	-4,700	-7,300
2026	86.5	54.1	32.4	4,800	7,500
2033	223.0	63.0	160.0	20,300	31,900
2035	269.4	65.8	203.6	24,700	38,800

<sup>1</sup> Average sales density assumed to be £5,500/sq m which Nexus considers to be towards the upper end of what could be achieved in Tunbridge Wells Borough

<sup>2</sup> Average sales density assumed to be £3,500/sq m which Nexus considers to be towards the lower end of what could be achieved in Tunbridge Wells Borough

Source: Table 26l, Appendix D

**Figure 7.14 | Likely Comparison Goods Floorspace Capacity in Southborough**

Year	Surplus Expenditure (£m)	Commitments (£m)	Residual Expenditure (£m)	Floorspace Capacity (sq m net)	
				Min <sup>1</sup>	Max <sup>2</sup>
2021	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0
2026	0.2	0.0	0.2	0	0
2033	0.4	0.0	0.4	0	100
2035	0.5	0.0	0.5	100	100

<sup>1</sup> Average sales density assumed to be £5,500/sq m which Nexus considers to be towards the upper end of what could be achieved in Tunbridge Wells Borough

<sup>2</sup> Average sales density assumed to be £3,500/sq m which Nexus considers to be towards the lower end of what could be achieved in Tunbridge Wells Borough

Source: Table 26p, Appendix D

**Figure 7.15 | Likely Comparison Goods Floorspace Capacity in Paddock Wood**

Year	Surplus Expenditure (£m)	Commitments (£m)	Residual Expenditure (£m)	Floorspace Capacity (sq m net)	
				Min <sup>1</sup>	Max <sup>2</sup>
2021	0.3	0.0	0.3	100	100
2026	1.4	0.0	1.4	200	300
2033	3.5	0.0	3.5	400	700
2035	4.2	0.0	4.2	500	800

<sup>1</sup> Average sales density assumed to be £5,500/sq m which Nexus considers to be towards the upper end of what could be achieved in Tunbridge Wells Borough

<sup>2</sup> Average sales density assumed to be £3,500/sq m which Nexus considers to be towards the lower end of what could be achieved in Tunbridge Wells Borough

Source: Table 26t, Appendix D

**Figure 7.16 | Likely Comparison Goods Floorspace Capacity in Cranbrook**

Year	Surplus Expenditure (£m)	Commitments (£m)	Residual Expenditure (£m)	Floorspace Capacity (sq m net)	
				Min <sup>1</sup>	Max <sup>2</sup>
2021	0.2	0.0	0.2	0	100
2026	1.0	0.0	1.0	100	200
2033	2.6	0.0	2.6	300	500
2035	3.1	0.0	3.1	400	600

<sup>1</sup> Average sales density assumed to be £5,500/sq m which Nexus considers to be towards the upper end of what could be achieved in Tunbridge Wells Borough

<sup>2</sup> Average sales density assumed to be £3,500/sq m which Nexus considers to be towards the lower end of what could be achieved in Tunbridge Wells Borough

Source: Table 26x, Appendix D

**Figure 7.17 | Likely Comparison Goods Floorspace Capacity in Hawkhurst**

Year	Surplus Expenditure (£m)	Commitments (£m)	Residual Expenditure (£m)	Floorspace Capacity (sq m net)	
				Min <sup>1</sup>	Max <sup>2</sup>
2021	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0
2026	0.2	0.0	0.2	0	0
2033	0.5	0.0	0.5	100	100
2035	0.6	0.0	0.6	100	100

<sup>1</sup> Average sales density assumed to be £5,500/sq m which Nexus considers to be towards the upper end of what could be achieved in Tunbridge Wells Borough

<sup>2</sup> Average sales density assumed to be £3,500/sq m which Nexus considers to be towards the lower end of what could be achieved in Tunbridge Wells Borough

Source: Table 26ab, Appendix D

**Figure 7.18 | Likely Comparison Goods Floorspace Capacity in other rural and local centres**

Year	Surplus Expenditure (£m)	Commitments (£m)	Residual Expenditure (£m)	Floorspace Capacity (sq m net)	
				Min <sup>1</sup>	Max <sup>2</sup>
2021	0.2	0.0	0.2	0	100
2026	1.0	0.0	1.0	100	200
2033	2.4	0.0	2.4	300	500
2035	3.0	0.0	3.0	400	600

<sup>1</sup> Average sales density assumed to be £5,500/sq m which Nexus considers to be towards the upper end of what could be achieved in Tunbridge Wells Borough

<sup>2</sup> Average sales density assumed to be £3,500/sq m which Nexus considers to be towards the lower end of what could be achieved in Tunbridge Wells Borough

Source: Table 26af, Appendix D

7.45 **Royal Tunbridge Wells** generates a total residual expenditure deficit of £-28.2m in 2021, rising to £203.6m in 2035 (having regard to the likely comparison goods commitments within the zone). This available expenditure would provide a significant estimated net comparison goods floorspace

capacity of between 4,800 sq m and 7,500 sq m by 2026, rising to 20,300 sq m and 30,900 sq m at 2033 and between 24,700 sq m and 38,800 sq m at 2035. We go on to consider this capacity against the centre's allocations in Section 9.

- 7.46 The residual expenditure generated by **Southborough** totals just £0.6m in 2026, rising marginally to £0.5m by 2035. On this basis, we estimate that Southborough would not have any capacity floorspace until 2035, where we calculate that there is capacity for just 100 sq m for comparison goods floorspace. As with convenience goods retail capacity in Southborough, this marginal capacity would not warrant a specific site allocation.
- 7.47 **Paddock Wood** is calculated to have an available residual expenditure of £0.3m at 2021, rising to £4.2m by 2035. This gives rise to a net available capacity for just 100 sq m of new comparison goods floorspace at 2021, rising to between 200 sq m and 300 sq m at 2026, between 400 sq m and 700 sq m at 2033 and between 500 sq m and 800 sq m at 2035. This quantum of new comparison goods retail floorspace would not necessitate a site specific approach.
- 7.48 **Cranbrook** is shown to have a relatively modest residual expenditure of £0.2m at 2021, which is forecast to grow by just £2.9m to £3.1m by 2035. This equates to an estimated comparison floorspace capacity of up to 100 sq m at 2021, rising to between 100 sq m and 200 sq m at 2026, between 300 sq m and 500 sq m at 2033 and between 400 sq m and 600 sq m at 2035. This capacity would not require the Council to provide a specific site allocation, but does suggest that there is sufficient surplus expenditure to support a small addition of comparison retail floorspace over the plan period.
- 7.49 **Hawkhurst** generates a residual expenditure surplus of just £0.2m by 2021, rising just £0.4m to £0.6m by 2035, which provides capacity for just 100 sq m of new comparison goods floorspace at 2033 and 2035. This negligible capacity for new floorspace in Hawkhurst is likely to be taken up by incremental developments to existing units in the centre and would not necessitate Council intervention to deliver.
- 7.50 As with convenience goods, we have modelled the capacity for new comparison goods floorspace across the Borough's other rural and local centres. Figure 7.18 identifies a surplus expenditure of £0.2m at 2021, rising to £3.0 by 2035. We therefore estimate a capacity for new comparison goods floorspace across the rest of the Borough of up to 100 sq m at 2021, rising to between 400 sq m and 600 sq m at 2035, which is likely to be taken up by minor extensions and small retail developments outside of the Borough's key centres over the course of the plan period.

### **Capacity for Future Bulky and Non-Bulky Comparison Goods Floorspace**

- 7.51 We go on to assess the capacity for net additional comparison goods floorspace for both bulky (defined as 'Furniture', 'DIY' and 'Electrical') and non-bulky goods (defined as 'Clothing &

Footwear', 'CDs, DVDs and Books', 'Small Household Goods', 'Toys, Games, Bicycles and Recreational Goods' and 'Health and Beauty/Chemist Goods'), taking account of projected increases in population and expenditure as well as the existing market share shopping patterns.

7.52 In terms of bulky goods, we identify a surplus expenditure of £84.1m of spending on bulky goods by 2035, which, in view of the estimated £28.4m of committed development that could be taken up by bulky goods retailers, would equate to a residual expenditure of £55.8m. This would provide capacity for 10,600 sq m (net) new bulky comparison goods development across the Borough over the plan period.

**Figure 7.19 | Likely Bulky Comparison Goods Floorspace Capacity in the Borough**

Year	Surplus Expenditure (£m)	Commitments (£m)	Residual Expenditure (£m)	Floorspace Capacity (sq m net)
2016	0.0	18.9	-18.9	-5,400
2021	6.5	20.9	-14.3	-3,700
2026	27.2	23.3	3.9	900
2033	69.7	27.2	42.5	8,500
2035	84.1	28.4	55.8	10,600

<sup>1</sup> Average sales density assumed to be £3,500 per sq.m for non-bulky goods retailers

<sup>2</sup> Residual calculated by subtracting turnover of commitments (sourced from Table 26ak) from surplus expenditure (sourced from Table 26ag)

<sup>3</sup> Allows for increased turnover efficiency as set out in Table 4b Experian Retail Planner 14 (November 2016)

<sup>4</sup> Figures may not total due to rounding

Source: Table 26al, Appendix D

7.53 We go on to calculate a surplus non-bulky goods expenditure of £198.2m from residents of the Study Area by 2035. Taking into account an estimated £35.8m of comparison goods commitments for non-bulky goods retailers, we identify a residual expenditure of £162.4m by 2035, which equates to 19,700 sq m of capacity for new non-bulky comparison goods floorspace across the Borough.

**Figure 7.20 | Likely Non-Bulky Comparison Goods Floorspace Capacity in the Borough**

Year	Surplus Expenditure (£m)	Commitments (£m)	Residual Expenditure (£m)	Floorspace Capacity (sq m net)
2016	0.0	23.9	-23.9	-4,300
2021	15.4	26.4	-10.9	-1,800
2026	64.1	29.5	34.6	5,100
2033	164.2	34.3	129.9	16,500
2035	198.2	35.8	162.4	19,700

<sup>1</sup> Average sales density assumed to be £5,500 per sq.m for bulky goods retailers

<sup>2</sup> Residual calculated by subtracting turnover of commitments (sourced from Table 26aq) from surplus expenditure (sourced from Table 26am)

<sup>3</sup> Allows for increased turnover efficiency as set out in Table 4b Experian Retail Planner 14 (November 2016)

<sup>4</sup> Figures may not total due to rounding

Source: Table 26ar, Appendix D

---

## Summary

- 7.54 Under the scenario where only the retail floorspace commitments that are likely to come forward are considered, we identify capacity for the delivery of between 7,500 sq m and 9,500 sq m of net additional convenience floorspace and between 21,700 sq m and 34,000 sq m of net additional comparison floorspace across the Borough by 2033, on the basis of current market share patterns. This rises to between 7,700 sq m and 9,800 sq m (convenience) and between 26,300 sq m and 41,300 sq m (comparison) by 2035.
- 7.55 Of this, Royal Tunbridge Wells is estimated to provide for the majority of convenience goods floorspace (between 6,000 sq m and 7,600 sq m by 2033), followed by Paddock Wood (between 1,000 sq m and 1,300 sq m by 2033). Given the current convenience goods market shares across Southborough and Cranbrook, each town centre is estimated to provide less capacity for new retail floorspace over the plan period (between 300 sq m and 400 sq m by 2033), whilst we do not calculate any capacity for Hawkhurst over the plan period.
- 7.56 In terms of comparison goods floorspace capacity, Royal Tunbridge Wells is shown to have the vast majority of capacity for between 20,300 sq m and 31,900 sq m by 2033. Paddock Wood has an estimated capacity for between 400 sq m and 700 sq m by 2033, while Cranbrook has capacity for between 300 sq m and 500 sq m over the same period. Southborough and Hawkhurst, as the centres with the smallest market share, each had an estimated comparison goods floorspace capacity of just 100 sq m over the study period.
- 7.57 Considering the capacity for new comparison goods floorspace across the Borough further, we calculate capacity for an estimated 8,500 sq m of bulky goods floorspace and for 16,500 sq m of non-bulky comparison goods by the end of the plan period.

