

CHAPTER 8: SHOPPING

INTRODUCTION

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- 8.1 This Chapter sets out the Plan's approach towards shopping provision and changes of use in the Borough's district and local shopping centres. It explains the manner in which proposals for large scale additional shopping floorspace will be dealt with, particularly in out-of-centre locations.

DESCRIPTION OF THE BOROUGH AND RECENT TRENDS

- 8.2 Shopping facilities in the Borough are concentrated in Woking town centre, which provides a range of shops and services and serves the population both of the Borough itself and also a wider area, particularly to the west. In April 1996, the total retail floorspace in Woking town centre was approximately 41,300 sq. m. net, making it, together with Camberley, the second largest centre in Surrey after Guildford (64,500 sq. m. net). It is predominantly a comparison goods shopping centre, with 92% of its floorspace in this use. The opening of The Peacocks shopping centre in 1992 confirmed the importance of Woking town centre as a major Surrey shopping destination.
- 8.3 Distributed around the Borough are seven district shopping centres of which West Byfleet is the most significant in terms both of size and retailer representation. These centres, Byfleet, Goldsworth Park, Horsell, Knaphill, St. Johns, Sheerwater and West Byfleet, provide a range of convenience shops and services and meet the day to day needs of their surrounding populations. Also important are twelve local centres, such as Brookwood, Kingfield and Pyrford, which meet the basic shopping requirements of the immediate local population. In some areas without a local centre, single shops or small parades provide for day to day needs.
- 8.4 A more recent development has been the provision of out of centre shopping facilities. Currently there is a large foodstore and DIY store at Knaphill and two retail parks, Lion Retail Park, Oriental Road Woking (6 units) and Wey Retail Park at Royston Road, Byfleet (3 units). There is a further DIY store at St. Johns. Planning permission has been granted for a further foodstore at Goldsworth Road, Woking. Many residents of the Borough also use the food and comparison goods shopping facilities at Brooklands and at Ladymead, Guildford.
- 8.5 Over the past few years several important trends have become evident in relation to shopping and retailing patterns in the Borough:
- § a shift in the focus of Woking town centre has occurred as a result of the opening of The Peacocks centre. The Peacocks has significantly increased the overall level and range of shops trading in the town centre but has

probably contributed to the increase in the numbers of empty shops, particularly in the Chertsey Road/High Street area. However the units in the Peacocks are now very largely let, and vacancies in the rest of the town centre have reduced from a peak in 1994.

- § a number of surplus shop units in Woking Town Centre, particularly in Chertsey Road, have been taken up by restaurants, pubs and other food and drink outlets. The former ASDA store in Chertsey Road has been converted into the HG Wells Conference Suite and Planets entertainment complex.
- § with the opening of two large food superstores - one at Knaphill and another at Brooklands, just beyond the Borough boundary - together with the closure of the ASDA store in Woking Town Centre, there has been an increase in food shopping trips to out of centre locations, many of these trips being made by car.
- § several of the District and Local centres appear to be experiencing difficulties, manifested in the increased numbers of vacant shops, probably largely as the result of the larger numbers of local people shopping for food in out of centre locations. A number of the vacant units are being taken up by non-retail uses.

NATIONAL/REGIONAL CONTEXT

- 8.6 The main policy guidance on planning for retailing is *PPG6 - Town Centres and Retail Developments*, published in June 1996. The main strands of PPG6 are:
- § An emphasis on a plan led approach to promoting retail development in town centres, through identifying sites and including suitable policies.
 - § Encouragement of a wide range of facilities in district and local centres consistent with the scale and function of that centre, thereby reducing the need to travel. Local planning authorities should encourage local supermarkets and the retention of post offices and pharmacies in existing district and local centres.
 - § Detailed guidance on assessing proposals for new retail developments, with a stress on using a sequential approach to selecting sites for development, town and district centres being the preferred location for development that attracts a large volume of trips. Proposals for development in out-of-centre locations are to be accompanied by a demonstration that all potential alternative options have been thoroughly assessed.
- 8.7 Equally important in assessing the acceptability of such proposals is the extent to which they would have an impact on the vitality and viability of nearby, town district or local centres, accessibility by a choice of means of transport and impact on overall travel and car use.

- 8.8 Also relevant is *PPG13 - Transport* which reinforces the preference for new retail development to be located in town centres and for shopping facilities to be easily accessible by a range of transport modes and the regional guidance - *RPG9 - Regional Planning Guidance for the South East*, which advises that wherever possible, retail development should be located within existing town and district centres.

COUNTY PLANNING CONTEXT

- 8.9 The Surrey Structure Plan 1994 sets out in Policies DP15 to DP19 the strategic policy approach to retail provision in the County. These policies:
- § allow limited additional provision of retail floorspace to meet the needs of Surrey residents. This development should be concentrated in town centres in order to strengthen their position as attractive and viable places to shop and provide alternatives to the use of the car, should contribute to the character and role of centres and provide a range of facilities convenient and accessible for all sections of the community
 - § seek to restrict retail development outside town centre areas defined in Local Plans (policy DP17).
 - § provide guidance (Policy DP16) on the approach to be taken to retail developments outside town centres. Provision may be made for a limited number of superstores and retail warehouses within urban areas to meet the needs of Surrey shoppers, but not normally in “out of centre” locations except where strict criteria can be met, for example, where a location within or on the edge of an existing town centre is not possible. Edge of centre locations are generally preferable to out of centre.

OTHER COUNCIL POLICIES

Woking Town Centre Strategy

- 8.10 Woking Borough Council adopted in July 1995 a Woking town centre Strategy, intended to guide the Council's approach to the development and management of Woking town centre over the next 5 - 10 years. A key aim of this strategy is to attract and make provision for strategic retail developments which would be likely to enhance the centre's attractiveness over an area wider than its immediate catchment area. It aims to encourage further diversification through the attraction of further retail, restaurants and related entertainment and leisure uses. The strategy also seeks a co-ordinated approach to the promotion and management of the town centre as a retail centre. Woking town centre in its wider context is dealt with under the Woking town centre chapter.