---

## 8.0 Leisure & Other Town Centre Uses

### Introduction

- 8.1 The leisure market has undergone drastic structural changes over the past few years. The economic downturn of 2008 to 2013 significantly changed consumers' spending behaviours. Even though overall spending was down, the popularity of going to the cinema or theatre has steadily increased, as has eating out at restaurants, cafés, or purchasing takeaway meals. Additionally, as the health and fitness world flourishes, the number of fitness centre memberships has steadily increased. ONS reported that in 2006 average weekly spend on 'sports admissions, subscriptions, leisure class fees and equipment hire' was £5.80 and in 2014 it had increased to £6.90. Further commentary on recent and emerging leisure trends is included in Section 2 of this report.
- 8.2 This section of the Retail and Leisure Study provides a concise analysis of current and predicted trends influencing the leisure sector, as well as an examination of the performance of the Borough's existing leisure base.

### Methodology

- 8.3 The results of the NEMS Household Survey offer an indication of locations and facilities where residents of the Study Area satisfy their leisure and cultural needs. As such, the survey enables us to analyse patterns of travel and potential deficiencies (those that are qualitative in nature) in Tunbridge Wells provision.
- 8.4 The modelling of future commercial leisure needs cannot be based upon the same quantitative model used to estimate retail need (as we have done in Section 7 by estimating future expected expenditure). We therefore appraise Tunbridge Wells' existing provision against recognised sector 'standards' or 'benchmarks'. The completion of this 'benchmarking exercise' allows us to establish deficits and where gaps in the provision of existing facilities may be.
- 8.5 There is a limited collection of uses within the leisure market for which reliable data can be obtained. These include: gyms and leisure centres, cinemas, and ten pin bowling. These uses require proportionally larger properties, and by virtue of their size land parcels/ sites may need to be identified through the development plan process and land allocated accordingly.
- 8.6 Public houses, restaurants, clubs, are typically accommodated in smaller units. By nature of their smaller size, the market can generally deliver units of this size unaided by intervention by the development plan process through allocations.

---

## Existing Tunbridge Wells Market Share by Leisure and Cultural Sector

- 8.7 The NEMS household survey (completed in September 2016) asked respondents to describe their leisure and cultural activities and habits. The responses to these questions (Questions 36 to 54) inform our understanding of leisure trends and needs in Tunbridge Wells. The breakdown of the answers to these questions is set out in full within **Appendix C** and we extrapolate the key results in this Section.
- 8.8 It is important to acknowledge that residents outside the Borough will visit Tunbridge Wells for leisure, recreation and cultural activities, as well as vice-versa. In response to this, the Study Area (from which respondents were engaged) encompasses both those Zones which broadly comprise the Borough (Zones 6, 7, 10, 11 and 15), as well as those in bordering authorities (Zones 1-5, 8-9, 12-14 and 16). In the following analysis, we will refer to residents of the Borough, and residents outside the Borough, utilising this distinction.
- 8.9 We summarise and interpret below, the responses given to the household survey, paying particular attention to distance travelled in order to identify any gaps in provision, as well as general levels of satisfaction with Tunbridge Wells provision of leisure and cultural facilities.

## Participation in Leisure Activities

- 8.10 In the first instance, it is important to have an understanding of the participation rates and general popularity of leisure activities across the Study Area. In Question 36 of the household survey NEMS asked respondents to identify all of the leisure activities they participated in (respondents were allowed to identify as many options as they wished).
- 8.11 Figure 8.1 shows that the most popular leisure activity across the Study Area is to go to a restaurant, which 71.2% of Study Area respondents indicated they do on at least an occasional basis. The second most popular activity is a trip to the cinema (52.7%). Following this, 50.7% of respondents participate in visits to pubs / bars, while 46.6% visit theatres and concert halls. Visiting Bingo Halls (1.6%) is the least prevalent leisure activity.
- 8.12 Figures for the Borough in isolation broadly follow patterns for the Study Area as a whole. There are no remarkable differences between the two datasets. This suggests that the Borough is typical of the wider area, and that there are no very localised barriers to supply and/ or demand that would prevent residents of the Borough from accessing facilities.
- 8.13 On the basis of our experience of undertaking similar studies elsewhere in the UK over recent years, leisure participation rates in Tunbridge Wells are at the middle/ upper end of the usual spectrum. This is an early indicator that the level of existing provision is broadly meeting local expectations.

**Figure 8.1 | Participation in Leisure Activities by Zone (%)**

Activity	Study Area Average	Borough Average
Indoor Sports/Health & Fitness	27.7%	24.8%
Cinema	52.7%	55.5%
Restaurant	71.2%	68.7%
Pubs and Bars	50.7%	50.3%
Ten Pin Bowling	14.4%	11.9%
Bingo	1.6%	1.0%
Theatre / Concert Hall	46.6%	48.9%
Museum / Art Galleries	33.8%	34.2%
Outdoor Sports	24.2%	22.3%

Source: Question 31 of NEMS Household Survey, Appendix C

## Leisure Destinations

8.14 NEMS then asked a series of questions to understand where residents of each zone usually undertook their chosen leisure activity. These results are summarised in Figure 8.2 below. In each case, we have focused on the most popular destination in order to provide a headline snapshot of preferred leisure destinations. The fully tabularised results are found in **Appendix C**.

**Figure 8.2 | Most Popular Leisure Destinations by Zone (%)**

Activity	Zone 6 (Southborough)	Zone 7 (TW Central and South)	Zone 10 (Paddock Wood)	Zone 11 (TW North)	Zone 15 (Cranbrook & Hawkhurst)	Study Area
Indoor Sports/ Health & Fitness	Tunbridge Wells	Tunbridge Wells	Tonbridge	Tunbridge Wells	Cranbrook	Tunbridge Wells
Cinema	Odeon, Tunbridge Wells	Odeon, Tunbridge Wells	Odeon, Tunbridge Wells	Odeon, Tunbridge Wells	Kino, Hawkhurst	Odeon, Tunbridge Wells
Restaurant	Tunbridge Wells	Tunbridge Wells	Tunbridge Wells	Tunbridge Wells	Tunbridge Wells	Tunbridge Wells
Pubs and Bars	Tunbridge Wells	Tunbridge Wells	Paddock Wood	Tunbridge Wells	Hawkhurst	Tunbridge Wells
Ten Pin Bowling	Bowlplex, Tunbridge Wells	Bowlplex, Tunbridge Wells	Bowlplex, Tunbridge Wells	Bowlplex, Tunbridge Wells	Bowlplex, Tunbridge Wells	Bowlplex, Tunbridge Wells
Bingo	Gala, Maidstone	Hornchurch	Paddock Wood	Gala, Maidstone	Gala, Maidstone	Gala, Maidstone
Theatre/Concert/ Museum/Gallery	London	Tunbridge Wells	London	Tunbridge Wells	London	London
Outdoor Sports	Tunbridge Wells	Tunbridge Wells	Paddock Wood	Tunbridge Wells	Cranbrook	Tunbridge Wells

Source: Questions 37-54 of NEMS Household Survey, Appendix C

- 
- 8.15 There are two clear trends in Figure 8.2. The first is that the Borough provides for the vast majority of its own populations leisure and cultural needs. The only times where the most popular leisure and cultural destinations are outside the Borough is for Bingo and Cultural activity trips such as theatres, concerts and museums, as would be expected. The proximity of London to all destinations in the south of England means that it is rarely likely to be rivalled for any significant proportion of trade. There are no full-time bingo facilities in the Borough, only part-time facilities in Paddock Wood and Hawkhurst, which is unsurprising given the low proportion of residents that participate in bingo activities (just 1.0% of the Borough).
- 8.16 We consider below a more in-depth analysis on a sector-by-sector basis of where residents are carrying out their trips.

## Health and Fitness

8.17 As set out in Figure 8.1, the survey highlighted that 27.7% of Study Area residents participate in health and fitness centre activities. This compares to 24.8% in the Borough itself. Figure 8.3 below shows that residents of the Borough undertake the vast majority of their health and fitness trips to destinations inside the Borough.

**Figure 8.3 | Health & Fitness Market Share by Zone (%)**

Zone	Southborough (Zone 6)	Tunbridge Wells Central and South (Zone 7)	Paddock Wood (Zone 10)	Tunbridge Wells North (Zone 11)	Cranbrook & Hawkhurst (Zone 15)	Others in Borough	Borough Total	Elsewhere outside Borough	Total
1	0.0	1.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.5	98.5	100.0
2	2.7	8.5	3.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	14.5	85.5	100.0
3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	100.0
4	0.0	4.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.8	95.2	100.0
5	0.0	1.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.3	98.7	100.0
6	0.0	89.2	0.0	10.8	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0
7	0.0	52.9	2.7	0.0	6.9	6.7	69.2	30.8	100.0
8	0.0	26.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	26.0	74.0	100.0
9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	100.0
10	0.0	5.8	36.2	0.0	9.4	2.9	54.3	45.7	100.0
11	2.4	79.8	3.0	8.8	0.0	0.0	94.0	6.0	100.0
12	11.9	6.0	0.0	7.5	0.0	0.0	24.5	75.5	100.0
13	0.0	6.3	0.0	0.0	10.6	0.0	16.9	83.1	100.0
14	0.0	0.0	10.6	0.0	13.9	0.0	24.5	75.5	100.0
15	0.0	5.9	3.2	0.0	86.5	0.0	95.6	4.4	100.0
16	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	15.6	0.0	15.6	84.4	100.0
<b>Study Area Avg</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>16.3</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>0.9</b>	<b>6.1</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>27.3</b>	<b>72.7</b>	<b>100.0</b>

8.18 The table shows that the Borough provides for almost all of its own residents needs in Zones 6, 11 and 15. Residents in Zone 6 split their trips fairly evenly between Southborough and Tunbridge Wells, whilst the vast majority of residents in Zone 11 visit facilities in Tunbridge Wells. Over 80% of residents in Zone 15 utilise venues in Cranbrook or Goudhurst.

8.19 However, a significant number of residents in Zones 7 (30.8%) and 10 (45.7%) carry out their health and fitness visits outside the Borough. Residents of Zone 7 trip out to a wide range of destinations such as Lamberhurst and Sissinghurst. Residents in Zone 10 visit Tunbridge in large numbers (29.7% of all trips). There is a small inflow of trips from residents outside the Borough. Those most likely to visit the Borough are residents in Zones 8, 12 and 14 (all around 25% inflow).

## Cinemas

- 8.20 52.7% of Study Area residents make cinema trips. This is slightly higher when considering residents of the Borough only; at 55.5%.
- 8.21 There are two full-time cinemas in the Borough which together attract a healthy 50.6% of all cinema trips made by residents of the Study Area (55.0% overall). These are the Odeon cinema in Tunbridge Wells (9 screens) and the Kino cinema in Hawkhurst (1 screen), with the Odeon cinema attracting 44.7% of all trips and the Kino cinema attracting 5.9% of all trips.
- 8.22 Figure 8.4 shows that almost all the residents of the Borough carry out their cinema trips within the Borough itself. None of the Borough's Zones exhibit any significant degree of leakage (13.7% from Zone 15 being the highest). The Borough also benefits from a notable inflow of cinema trade, with Odeon in Tunbridge Wells also being the most popular destination for residents in Zones 2 (40.3% of all trips), 5 (95.3%), 8 (40.5%) and 12 (54.3%). As well as attracting strong attendance from its home Zone 15 (44.8% of all cinema trips), the Kino in Hawkhurst also attracts significant patronage from Zones 12 (37.8%), 13 (18.3%) and 16 (23.0%).

**Figure 8.4 | Cinema Market Share by Zone (%)**

Zone	Odeon, Tunbridge Wells	Kino, Hawkhurst	Others in Borough	Borough Total	Elsewhere outside Borough	Total
1	6.2	0.0	1.1	7.3	92.7	100.0
2	40.3	0.0	8.6	48.9	51.1	100.0
3	2.8	0.0	0.0	2.8	97.2	100.0
4	8.1	0.0	1.0	9.1	90.9	100.0
5	95.3	0.0	1.8	97.1	2.9	100.0
6	95.3	0.0	4.7	100.0	0.0	100.0
7	79.1	3.3	10.1	92.5	7.5	100.0
8	40.5	1.6	0.0	42.1	57.9	100.0
9	24.1	1.4	4.3	29.8	70.2	100.0
10	90.6	2.5	2.9	96.0	4.0	100.0
11	88.9	0.0	11.1	100.0	0.0	100.0
12	54.3	37.8	2.0	94.1	5.9	100.0
13	28.7	18.3	1.0	48.0	52.0	100.0
14	12.3	5.7	10.6	28.6	71.4	100.0
15	26.1	44.8	15.4	86.3	13.7	100.0
16	3.5	23.0	0.0	26.5	73.5	100.0
<b>Study Area Avg</b>	<b>44.7</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>4.4</b>	<b>55.0</b>	<b>45.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

## Restaurants

- 8.23 71.2% of Study Area residents make restaurant trips. Of those trips, 31.7% are made to venues within the Borough.
- 8.24 Residents in each of the Borough's zones carry out the majority of the trips within the Borough itself, though there is a marked difference between the zones. The highest retention is in Zone 11 (Tunbridge Wells North) where 89.2% of residents eat out within the Borough, with the lowest retention being residents in Zone 10 (Paddock Wood) who only carry out 51.1% of their trips within the Borough.
- 8.25 Tonbridge (16.3% from Zone 10), London (8.9% from Zone 6) and Sevenoaks account for the greatest proportions of leaked restaurant trips carried out elsewhere.
- 8.26 Restaurants in Tunbridge Wells successfully attract a significant inflow of trade from Zones 8 (36.4%), 9 (23.4%) and 12 (30.3%) in particular.

**Figure 8.5 | Restaurant Market Share by Zone (%)**

Zone	Southborough (Zone 6)	Tunbridge Wells Central and South (Zone 7)	Paddock Wood (Zone 10)	Tunbridge Wells North (Zone 11)	Cranbrook & Hawkhurst (Zone 15)	Others in Borough	Borough Total	Elsewhere outside Borough	Total
1	1.3	10.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	11.4	88.6	100.0
2	1.2	11.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	12.7	87.3	100.0
3	0.0	5.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.2	94.8	100.0
4	0.0	10.5	1.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	12.1	87.9	100.0
5	0.0	9.7	1.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	11.1	88.9	100.0
6	6.4	61.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	68.3	31.7	100.0
7	0.0	79.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	79.5	20.5	100.0
8	1.0	36.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	37.4	62.6	100.0
9	1.2	23.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	24.6	75.4	100.0
10	1.8	17.7	28.7	1.1	1.8	0.0	51.1	48.9	100.0
11	0.0	76.2	3.7	9.3	0.0	0.0	89.2	10.8	100.0
12	0.0	30.3	0.0	0.0	3.8	0.0	34.1	65.9	100.0
13	0.0	16.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	16.9	83.1	100.0
14	0.0	4.0	1.8	0.9	1.8	0.0	8.5	91.5	100.0
15	0.0	26.3	0.0	0.0	37.5	0.0	63.8	36.2	100.0
16	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	9.7	0.0	9.7	90.3	100.0
<b>Study Area Avg</b>	<b>0.9</b>	<b>25.0</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>31.7</b>	<b>68.3</b>	<b>100.0</b>

## Bars, Pubs, Social Clubs and Nightclubs

- 8.27 The survey results show 50.7% of Study Area residents regularly carry out evening economy trips to bars, pubs, social clubs and nightclubs.
- 8.28 As Figure 8.6 shows, the residents of the Borough largely carry out those trips within the Borough itself, though there is a notable leakage of trade out of Zone 10 (Paddock Wood, 37.0%). A significant number of residents in that Zone visit Tonbridge (19.5%).
- 8.29 In terms of inflows, it is notable that 33.5% of residents in Zone 5 carry out their evening economy trips to the Borough, predominantly to Tunbridge Wells itself (24.0% of all trips).

**Figure 8.6 | Bars/Pubs/Clubs Market Share by Zone (%)**

Zone	Southborough (Zone 6)	Tunbridge Wells Central and South (Zone 7)	Paddock Wood (Zone 10)	Tunbridge Wells North (Zone 11)	Cranbrook & Hawkhurst (Zone 15)	Others in Borough	Borough Total	Elsewhere outside Borough	Total
1	0.0	2.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.1	97.9	100.0
2	1.7	5.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	7.1	92.9	100.0
3	0.0	3.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.0	97.0	100.0
4	0.0	8.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	8.2	91.8	100.0
5	0.0	24.0	6.7	0.9	1.9	0.0	33.5	66.5	100.0
6	14.4	56.9	1.3	0.0	1.3	0.0	73.9	26.1	100.0
7	3.9	77.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	81.6	18.4	100.0
8	0.0	20.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	20.9	79.1	100.0
9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	100.0
10	0.0	5.5	56.2	1.3	0.0	0.0	63.0	37.0	100.0
11	0.0	50.5	1.3	31.5	1.7	0.0	85.0	15.0	100.0
12	0.0	5.1	2.1	3.4	3.8	0.0	14.4	85.6	100.0
13	0.0	1.3	0.0	0.0	7.9	0.0	9.2	90.8	100.0
14	0.0	5.0	4.1	0.0	2.9	0.0	12.0	88.0	100.0
15	0.0	18.8	0.0	0.0	56.0	0.0	74.8	15.2	100.0
16	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.6	0.0	1.6	98.4	100.0
<b>Study Area Avg</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>19.2</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>31.5</b>	<b>68.5</b>	<b>100.0</b>

## Ten Pin Bowling

- 8.30 Only 14.4% of Study Area residents play ten pin bowling. This number reduced further to 11.9% when considering residents of the Borough in isolation.
- 8.31 The Borough has only one full-time ten-pin bowling facility, the Bowlplex in Tunbridge Wells (24 lanes), and so it is unsurprising that this facility accounts for almost all ten-pin bowling trips made by residents of the Borough. It also accounts for all ten-pin trips made by residents of Zones 5 and 8 outside the Borough, and 90.8% of trips made by residents of Zone 2. Similarly to the Odeon in Tunbridge Wells, the Bowlplex proves to be a key destination for leisure trade both within the Borough itself, and in terms of attracting those from outside.
- 8.32 The survey results show 50.7% of Study Area residents regularly carry out evening economy trips.

**Figure 8.7 | Ten-pin Bowling Market Share by Zone (%)**

Zone	Bowlplex, Tunbridge Wells	Others in Borough	Borough Total	Elsewhere outside Borough	Total
1	13.6	0.0	13.6	86.4	100.0
2	90.8	0.0	90.8	9.2	100.0
3	8.8	0.0	8.8	91.2	100.0
4	7.6	0.0	7.6	92.4	100.0
5	100.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0
6	100.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0
7	100.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0
8	100.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0
9	18.3	0.0	18.3	81.7	100.0
10	88.5	0.0	88.5	11.5	100.0
11	100.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0
12	69.3	0.0	69.3	30.7	100.0
13	27.2	0.0	27.2	72.8	100.0
14	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	100.0
15	87.9	0.0	87.9	12.1	100.0
16	10.0	0.0	10.0	90.0	100.0
<b>Study Area Average</b>	<b>56.5</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>56.5</b>	<b>43.5</b>	<b>100.0</b>

## Bingo

- 8.33 Just 1.6% of the Study Area, and only 1.0% of Borough residents, play bingo.
- 8.34 Of the low number of trips which are made, the majority are made to specialist venues outside the Borough, including the three Gala Bingos at Maidstone (24.0% of all trips), Rochester (18.6%) and Crawley (4.6%), as well as the Mecca Bingo in Ashford (7.8%).
- 8.35 There are no full-time bingo halls within the Borough, with part-time facilities in Paddock Wood and Hawkhurst accounting for 4.6% of Study Area market share. Only 14.4% of Study Area residents play ten pin bowling. This number reduced further to 11.9% when considering residents of the Borough in isolation.

**Figure 8.8 | Bingo Market Share by Zone (%)**

Zone	Borough Total	Elsewhere outside Borough	Total
1	0.0	100.0	100.0
2	0.0	100.0	100.0
3	0.0	100.0	100.0
4	0.0	100.0	100.0
5	0.0	100.0	100.0
6	0.0	100.0	100.0
7	0.0	100.0	100.0
8	0.0	100.0	100.0
9	0.0	100.0	100.0
10	100.0	0.0	100.0
11	0.0	100.0	100.0
12	44.4	55.6	100.0
13	0.0	100.0	100.0
14	0.0	100.0	100.0
15	0.0	100.0	100.0
16	0.0	100.0	100.0
<b>Study Area Average</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>95.4</b>	<b>100.0</b>

## Theatres, Galleries and Museums

- 8.36 Tunbridge Wells competes well for a share of arts and cultural market share. It understandably falls within the vast area, which is generally considered to be within the reach of London's established West End economy, and yet is the second most visited destination for all such trips. As Figure 8.9 shows below, 15.9% of all trips made by Study Area residents are made to Tunbridge Wells, with London accounting the majority of the remaining market share (62.1%).
- 8.37 Of the low number of trips which are made, the majority are made to specialist venues outside the Borough, including the three Gala Bingos at Maidstone (24.0% of all trips), Rochester (18.6%) and Crawley (4.6%), as well as the Mecca Bingo in Ashford (7.8%).

**Figure 8.9 | Theatre/Galleries/Museums Market Share by Zone (%)**

Zone	Tunbridge Wells	Others in Borough	Borough Total	Elsewhere outside Borough	Total
1	4.4	0.0	4.4	95.6	100.0
2	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	100.0
3	7.6	0.0	7.6	92.4	100.0
4	4.2	0.0	4.2	95.8	100.0
5	10.4	0.0	10.4	89.6	100.0
6	25.8	0.0	25.8	74.2	100.0
7	48.8	0.0	48.8	51.2	100.0
8	20.1	0.0	20.1	79.9	100.0
9	5.9	0.0	5.9	94.1	100.0
10	16.4	0.0	16.4	85.6	100.0
11	49.4	0.0	49.4	50.6	100.0
12	22.2	0.0	22.2	87.8	100.0
13	8.0	0.0	8.0	92.0	100.0
14	6.1	0.0	6.1	93.9	100.0
15	18.5	16.2	34.7	65.3	100.0
16	11.8	0.0	11.8	87.2	100.0
<b>Study Area Average</b>	<b>15.9</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>16.5</b>	<b>83.5</b>	<b>100.0</b>

## Outdoor Sports

- 8.38 As might be expected, the Borough is largely self-sufficient when it comes to providing outdoor space for leisure pursuits. Residents in Zones 6, 7, 10, 11 and 15 carry out at least 78.5% of their outdoor pursuits locally (Zone 10) increasing to as much as 95.7% (Zone 6).
- 8.39 Tunbridge Wells is the most popular location in the Borough (14.1% of all Study Area trips), though outdoor destinations at Goudhurst (3.5%) and Paddock Wood (2.7%) also show up well.

**Figure 8.10 | Outdoor Sports Market Share by Zone (%)**

Zone	Tunbridge Wells	Others in Borough	Borough Total	Elsewhere outside Borough	Total
1	4.4	0.0	4.4	95.6	100.0
2	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	100.0
3	7.6	0.0	7.6	92.4	100.0
4	4.2	0.0	4.2	95.8	100.0
5	10.4	0.0	10.4	89.6	100.0
6	25.8	0.0	25.8	74.2	100.0
7	48.8	0.0	48.8	51.2	100.0
8	20.1	0.0	20.1	79.9	100.0
9	5.9	0.0	5.9	94.1	100.0
10	16.4	0.0	16.4	85.6	100.0
11	49.4	0.0	49.4	50.6	100.0
12	22.2	0.0	22.2	87.8	100.0
13	8.0	0.0	8.0	92.0	100.0
14	6.1	0.0	6.1	93.9	100.0
15	18.5	16.2	34.7	65.3	100.0
16	11.8	0.0	11.8	87.2	100.0
<b>Study Area Average</b>	<b>15.9</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>16.5</b>	<b>83.5</b>	<b>100.0</b>

## The Need for Additional Leisure Facilities

- 8.40 Question 54 of the Household Survey found that the majority of responses in the Study Area (65.7%) did not identify any leisure facilities that they wished to see more of. This suggests that residents are largely happy with the provision of facilities. Such a response is typical of our surveys of many parts of the UK.
- 8.41 In Figure 8.11 we isolate those responses by residents of Zones 6, 7, 10, 11 and 15 to identify what the main requests for new leisure facilities were from residents of the Borough. More than one suggestion was allowed.
- 8.42 The results show that a new swimming pool was requested almost twice as much as any other single leisure pursuit (11.5%). This was largely driven by residents of Zone 10 (Paddock Wood area), 28.7% of whom mentioned that they would like to see a new swimming pool. A new swimming pool was also identified as the most needed facility by residents of Zones 11 (Tunbridge Wells North area) and 15 (Cranbrook & Hawkhurst area).
- 8.43 Interestingly, the top answer for residents in Zone 7 (Tunbridge Wells Central and South) was for a new cinema (21.4%). This far exceeded such requests elsewhere in the Borough.
- 8.44 Residents in Zone 6 (Southborough area) seem the most content with their provision of leisure facilities, with 75.2% answering that they had no specific requests for new facilities.

**Figure 8.11 | Leisure Facilities Tunbridge Wells residents wish to see more of (%)**

Activity	Average	Southborough (Zone 6)	Tunbridge Wells Central and South (Zone 7)	Paddock Wood (Zone 10)	Tunbridge Wells North (Zone 11)	Cranbrook & Hawkhurst (Zone 15)
None or Don't know	<b>64.3</b>	75.2	60.7	55.8	65.7	71.5
Swimming Pool	<b>11.5</b>	2.1	9.7	28.7	8.2	10.4
Cinema	<b>6.3</b>	2.3	21.4	0.0	6.1	1.2
More Children's Facilities	<b>5.8</b>	5.1	6.7	11.6	1.5	1.2
More Sports Facilities	<b>3.3</b>	7.6	3.6	1.3	0.0	3.9
Cycle Paths/area	<b>2.9</b>	2.1	3.4	3.3	3.2	2.7

Source: Question 54 of NEMS Household Survey, Appendix C (multiple responses allowed to this question)

---

## Capacity for Additional Leisure Facilities

- 8.45 Having identified existing market shares and examined the demand for new facilities from the Borough's residents, we consider here the potential supply-side issues for the provision of new leisure facilities. The purpose of this assessment is to examine the realism of actually providing for new facilities.
- 8.46 Due to the nature of the leisure market we have chosen to adopt a different methodology from that used to analyse the quantitative capacity in the retail market. The reason for this primarily relates to the degree to which the leisure market is disaggregated. However, the lack of reliable data for a number of leisure uses (public houses, clubs etc.) is also an influencing factor; as the data available is not sufficient and would not represent credible information from which we can base our assessment.
- 8.47 The findings of the NEMS Household Survey allow us to assess the market share secured by facilities within the Borough and the wider Study Area for a variety of leisure sectors. As such, we have completed a 'benchmarking' exercise by referencing the estimated increases in the population of the core area population (i.e. Zones 6, 7, 10, 11 and 15). The results of the 'benchmarking' exercise have been used to inform our conclusions with regards to the prospective future need for additional commercial leisure facilities in Tunbridge Wells.

## Estimated Study Area Population

- 8.48 In Section 5 of this Retail and Leisure Study we set out our assessment of how the Study Area's population will grow at regular year intervals at 2016, 2021, 2026, 2033 (being the end of the plan period) and 2035. We have calculated the population within each postal code sector using Experian Micromarketer G3 data and projected forwards using Experian population forecasts.
- 8.49 The results are shown earlier in Figure 5.3.

## Health and Fitness Capacity

- 8.50 A February 2015 report from Savills<sup>90</sup> identified that the level of health and fitness clubs in the UK is higher than it has ever been before, with more clubs and more members. In terms of membership rates across the whole of the UK, Savills estimate that 13.2% of the UK's population are registered members of private health and fitness clubs. In 2014 the membership rate was 12.6%. As at February 2015 Savills estimated that there were 6,112 fitness facilities in the UK.
- 8.51 Similarly, the Leisure Database Company's most up to date research (of June 2015)<sup>91</sup> suggests

---

<sup>90</sup> 'The UK's health and fitness sector', Savills online, 27 February 2016

<sup>91</sup> State of the UK Fitness Industry 2015, Leisure Database Company, June 2015

that there were in the region of 6,312 health and fitness clubs operating across the UK at 2015. We have taken an average of these two estimations, which gives a figure of 6,212.

- 8.52 At the time these estimations were produced the UK population was projected at 65.1 million<sup>92</sup>, and therefore, we calculate there to be on average one club for every 10,480 persons. Our calculations are summarised in Figure 8.12 below.
- 8.53 When estimating the potential requirement for additional health and fitness facilities in Tunbridge Wells, we have considered only the capacity within the Borough itself (rather than the wider Study Area). The reason for this is because the average person is likely to seek out and attend such facilities that are close to home (i.e. typical customer behaviour). Moreover, such trips are likely to be completed by a single person on a regular basis - i.e. one to two times a week, as shown by the household survey. The type and frequency of trips varies greatly to cinema or ten pin bowling activities. Visits to these kinds of leisure facilities are typically completed on a much less frequent basis and undertaken by groups of people and/or families. As a consequence, participants in cinema or ten pin bowling activities are more willing to travel further distances.
- 8.54 Accordingly, the five zones which broadly comprise Tunbridge Wells Borough have an identified estimated population of 127,169 at 2016, increasing to 146,543 by 2035. Based on the assumed benchmark identified above, we calculate that the Borough could support around 12 health and fitness clubs at 2016, increasing to around 14 clubs at 2035.
- 8.55 There are three publically owned and operated leisure centre complexes in the Borough – Tunbridge Wells Sports Centre, Putlands Sports and Leisure Centre (Paddock Wood) and The Weald Sports Centre (Cranbrook). There are also six further gym clubs in Tunbridge Wells (including a privately-run Nuffield Health Centre and PureGym). These are of varying sizes, four of which are small independent gyms, and two of which are larger national chains (Nuffield Health and PureGym). This brings the total health and fitness centre provision to nine in the Borough. It is also important to note that there may be a limited number of smaller clubs, perhaps with occasional classes, which have not been identified as part of our assessment.
- 8.56 Taking account of the fact the assessment considers more mainstream facilities with larger memberships; the current provision of nine facilities is broadly sufficient for meeting likely demand (estimated at 12-14 clubs), although it would appear that this evidence would support applications or allocations coming forward for this type of use.
- 8.57 Our earlier assessment of potential latent demand amongst local residents suggested that there was no significant disquiet amongst local residents about the provision of health and fitness centres. Even in Zones 10 (Paddock Wood, 2.8%) and 15 (Cranbrook and Hawkhurst, 4.3%),

---

<sup>92</sup> As identified by the Office for National Statistics' UK Population mid-year estimate 23 June 2016 data release

which are largely reliant on nearby publicly provided leisure centres, there was little interest in additional leisure centre facilities.

**Figure 8.12 | Health and Fitness Centre Requirement in the Borough**

Year	Tunbridge Wells Population (Zones 6, 7, 10, 11 & 15)	Typical Population Required to Support Centre	Potential No. of Clubs Supported by the Borough
2016	127,169	10,480	12
2021	132,748	10,480	13
2026	138,069	10,480	13
2033	144,835	10,480	14
2035	146,543	10,480	14

*Note: Typical population to support a health and fitness club derived from the Leisure Database Company research (2015)*

- 8.58 We have therefore identified there to be modest capacity for additional health and fitness facilities in the period to 2035. It is envisaged that the market will likely be able to facilitate the development of any such facilities in appropriate locations through the development management process.
- 8.59 There is though significant interest in the creation of a new swimming pool, a desire expressed by significant numbers by residents of the Borough and, in particular, by residents of Zone 10 (28.7%, Paddock Wood). We are aware that there have historically been plans for a new developer-led swimming pool in the town, which are yet to come to fruition. Subject to all commercial considerations, the Council may wish to consider support for such a facility.

## Cinema Capacity

- 8.60 The Borough has two existing full-time cinemas – the Odeon in Tunbridge Wells (9 screens) and the Kino in Hawkhurst (1 screen) – which together attract 87.1% of all cinema trips made by residents of the Borough, in addition to the Trinity Theatre in Tunbridge Wells which also operates as a single screen cinema.
- 8.61 In 2015, data kept by the British Film Institute specified a total of approximately 171.9 million cinema admissions in the UK in 2015 – the third highest annual admission count for the past decade<sup>93</sup>. Taking account of this spike in admissions, we have looked back at the data kept by the British Film Institute since 2006 to produce an average. This calculation delivers an average of 166.5 million cinema admission per year. In order to estimate the average number of admissions per year we have taken the approximate UK population in 2015 of 65.1 million<sup>94</sup>, which suggests there were on average 2.6 admissions per person per year over the last decade.

<sup>93</sup> 'The Box Office 2015 - BFI Research and Statistics', British Film Institute, April 2016

<sup>94</sup> As identified by the Office for National Statistics' 2015-Based National Population Projections 23 June 2016 data release

- 8.62 The UK Cinema Association specifies that in 2015 there were a total of 4,115 cinema screens throughout the UK<sup>95</sup>. Again, we have looked back at the past ten years of data held by the UK Cinema Association in order to produce a ten-year average. This average allows us to produce a figure which may, in reality, better represent the 'right' number of screens to meet market demand. Our calculations result in an average figure of 3,790 screens.
- 8.63 Taking into account the estimations provided by both the British Film Institute and the UK Cinema Association, it is suggested that on average each cinema screen commands 43,931 admissions per year.
- 8.64 Through the application of our benchmarking exercise we have produced an estimate that from the Borough's 2016 population (127,169) there would be on average 330,639 cinema admissions, and that by 2035 this would increase to around 381,012 admissions. Following this, we have taken the assumed number of visits per screen and produced a finding that around 9 screens could be supported over the period to 2035. Figure 8.13 below sets out our findings.
- 8.65 This exercise suggests that the existing provision of 10 full-time screens within the Borough supports the resident population at the current time. The growth in population to 2035 will provide welcome additional patronage to the existing cinemas, as well as the planned cinema development proposed as part of the planning permission for the expansion to Royal Victoria Place Shopping Centre and any other forthcoming developments for such a provision, subject to market demands.

**Figure 8.13 | Cinema Screen Requirement in the Borough**

Year	Tunbridge Wells Population (Zones 6, 7, 10, 11 & 15)	Number of Cinema Visits Per Person	Attendance	Number of Admissions Required to Support Screen	Screens Supported by the Borough
2016	127,169	2.6	330,639	43,931	8
2021	132,748	2.6	345,145	43,931	8
2026	138,069	2.6	358,979	43,931	8
2033	144,835	2.6	376,571	43,931	9
2035	146,543	2.6	381,012	43,931	9

*Note: Number of cinema trips per person and number of admission per screen source from BFI & UK Cinema Association data.*

## Ten Pin Bowling

- 8.66 Mintel is a global provider of Market Research, who provides information on trends and insight in the leisure sector. In terms of data on ten pin bowling trends in the UK, they are one of the only providers. As such we have looked to Mintel research to provide a general indication of the average number of ten pin bowling lanes per resident in the UK.

<sup>95</sup> 'UK cinema industry infrastructure', UK Cinema Association, Retrieved online in April 2016

- 8.67 In 2011 Mintel identified a total of 5,773 bowling lanes throughout the UK<sup>96</sup>. Taking into account the UK population at the time this data was produced (63.3 million) and assessing this against the 2011 provision of ten pin bowling lanes; results in a figure of one bowling lane per every 10,965 persons. We set this analysis out at Figure 8.6.
- 8.68 There is currently one full-time ten-pin facility in the Borough – the Bowlplex in Tunbridge Wells (24 lanes).
- 8.69 Figure 8.14 below indicates that, based on the assumed benchmark, we calculate that around 13 lanes could be supported in the Borough in the period up to 2035. This is well within the current level of provision, and is indicative of the significant inflow of trade from beyond the borough-boundary required to support the Bowlplex facility (as identified earlier).
- 8.70 It is generally accepted, however, that ten pin bowling patronage in the main is reducing. Therefore, it seems likely that the existing level of provision is ample to cater for demands to the end of the Plan period.

**Figure 8.14 | Ten Pin Bowling Requirement in the Borough**

Year	Tunbridge Wells Population (Zones 6, 7, 10, 11 &15)	Number of Cinema Visits Per Person	Attendance	Number of Admissions Required to Support Screen	Screens Supported by the Borough
2016	127,169	2.6	330,639	43,931	8
2021	132,748	2.6	345,145	43,931	8
2026	138,069	2.6	358,979	43,931	8
2033	144,835	2.6	376,571	43,931	9
2035	146,543	2.6	381,012	43,931	9

Note: Typical number of persons required to support a bowling lane derived from Mintel research.

## Summary

- 8.71 As part of this Retail and Leisure Study, Nexus has measured Tunbridge Wells' existing leisure provision against 'benchmarks' in order to ascertain whether there are any gaps in the market where demand is not being met by existing provision.
- 8.72 In terms of existing market shares, the Borough provides well for its population in terms of all the key leisure activities that would be expected to be catered for close to home. This is reflected by 64.3% of Borough residents surveyed being unable to identify any leisure facility that they considered to be underprovided. Whilst there is a notable leakage of bingo trips, this is of little concern due to low, declining, participation rates. The Borough also exports a significant number of trips for cultural activities, but this is to be expected for a destination in such close proximity to

<sup>96</sup> 'Tenpin Bowling – UK', Mintel, November 2011

---

London

- 8.73 Accordingly, we have been unable to identify any latent capacity for any of the activities that we have been readily able to forecast into the future; health and fitness clubs, cinema screens or ten-pin bowling lanes. This is largely a factor of the Borough being well-provided for in terms of supply in most categories.
- 8.74 Turning to consider the requests for new facilities in the Borough (Question 54 of the household survey); we noted that there was significant call for a new swimming pool, particularly by residents in the Paddock Wood area. This is clearly an area which the Council may wish to explore further. There were also a significant number of residents in the Tunbridge Wells area who requested consideration be given to a new cinema, notwithstanding the existing Odeon cinema. No doubt healthy competition, in a sustainable location might be welcomed and would be subject to market demand to provide such additional facilities.

---

## 9.0 Recommendations and Future Retail Strategy

### Introduction and Policy Basis

- 9.1 This Retail and Leisure Study has been commissioned in order to form part of the evidence base to support the emerging Local Plan for the Borough (up to 2033) in accordance with national policy requirements.
- 9.2 Specifically, Paragraph 23 of the NPPF indicates that local planning authorities should:
- Recognise town centres as the heart of their communities and pursue policies to support their viability and vitality;
  - Define a network and hierarchy of centres that is resilient to anticipated future economic changes;
  - 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;
  - Promote competitive town centres that provide customer choice and a diverse retail offer and which reflect the individuality of town centres;
  - Retain and enhance existing markets and, where appropriate, re-introduce or create new ones, ensuring that markets remain attractive and competitive;
  - 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;
  - 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 identified needs in other accessible locations that are well connected to the town centre; and
  - Set policies for the consideration of proposals for main town centre uses which cannot be accommodated in or adjacent to town centres.
- 9.3 In addition, Paragraph 26 of the NPPF indicates that local planning authorities may set their own local threshold for retail, leisure and office developments outside of town centres for which an

impact assessment would be required.

- 9.4 The Council has therefore appointed Nexus to undertake a health check of the vitality and viability of the Borough's key centres, and to provide a robust quantitative base for their retail and leisure capacity projections to 2033. In conjunction with this Study, we have conducted and analysed a household telephone survey that enables us to understand existing market share patterns, and the performance of existing centres and stores.

## Qualitative Retail Capacity Assessment

### Trends

- 9.5 Prior to conducting our quantitative assessment, we firstly analysed in Section 2 the retail and leisure trends, which have prevailed in towns and centres across the UK over recent years.

### Vitality and Viability

- 9.6 We then set out our findings in Section 4 - Tunbridge Wells' key centres (being Royal Tunbridge Wells, Southborough, Paddock Wood, Cranbrook and Hawkhurst) through a health check assessment of vitality and viability, as well as how the centres have performed since the previous Study in 2014.
- 9.7 **Royal Tunbridge Wells** occupies a high Javelin Venuescore ranking of 52 (out of a possible 3,077 in 2014-15) and has risen in the rankings since 2010 due to the strong draw and high proportion of national multiple retailers present in the centre. The comparable regional centres of Maidstone and Guildford have marginally fallen in the rankings over the same period, yet remain slightly higher in the rankings at 51 and 32, respectively.
- 9.8 The Pantiles and the High Street, as well as Camden Road, feature a wide range of independent retailers that complement the national multiple retailers to the north of the centre, particularly within the Royal Victoria Place Shopping Centre and along Calverley Road. The town centre also actively competes with the significant out-of-centre retail offer from the nearby Retail Parks at Longfield Road/ North Farm. The extent of the retail offer to the north of the centre (and lack of public transport to the out-of-centre retail parks), combined with the attraction of Royal Tunbridge Wells has a tendency to cause congestion resulting from traffic jams and bottlenecks on the A264 (Pembury Road) coming in to the town, as well as the A26 (London Road) through Southborough.
- 9.9 There is qualitative capacity for a town centre foodstore in Royal Tunbridge Wells to complement the centre's strong comparison goods offer, especially since the closure of the Morrisons foodstore (now occupied by The Range) in the centre in 2016. Whilst the proportion of vacant units in the centre is higher than the national average in terms of both the number of units and amount of floorspace, the majority of these vacancies are located to the north of the centre at Royal Victoria

- Place Shopping Centre and Ely Court. Notably, Royal Victoria Place currently benefits from planning permission for a comprehensive redevelopment to provide a revised pedestrian access, as well as new larger and more flexible retail units, restaurants and cafes and a multi-screen cinema. As such, the vacancies are likely due to expiring leases and retailers waiting for the redevelopment to go ahead, rather than any specific indicator of the health of the centre.
- 9.10 Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre benefits from plenty of street furniture and planting, complimenting the wide footpaths and 'boulevard' nature of the centre. Footfall was notably higher to the north of the centre, in particular along the pedestrianised Calverley Road, with the linear nature of the town and the sloping topography between the north and south of the centre reducing the likelihood that shoppers link trips between retailers at either end of the centre.
- 9.11 **Southborough** primarily caters to the day-to-day needs of local residents, with the anchor Tesco express foodstore to the north of the primary shopping area providing almost the entirety of the centre's convenience retail offer while the extent of the centre's comparison offer (made up almost entirely of independent retailers) suits the centre's more local function.
- 9.12 The centre as a whole is bisected by the A26 (London Road) running through the town with the Royal Victoria Hall, surrounding vacant land and lack of active frontages to the east of London Road somewhat detracting from the overall vitality and viability of the centre. The centre features a local post office, but no banking facilities. A proposal for a Community Hub development at the Royal Victoria Hall site will introduce a new retail unit and other town centre uses to the centre, as well as public realm improvements.
- 9.13 **Paddock Wood** performs well, with a large Waitrose supermarket and small Tesco express supplemented by a mix of independent convenience and comparison retailers. The draw of the centre and proportion of retail units decreases to the south, yet the centre has a low vacancy rate compared to the national average, suggesting strong demand from retail and other town centre occupiers for units within Paddock Wood.
- 9.14 While the town is generally well provided for in terms of convenience and day-to-day comparison goods and leisure services, the centre lacks the number of restaurants and other evening economy uses that would be expected of a town of its size. With the expected growth in population through the permitted schemes for significant residential development on the edge of Paddock Wood, it would be expected that this would result in further demand for local facilities and a wider offer within the town.
- 9.15 **Cranbrook** is a pleasant town located within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), anchored by a large Co-operative foodstore and benefiting from on-street parking and a good mix of both national multiple and local independent convenience and comparison retailers.

- 9.16 Whilst the pedestrian count and market share of comparison goods spending to Cranbrook has fallen since the previous Study in 2014, the prominent vacant Cranbrook Engineering Site has recently been granted planning permission for a residential-led development incorporating a new retail unit. This introduction of an additional local resident population from this scheme and other schemes in the pipeline will increase footfall and spending, improving the vitality and viability of the centre and providing a new modern retail unit in a constrained centre.
- 9.17 **Hawkhurst** is the smallest centre in the Study, located at a major vehicular crossroads and anchored by a large Waitrose supermarket that recently opened in place of a Budgens foodstore. The centre also features a Tesco foodstore (located out-of-centre) and, somewhat unusually for a centre of this size, a popular single screen digital cinema that draws residents to the centre from a wide catchment area. To the north of the centre is 'The Colonnade', a Grade II listed run of shop frontages that was recently refurbished and features a number of independent local retailers.
- 9.18 Whilst Hawkhurst benefits from trade as a result of passing-by traffic (particularly given the draw of the new Waitrose foodstore), the centre is constrained by pedestrian accessibility, both from the Waitrose foodstore to the rest of the centre and across the busy crossroads.

### Market Share

#### All Retail - Market Share by Destination (%)

Destination	Market Share by Category (%)												Total Market Share (all retail)
	Convenience Spending			Comparison Spending									
	Main Food	Top-up	Total	Clothing	Books etc.	Household	Recreation	Chemist	Electrical	DIY	Furniture	Total	
<b>Royal Tunbridge Wells</b>	19.5	13.3	<b>18.2</b>	43.3	32.5	43.6	40.4	42.6	45.6	36.4	41.1	<b>41.8</b>	<b>32.3</b>
<b>Southborough</b>	0.3	1.9	<b>0.7</b>	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.3	<b>0.1</b>	<b>0.3</b>
<b>Paddock Wood</b>	3.2	3.1	<b>3.2</b>	0.5	0.5	0.4	1.0	0.5	0.2	1.1	1.4	<b>0.7</b>	<b>1.7</b>
<b>Cranbrook</b>	1.2	2.6	<b>1.5</b>	0.2	0.0	0.3	0.4	0.4	1.2	0.8	1.0	<b>0.5</b>	<b>0.9</b>
<b>Hawkhurst</b>	1.7	1.8	<b>1.7</b>	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.2	0.1	<b>0.1</b>	<b>0.7</b>
<b>Others in Tunbridge Wells</b>	0.5	5.8	<b>1.6</b>	0.1	0.6	0.4	0.1	0.4	0.2	2.1	1.2	<b>0.5</b>	<b>0.9</b>
<b>Tunbridge Wells Sub-Total</b>	26.5	28.5	<b>26.9</b>	44.2	33.8	44.8	41.9	43.9	47.6	40.6	45.1	<b>43.6</b>	<b>36.9</b>
<b>Others in Study Area</b>	47.0	57.4	<b>49.1</b>	12.8	38.0	15.2	24.1	15.0	17.0	33.0	24.7	<b>19.7</b>	<b>31.5</b>
<b>Outside the Study Area</b>	26.6	14.1	<b>24.0</b>	43.0	28.3	40.0	34.0	41.1	35.5	26.4	30.2	<b>36.7</b>	<b>31.6</b>
<b>Total</b>	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Appendix D

- 
- 9.19 Having established the Study Area and the projected changes in population, expenditure and special forms of trading in Section 5, we then moved on in Section 6 to analyse the market shares arising out of the Household Telephone Survey of 1,600 households in the Study Area.
- 9.20 Royal Tunbridge Wells is by far the dominant destination for convenience goods spending across the Borough, with Paddock Wood also drawing a healthy proportion of trade given its relative size, supporting residents to the east of the Borough. Hawkhurst, Cranbrook and Southborough each cater for a greater proportion of top-up spending than main food shopping trips, providing support for the day-to-day convenience needs of local residents.
- 9.21 The 2016 household survey identified that the Borough has maintained a similar convenience goods market share as the previous 2014 Study (falling marginally from 27.1% to 26.9%), with a slight fall in the proportion of convenience goods spending to Royal Tunbridge Wells and an increase in the proportion of spending to Southborough and Paddock Wood.
- 9.22 On the whole, convenience retailers in the Borough are performing above national company averages, with the notable exception of foodstores located within Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre where convenience retailer likely suffer from congestion and parking issues compared to the draw of the easily accessible out-of-centre retailers.
- 9.23 Royal Tunbridge Wells features Tesco Metro, Marks and Spencer, Sainsbury's Local and Iceland foodstores within the town centre. However, the majority of convenience goods draw is to foodstores in edge-of-centre locations – such as the Sainsbury's at Linden Park Road, which has the highest convenience market share in the Borough – and the out-of-centre Asda and Marks and Spencer at the Fountains and Longfield Road Retail Parks.
- 9.24 The majority of convenience goods trips in Paddock Wood and Cranbrook are made to Waitrose, Tesco Express and Co-op within the town centre boundaries, whilst the convenience offer in Southborough and Hawkhurst (Tesco Express and Tesco Metro) are primarily located towards the outskirts of the centres, with Waitrose in Hawkhurst not trading at the time of the household survey.
- 9.25 In terms of comparison goods, the Borough saw a slightly greater drop in market share from 47.2% at the time of the previous household survey in 2013 to 43.6% in 2016. As may be expected, the majority of spending in the Borough was directed towards retailers in Royal Tunbridge Wells, with each of the other centres in the Borough attracting less than 1% of market share from across the Study Area.
- 9.26 Nonetheless, notably, each of the centres of Southborough, Paddock Wood, Cranbrook and Hawkhurst attracted the greatest proportion of comparison goods trade from their own zones, suggesting that these centres do cater to local resident's day-to-day comparison goods needs, whilst residents of the Borough visit Royal Tunbridge Wells for larger comparison goods shopping

trips.

- 9.27 Leakage of retail spending from residents of the Study Area to other centres outside of the Borough has risen marginally since the previous 2013 Study, from 72.9% to 73.1% (convenience goods) and from 52.8% to 56.4% (comparison goods).

### Study Area Leakage by Destination at 2016 (%)

Destination	Study Area Leakage by Category (%)												Total Leakage (all retail)
	Convenience Spending			Comparison Spending									
	Main Food	Top-up	Total	Clothing	Books etc.	Household	Recreation	Chemist	Electrical	DIY	Furniture	Total	
<b>East Grinstead</b>	10.6	8.8	<b>10.2</b>	3.2	11.2	4.6	6.4	4.4	1.6	7.1	6.4	<b>5.0</b>	7.1
<b>Maidstone</b>	5.8	3.7	<b>5.4</b>	10.9	8.3	7.1	5.9	7.2	3.4	4.0	5.7	<b>7.2</b>	6.5
<b>Tonbridge</b>	11.6	10.2	<b>11.3</b>	2.1	7.7	2.9	5.1	2.7	0.8	2.8	2.8	<b>3.0</b>	6.4
<b>Ashford</b>	2.5	0.4	<b>2.0</b>	3.7	1.9	4.4	3.4	4.9	3.5	5.7	4.2	<b>3.9</b>	3.2
<b>Tenterden</b>	4.7	5.5	<b>4.9</b>	2.8	4.2	1.0	1.9	1.1	1.9	1.6	0.7	<b>1.9</b>	3.1
<b>Bluewater</b>	-	-	-	8.0	3.1	6.5	2.3	6.4	4.8	0.0	3.1	<b>5.1</b>	3.0
<b>Crawley</b>	0.7	0.8	<b>0.7</b>	4.5	0.7	2.9	3.1	2.7	7.5	0.8	0.8	<b>3.3</b>	2.2
<b>Sevenoaks</b>	4.4	3.3	<b>4.1</b>	0.1	0.6	0.4	0.3	0.4	1.0	2.4	0.5	<b>0.5</b>	2.0
<b>Others outside Tunbridge Wells</b>	33.3	38.8	<b>34.4</b>	20.5	28.5	25.5	29.6	26.2	27.8	34.9	30.7	<b>26.5</b>	29.7
<b>Total Leakage from the Study Area</b>	<b>73.5</b>	<b>71.5</b>	<b>73.1</b>	<b>55.8</b>	<b>66.2</b>	<b>55.2</b>	<b>58.1</b>	<b>56.1</b>	<b>52.4</b>	<b>59.4</b>	<b>54.9</b>	<b>56.4</b>	<b>63.1</b>

Source: Appendix D

### Study Area Leakage by Destination since 2013 (%)

Destination	Study Area Leakage (%)			
	Convenience Spending		Comparison Spending	
	2013	2016	2013	2016
<b>East Grinstead</b>	9.6	10.2	4.4	5.0
<b>Maidstone</b>	4.5	5.4	8.6	7.2
<b>Tonbridge</b>	11.7	11.3	4.2	3.0
<b>Ashford</b>	-	2.0	2.1	3.9
<b>Tenterden</b>	4.3	4.9	1.4	1.9
<b>Bluewater</b>	-	-	5.0	5.1
<b>Crawley</b>	-	0.7	2.6	3.3
<b>Sevenoaks</b>	5.0	4.1	2.0	0.5
<i>Others outside Tunbridge Wells</i>	37.8	34.4	22.5	26.5
<b>Total Leakage from the Study Area</b>	<b>72.9</b>	<b>73.1</b>	<b>52.8</b>	<b>56.4</b>

Source: Appendix D and PBA, Retail and Leisure Study Update 2014 (Appendix D, Table 5)  
Some figures not shown in PBS Study

- 9.28 Convenience goods leakage from the Study Area is focussed towards Tonbridge and East Grinstead, each attracting 11.3% and 10.2% of convenience goods spending from residents across the Study Area, with a further 5.4% drawn to Maidstone. Whilst convenience goods spending in Tonbridge from residents of the Study Area has marginally fallen since 2013, the proportion of convenience goods spending to retailers in East Grinstead and Maidstone has grown.
- 9.29 Notably, convenience goods spending to each of the centres of Tonbridge, East Grinstead and Maidstone comprised of a higher proportion of main food spending than top-up goods spending, suggesting that residents are regularly making the journey to these centres for their main convenience goods shopping (as opposed to carrying out this shopping alongside other activities such as work commutes).
- 9.30 In terms of comparison goods leakage, Maidstone is the primary draw for comparison goods retail trips out of the Borough, with Bluewater Shopping Centre and East Grinstead each also attracting over 5% of comparison spending from residents across the Study Area.
- 9.31 Leakage of comparison goods expenditure to Maidstone has actually fallen since the previous household survey, whilst spending to Bluewater has remained broadly at the same level, attracting a high proportion of clothing and footwear and household goods spending.

### **Quantitative Retail Capacity Assessment**

- 9.32 In Section 7, we built on the work carried out in Sections 5 and 6 to set out our forecast capacity for new retail development over the plan period.
- 9.33 This assessment takes full account of the considerable number of extant commitments already in the system, including the recently opened Waitrose in Hawkhurst, The Range in Royal Tunbridge Wells and the significant development proposals at the Royal Victoria Place Shopping Centre and the former Courier House and Printing Works, Longfield Road.
- 9.34 We went on to review the emerging, extant, and permitted applications for new retail developments with Council officers in order to establish a 'likely' scenario, disregarding planning proposals that developers have since announced will not be going ahead, such as the proposed redevelopment of the Tesco foodstore at Pembury Road.
- 9.35 The overtrading of a number of foodstores across the Study Area, in addition to projected population growth over the plan period resulted in a significant surplus expenditure of £113.7m across the Borough at 2033. Accounting for the projected turnover of commitments (calculated to total £17.9m by 2033), we estimate a Borough wide residual expenditure of £95.8m, which would provide capacity for between 7,500 sq m and 9,500 sq m of new convenience goods floorspace across the Borough by the end of the plan period.

- 9.36 On the basis of the available expenditure and current market shares from the resident population of the Study Area, we identify the location of the convenience floorspace capacity across the Borough's key centres.
- 9.37 We find the majority of the available residual expenditure is projected for Royal Tunbridge Wells, based on current market shares and population distribution, which allows for between 6,000 sq m and 7,600 sq m (net) of new convenience goods floorspace by the end of the plan period. This capacity could be met by the provision of one large (or two small to medium sized) foodstore(s) in the town centre, having regard to potential to 'claw back' trade from the significant overtrading of current out-of-centre facilities. We also find sufficient capacity in Paddock Wood to allow for the provision of one medium sized foodstore by 2033.
- 9.38 Whilst we do find positive capacity for new convenience retail floorspace in each of Southborough, Cranbrook and across the rest of the Borough, this is not considered of sufficient size to specifically plan for any new convenience retail floorspace and will likely be taken up by minor increases in retail provision across the Borough over the plan period.
- 9.39 Based on the recent closure of the Budgens foodstore in Hawkhurst and the recent opening of the Waitrose, we calculate a residual expenditure deficit, which gives rise to a negative capacity, and as such we would not recommend planning for new convenience retail in Hawkhurst over the plan period.

#### Likely Convenience Goods Floorspace Capacity in Tunbridge Wells Borough by 2033

Destination	Floorspace Capacity	
	Min	Max
Royal Tunbridge Wells	6,000 sq m	7,600 sq m
Southborough	300 sq m	400 sq m
Paddock Wood	1,000 sq m	1,300 sq m
Cranbrook	300 sq m	400 sq m
Hawkhurst	-300 sq m	
<i>Others in the Borough</i>	<i>100 sq m</i>	<i>200 sq m</i>
<b>Tunbridge Wells Borough</b>	<b>7,500 sq m</b>	<b>9,500 sq m</b>

Source: *Appendix D*  
 Figures may not total due to rounding

- 9.40 Turning to comparison goods capacity, based on projected population and expenditure growth and forecast changes in floorspace efficiencies over time, we identify a surplus expenditure of £233.9m by 2033. We then take account of committed comparison goods floorspace of 9,757 sq m, which equates to £63.0m by 2033 and gives an available residual expenditure of £170.9m by 2033 across

the Borough, or between 21,700 sq m and 34,000 sq m (net) of new comparison goods floorspace.

- 9.41 Of this, we identify an estimated 8,500 sq m of capacity for new bulky comparison goods retailers' floorspace and 16,500 sq m of non-bulky comparison goods retailers' floorspace (net) by 2033.
- 9.42 Based on current market share and population distribution, Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre accounts for the majority of comparison goods capacity, equating to between 20,300 sq m and 31,900 sq m (subject to the sales density and turnover of the proposed retailers).
- 9.43 In light of the relatively small amount of residual expenditure for new comparison goods floorspace across the other four key centres and the rest of the Borough, we recommend that the Council do not plan for the additional allocation of new comparison retail-led developments elsewhere in the Borough. Nonetheless, we do forecast the capacity to support a small addition of comparison retailer floorspace in each of the key centres over the plan period.

#### Likely Comparison Goods Floorspace Capacity in Tunbridge Wells Borough by 2033

Destination	Floorspace Capacity	
	Min	Max
Royal Tunbridge Wells	20,300 sq m	31,900 sq m
Southborough	-	100 sq m
Paddock Wood	400 sq m	700 sq m
Cranbrook	300 sq m	500 sq m
Hawkhurst	100 sq m	
<i>Others in the Borough</i>	<i>300 sq m</i>	<i>500 sq m</i>
<b>Tunbridge Wells Borough</b>	<b>21,700 sq m</b>	<b>34,000 sq m</b>

Source: Appendix D  
Figures may not total due to rounding

- 9.44 It is important to point out, as noted at Paragraph 7.2, that an identified retail capacity across the Study Area does not necessarily justify new retail floorspace in and of itself (especially in out-of-centre locations). Equally, the lack of significant demonstrable quantitative capacity should not necessarily prevent the Council from allowing new applications for retail development in existing designated centres, particularly where such developments would bolster the draw of such centres and encourage growth in line with the Council's aspirations and the centre's position within the retail hierarchy.
- 9.45 We would also stress that, in accordance with national planning policy and guidance, applications for retail developments above the locally set threshold and outside of the designated primary shopping area boundaries would need to be considered in accordance with the sequential

---

approach and retail impact assessment methodology

## Leisure

- 9.46 In terms of leisure facilities, Section 8 does not identify Borough wide capacity for any of the activities that we are readily able to forecast (being health and fitness clubs, cinema screens or ten-pin bowling lanes).
- 9.47 Based on the proportion of trips made by residents, we consider that the Borough provides well for its population in terms of cinemas, bars/pubs, bingo, and running, cycling and outdoor activities. For other cultural activities including museums, theatres and galleries, the population base predominantly looks to London, which is to be expected given the relative proximity, accessibility and draw of the Capital.
- 9.48 Additionally, whilst a high proportion of respondents were content with the provision of leisure facilities across the Borough, there was an indication of public demand for a swimming pool, additional cinemas and children's play facilities.
- 9.49 Nonetheless, it is important to recognise that this is subject to market forces dictating demand in order to meet any identified gaps in leisure provision across the Borough. The Council are likely to welcome proposals to expand the range and quality of leisure provision, particularly through mixed-use developments that would increase the draw of town centres, subject to adherence and support of the policies of the emerging Local Plan.

## Local Retail Impact Thresholds

- 9.50 In accordance with national planning policy, retail, office and leisure developments greater than 2,500 sq m proposed in edge-of-centre and out-of-centre locations will be subject to the assessment of the impact criteria set out by Paragraph 26 of the NPPF.
- 9.51 Where appropriate, Local Authorities are entitled to identify local thresholds in accordance with the following considerations identified within the NPPG ('Ensuring the vitality of town centres', Paragraph 16):
- scale of proposals relative to town centres;
  - the existing viability and vitality of town centres;
  - cumulative effects of recent developments;
  - whether local town centres are vulnerable;
  - likely effects of development on any town centre strategy; and

- impact on any other planned investment.
- 9.52 The previous retail Study recommended that the Council utilise the NPPF threshold of 2,500 sq m for application for retail floorspace outside of Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre, whilst requiring retail impact assessments for all retail proposals outside of the defined centres of Southborough, Paddock Wood, Cranbrook and Hawkhurst. This recommendation has not currently been adopted as policy.
- 9.53 In considering our recommendations, we have regard to the average size of units (where recent floorspace figures are available from Experian Goad), which identifies relatively little variation with the average town centre unit measuring 164 sq m in Royal Tunbridge Wells, 156 sq m in Paddock Wood and 97 sq m in Cranbrook. The centres of Southborough and Hawkhurst are not currently covered by Experian Goad.
- 9.54 It is also relevant to note the existing trading patterns of the centres, in order to establish their vulnerability to the development of additional edge-of-centre and out-of-centre retail stores. Whilst the household survey identifies that 26.9% of convenience spend was made to stores in the District, just 6.9% of this trade was to stores located within the town centre boundaries.
- 9.55 In particular, a number of large foodstores serving Royal Tunbridge Wells are located in retail parks outside of the town centre boundaries. In total, the Asda and Marks & Spencer Food & Home stores in the Longfield Road/ North Farm Retail Parks, to the north of the centre, provide more convenience goods floorspace than the town centre retailers combined. Equally, the Sainsbury's at Linden Park Road to the south of the centre (the highest performing foodstore in the Study Area) has a gross floorspace of 6,897 sq m, which equates to over one and a quarter times the total amount of convenience floorspace across the whole of Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre. As such, a number of convenience retailers in Royal Tunbridge Wells are shown to be trading below company averages.
- 9.56 This pattern is less pronounced in terms of comparison goods spending, however, the retail parks at Longfield Road/ North Farm to the north of Royal Tunbridge Wells offer a significant comparison retail draw. By way of an example, the John Lewis at Home unit at the Longfield Road Retail Park is the most popular comparison goods retailer in the Borough outside of Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre, attracting almost 5% of all comparison goods spending across the Study Area.
- 9.57 We have also considered the on-going plans to consolidate units in the Royal Victoria Place Shopping Centre in Tunbridge Wells to provide units of larger footprints in order to offer more suitable, modern units to better attract national multiple retailers and fill existing runs of vacant units. This trend reflects our understanding that the current retail market favours larger and more flexible units that might not otherwise be available in constrained town centres, leading retailers to pursue edge and out-of-centre units that would directly compete with the town centre offer, thereby

- jeopardising the vitality and viability of the centres.
- 9.58 However, taking account of the significant retail capacity in the Borough (and in particular Royal Tunbridge Wells), we would caution against imposing too low a threshold that would result in an overly onerous requirement, whereby an applicant needs to invest significant time and resource to promote relatively straightforward and uncontentious proposals
- 9.59 Despite the relative vitality and viability of Royal Tunbridge Wells, considering the consistently strong performance of edge-of-centre and out-of-centre facilities outside of the centre, we would recommend adopting a local impact threshold of **1,000 sq m (net) for proposals within the catchments of Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre**. This is likely to capture all small to medium sized standalone retail proposals that would directly compete with the offer of the town centre.
- 9.60 On the other hand, the Borough's other key centres are typically served and anchored by just one or two small to medium sized foodstores. Whilst the facilities are generally located within the designated town centre and/or primary shopping area, the relative lack of draw to the smaller centres suggests that the centres are equally, if not more vulnerable to competing out-of-centre retail developments.
- 9.61 We consider that Southborough, Paddock Wood, Cranbrook and Hawkhurst are potentially vulnerable to convenience and comparison retail developments of both 'big box' retail park destinations and smaller, 'town centre parade' style units can directly compete with the smaller centre's retail offer. Such developments would jeopardise the vitality and viability of the centres and the threshold should reflect the somewhat smaller floorplates of the existing retail facilities across the centres.
- 9.62 As such, we recommend a locally set threshold of **280 sq m (net) for proposals within the catchments of Southborough, Paddock Wood, Cranbrook and Hawkhurst Town Centres**. This will capture retail proposals above the threshold for Sunday trading hours that are likely to threaten existing town centre retailers' function providing for the day-to-day needs of local residents
- 9.63 We would stress that whilst the locally set threshold would require the submission of an impact assessment for all edge-of-centre and out-of-centre developments exceeding the recommended local thresholds, national guidance dictates that the impact test should be undertaken in a proportionate and locally appropriate way, commensurate to the scale of development proposed.
- 9.64 The level of detail would typically be agreed with Council officers during the pre-application process in order to avoid overly onerous requirements that may otherwise restrict and delay development opportunities from coming forward.
- 9.65 In addition, we would recommend that the Council allows for the amalgamation of units (where there is little, or marginal, loss of net retail floorspace) in order to provide suitable flexibility to

encourage investment in the Borough's centres.

## Town Centre Recommendations

- 9.66 The Council recently adopted the Tunbridge Wells Site Allocations Local Plan (2016), which incorporated a number of Site Allocations Proposals Maps setting out relevant town centre designations and boundaries that superseded the previous Local Plan (2006) Proposals Map.
- 9.67 To summarise, we broadly agree with the retail and town centre designations of the Site Allocations Proposals Maps and do not recommend that the Council deviate significantly from the recently adopted town centre boundaries, primary shopping areas and primary shopping character area frontages.
- 9.68 We do note that the Council does not currently designate secondary shopping character area frontages within the identified centres. The NPPF (Annex 2, Glossary) provides the following definition for primary and secondary retail frontages:
- “Primary frontages are likely to include a high proportion of retail uses which may include food, drinks, clothing and household goods. Secondary frontages provide greater opportunities for a diversity of uses such as restaurants, cinemas and businesses.”*
- 9.69 Considering the changing structure of high streets and shopping habits identified in Section 2, we do not recommend that the Council needs to designate secondary frontages through the emerging Local Plan. Whilst the primary shopping area and primary shopping character area frontages provide protection to retail uses within the designated boundaries, we would recommend adopting a flexible approach that allows the remainder of the town centres to adapt to new and emerging town centre trends, to better compete with out-of-centre retail destinations.
- 9.70 We also note that the previous ‘Town, Neighbourhood and Village Centres (incorporating Retail Development)’ Policies within the previous Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan 2006 provided percentage thresholds restricting the proportion of non-retail uses permissible within each centre. In light of the foregoing, we would consider such policies overly restrictive in this instance and do not recommend adopting such policies through the emerging Local Plan.
- 9.71 This more flexible approach would allow for the provision of cafes, coffee shops and other ancillary town centre uses that allow for ‘grazing’ whilst shopping and incentivise shoppers, providing additional reasons to remain in the centres for longer. It would also encourage the faster occupation of any vacant units outside of the primary shopping area and primary shopping character area frontages.
- 9.72 In **Royal Tunbridge Wells**, we find quantitative capacity for an allocation for one large (or two small to medium) foodstore(s) within the centre, particularly noting the qualitative lack of

convenience provision in the centre given relative draw of out-of-centre facilities. In terms of comparison goods, we note that the recently adopted Tunbridge Wells Site Allocations Local Plan (2016) allocates for the following:

#### Retail development in Royal Tunbridge Wells to be delivered through Site Allocations

Policy	Location	Estimated Retail Capacity (Comparison net A1)	Estimated period for delivery of retail development
AL/RTW2A	Civic Site (Area of Change)	15,000 sq m (net)	2016-2021
AL/RTW2B	Cinema Site (Area of Change)	3,500 sq m (net)	2016-2021
AL/RTW19	Royal Victoria Place	13,000 sq m (net)	First phase 2016-2021 Possible subsequent phases 2021-2026
AL/RTW23	John Street	200 sq m (net)	Up to 2016
<b>Estimated Total</b>		<b>31,700 sq m (net)</b>	

Source: Tunbridge Wells Borough Site Allocations Local Plan 2016, Table 6

- 9.73 The total provision of retail floorspace proposed through the Site Allocations Local Plan would fall within the identified qualitative capacity and would be suitable for Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre, subject to market forces and all other relevant material considerations. Whilst the current amount of allocated comparison goods floorspace is towards the upper end of the calculated comparison goods capacity, we note that the allocations will be reviewed throughout the plan period in order to suitably account for relevant changes.
- 9.74 We do not recommend any deviations from the relatively recent Site Allocations Local Plan Proposals Map and policies for Royal Tunbridge Wells, however, in light of the forecast capacity and existing accessibility issues identified, we recommend that the Council reviews how best to address congestion resulting from traffic jams and bottlenecks to the north of the centre in order to allow the centre to continue growing sustainably.
- 9.75 **Southborough** was found to have a small amount of convenience capacity by 2033, but not a significant enough proportion to recommend any planned retail allocations. However, we do note that the forthcoming Community Hub development includes a retail unit, which would be suitable for a small convenience retailer, subject to market and occupier demand. We would also identify the likely future requirement for banking facilities within the centre, noting the popularity of the post office, but would not recommend any Council intervention through specific allocations.

- 
- 9.76 The Site Allocations Local Plan Proposals Map for Southborough recently revised the boundaries to incorporate the Tesco within the town centre and we would not recommend any further changes at this time.
- 9.77 **Paddock Wood** was found to have a slightly higher proportion of the identified convenience capacity, suitable for a medium sized convenience store to provide further qualitative competition to the Tesco and Waitrose, and note the longstanding mixed-use allocation site at Station Road/ Commercial Road and Commercial Road West Car Park (AL/PW1) incorporates retail provision.
- 9.78 However, we would caution that the identified capacity does not suggest a need for development and that the delivery of such retail provision in an out-of-centre location would likely detrimentally impact the health of the centre.
- 9.79 We also note a small capacity for additional comparison goods provision over the plan period, and whilst we do not consider that this capacity warrants an additional allocation, we suggest that this provision be directed towards the south of the centre to increase the draw along the High Street and complement the allocation AL/PW2 for a leisure/ community facility to the end of the centre.
- 9.80 Noting the recent Site Allocations Local Plan Proposals Map for Paddock Wood, we do not recommend any amendments to the centre's boundaries, but would suggest that the Council monitors shoppers behaviour and retailer demand for units to the south of the centre to establish the merits of further extending the centre southwards over the plan period.
- 9.81 **Cranbrook** is a particularly constrained centre, and we do not suggest any deviations from the boundaries, designations or allocations identified in the Site Allocations Local Plan Proposals Map or policies for Cranbrook.
- 9.82 Nonetheless, we welcome the forthcoming retail unit within the development of the Cranbrook Engineering and Wilkes Field in the town centre, attracting additional investment and a modern retail unit for the town centre.
- 9.83 In **Hawkhurst** we find a negative capacity for new convenience retail floorspace over the plan period, given the recent opening of the Waitrose foodstore that is likely to generate beneficial linked trade to other town centre retailers, as well as a small capacity of comparison goods floorspace that would not necessitate Council intervention.
- 9.84 We do not recommend any alterations to the boundaries within the Site Allocations Local Plan Proposals Map for Hawkhurst, but recommend that the Council encourages efforts to enhance accessibility and links across the centre, in particular from the Waitrose store, as well as building upon the signage identifying the history of the town and the recent resident-led investment and renovation of 'The Colonnade', which enhances the overall environmental quality and character of the centre.

---

## Glossary of Terms

- Bulky goods:** Goods of a large physical nature (for example DIY, furniture, carpets) that sometimes require large areas for storage or display  
*Source: Planning Portal*
- Capacity:** Forecast resident spending within the catchment area, with which to support existing and additional retail floorspace  
*Source: Planning Portal*
- Comparison Goods:** Retail items not bought on a frequent basis, for example televisions and white goods (fridges, dishwashers etc.)  
*Source: Planning Portal*
- Convenience Goods:** Everyday essential items, such as food  
*Source: Planning Portal*
- Edge-of-Centre:** For retail purposes, a location that is well connected and up to 300 metres of the primary shopping area. For all other main town centre uses, a location within 300 metres of a town centre boundary. For office development, this includes locations outside the town centre but within 500 metres of a public transport interchange. In determining whether a site falls within the definition of edge of centre, account should be taken of local circumstances  
*Source: NPPF*
- Expenditure per Capita:** The amount of money spent on retail goods per person in each Zone across the Study Area
- Expenditure:** Average annual expenditure levels for various forms of goods, multiplied by the population within the defined Study Area.
- Experian Goad:** Experian Goad is a retail property intelligence system that helps retail developers, property investors, planning professionals, and commercial agents to identify profitable locations for retail property development and investment projects. It offers comprehensive retail location plans and easy to use reports covering over 3,000 shopping areas in the UK and Ireland.
- Experian (MMG3):** A population, expenditure and socio-demographic dataset that utilises the 2011 Census release, projected forward by using growth rates derived

from Office for National Statistics projections and current age and gender estimates.

- Floorplate:** Defined as the physical rentable area on one whole floor; sometimes called the footprint.
- Goald Plans:** A plan showing a bird's eye view of a retail centre including the exact location of all retail outlets and vacant premises, fascia name, retail category, and floor space. Key location factors such as pedestrian zones, road crossings, bus stops and car parks are also featured, allowing you to instantly assess the site quality of existing or prospective store locations  
*Source: Experian*
- Independent Retailers:** Retailers with less than 10 outlets/ stores  
*Source: Experian*
- Main Town Centre Uses:** Retail development (including warehouse clubs and factory outlet centres); leisure, entertainment facilities the more intensive sport and recreation uses (including cinemas, restaurants, drive-through restaurants, bars and pubs, night-clubs, casinos, health and fitness centres, indoor bowling centres, and bingo halls); offices; and arts, culture and tourism development (including theatres, museums, galleries and concert halls, hotels and conference facilities)  
*Source: NPPF*
- Market Share:** The proportion of residents that visit a particular retail destination, derived from household survey results
- National Multiple:** Defined as retailers with ten or more stores/ outlets  
*Source: Experian*
- Prime Unit:** 'Prime' is a widely used term within real estate investment circles to describe building and location quality. There are no universally agreed definition, however, and no consistency in the distinctions applied to prime or non-prime property.  
*Source: Colliers*
- Primary shopping area:** Defined area where retail development is concentrated (generally comprising the primary and those secondary frontages which are adjoining and closely related to the primary shopping frontage)  
*Source: NPPF*

- 
- Primary/ secondary frontages:** Primary frontages are likely to include a high proportion of retail uses which may include food, drinks, clothing and household goods. Secondary frontages provide greater opportunities for a diversity of uses such as restaurants, cinemas and businesses  
*Source: NPPF*
- Retail Floorspace:** Total floor area of the property that is associated with all retail uses in square metres. May be expressed as a net figure (the sales area) or in gross (including storage, preparation and staff areas)  
*Source: Planning Portal*
- Retail Impact:** The potential effects of proposed retail development upon existing shops  
*Source: Planning Portal*
- Sequential Approach:** A planning principle that seeks to identify, allocate or develop certain types or locations of land before others. For example, brownfield housing sites before greenfield sites, or town centre retail sites before out-of-centre sites  
*Source: Planning Portal*
- Sales Density:** Turnover, per square metre. Various retail planning sources such as Verdict UK Food & Grocery Company Briefing Reports and Mintel Retail Rankings provide average (or benchmark) sales densities for national multiple convenience retailers
- Special Forms of Trading:** Special forms of trading (SFT) are defined as sales via the internet, mail order, stalls and markets, vending machines, door-to-door and telephone sales, including online sales by supermarkets, department stores and catalogue companies  
*Source: Experian*
- Study Area:** The geographical area where the household survey is carried out, based on postal sectors that make up the 16 zones that covers Tunbridge Wells Borough, as well as hinterlands within Sevenoaks, Tandridge, Mid Sussex, Lewes, Wealden, Rother, Ashford, Maidstone and Tonbridge & Malling where shoppers may be attracted to Tunbridge Wells' retail and leisure offer
- Trade draw:** The proportion of trade that a development is likely to receive from customers within and outside its catchment area. It is likely that trade draw will relate to a certain geographic area (i.e. the distance people are likely to travel) and for a particular market segment (e.g. convenience retail). The best way of assessing trade draw where new development is

---

proposed is to look at existing proxies of that type of development in other areas

*Source: NPPG*

**Turnover:**

Sales per unit area of retail floorspace

*Source: Planning Portal*

**Town Centre:**

Area defined on the local authority's proposal map, including the primary shopping area and areas predominantly occupied by main town centre uses within or adjacent to the primary shopping area. References to town centres or centres apply to city centres, town centres, district centres and local centres but exclude small parades of shops of purely neighbourhood significance. Unless they are identified as centres in Local Plans, existing out-of-centre developments, comprising or including main town centre uses, do not constitute town centres

*Source: NPPF*