Village Centres Strategy

- 8.11 The Council has held a series of village centre forums over recent years, in order to formulate strategies to deal with the problems faced by the Borough's village centres. One of the main issues is the decline of the Village Centres' retailing role as car ownership has increased and retailing has become more concentrated into larger stores. One of the key objectives of the Village Centres Strategy is to regenerate the villages by encouraging a more diverse role for them whilst attempting to retain their central retail function. The Strategy identifies 7 key centres, which coincide with the District centres listed under Policy SHP1 below. These are the most significant retail and commercial centres and are generally well serviced by public transport.



WEST BYFLEET

OBJECTIVES FOR SHOPPING

- 8.12 It is important for the Local Plan to reflect the policy context outlined above. In particular, the guidance seeks to strengthen the role of the town centre and District and Local centres to minimise the need to travel by car and to protect their vital role. In respect of shopping policies, the planning policy objectives are as follows:

The Council will seek to enhance the vitality and viability of Woking town centre as the principal centre in the Borough for retail, commercial, leisure, cultural and community facilities

The Council will concentrate new retail development to meet local needs in existing centres wherever possible

The Council will seek to regenerate the village centres in the Borough so that they may continue to serve their local neighbourhood but without fundamentally altering their character

- 8.13 These objectives have been developed into more specific objectives, which are addressed in the policies. These are:
1. to maintain the existing hierarchy of shopping centres in the Borough in order to ensure a wide range of shopping facilities to which people have easy access.

2. to consolidate and strengthen the vitality and viability of shopping provision in Woking town centre by providing for a diversity of uses.
3. to maintain all district, village and local neighbourhood centres in the Borough by seeking to safeguard a range of basic convenience shopping facilities and encouraging new ones.
4. not to permit further out of town shopping provision, in the form of food superstores or non-food retail stores, insofar as this meets the criteria of the relevant policies of the Plan.

POLICIES

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SHP1 • THE SHOPPING HIERARCHY

THE COUNCIL WILL SEEK TO MAINTAIN AND REINFORCE THE EXISTING PATTERN AND HIERARCHY OF RETAIL CENTRES IN WOKING BOROUGH, AS FOLLOWS: SUSTAIN AND ENHANCE THE VITALITY AND VIABILITY OF THE DEFINED SHOPPING AREAS SHOWN ON THE PROPOSALS MAP, BASED ON THE HIERARCHY SET OUT BELOW. THE PREFERRED LOCATION FOR NEW RETAIL DEVELOPMENT WILL BE WITHIN THESE CENTRES, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THIS HIERARCHY.

WOKING TOWN CENTRE DEFINED SHOPPING CENTRE WHERE MAJOR RETAIL DEVELOPMENT WILL BE PERMITTED.

DISTRICT CENTRE RETAIL SERVICE AREAS: BYFLEET, GOLDSWORTH PARK, HORSELL, KNAPHILL, ST JOHNS, SHEERWATER, WEST BYFLEET, WHERE SMALLER SCALE RETAIL DEVELOPMENT APPROPRIATE TO THE SIZE AND FUNCTION OF THESE CENTRES MAY BE PERMITTED IN, OR IN CLOSE PROXIMITY TO THE DEFINED AREA.

LOCAL CENTRES: ANCHOR HILL, BARNSBURY, BROOKWOOD, GORSEWOOD ROAD, GUILDFORD ROAD, HERMITAGE ROAD, KINGFIELD, MAYBURY, MAYFORD, OLD WOKING, ORIENTAL ROAD, PYRFORD, RYDENS WAY, WALTON ROAD AREA, WESTFIELD, AND WYCH HILL, WHERE ONLY VERY LIMITED RETAIL DEVELOPMENT APPROPRIATE TO THE SIZE AND FUNCTION OF THE CENTRES MAY BE PERMITTED

THE BOUNDARIES OF THESE CENTRES AND THEIR RETAIL AREAS ARE SHOWN ON THE PROPOSALS MAP, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF MAYFORD, OLD WOKING AND WALTON ROAD AREA, WHERE IT IS NOT APPROPRIATE TO DEFINE A BOUNDARY.

APPLICATIONS FOR MAJOR RETAIL DEVELOPMENT OUTSIDE THESE CENTRES WILL BE ASSESSED AGAINST THE CRITERIA IN POLICY SHP2

JUSTIFICATION

- 8.14 The objective of maintaining a hierarchy of shopping centres is so that the Borough's residents have the opportunity of meeting their shopping requirements within the Borough, thereby enabling them to carry out their shopping activities conveniently and by using a range of means of transport other than the car, including walking. Different centres can support different levels of activity, according to what is there at present, the physical scope for expansion and the size of the local catchment population. To some extent, the range of the geographical influence of any centre depends on its size and the variety of retail services available. Larger centres tend to attract shoppers from a wider area.
- 8.15 The hierarchy of shopping centres in Woking Borough is well distributed, and has been defined on the basis of clear criteria. Many of the centres have scope for additional development, although the size of any new development would vary according to the position of the centre in the hierarchy. Most district centres are not sufficiently well served by public transport to be appropriate for development of a scale which attracts people from further afield, and most local centres are suitable only for development of a type that serves the immediate local population .
- 8.16 The hierarchy will operate as follows:
- § *Woking town centre* is a strategic centre with Borough wide influence serving the comparison shopping needs of the Borough's population and beyond and the convenience shopping needs of the population in the immediate vicinity of the designated shopping centre of the town centre. It is the correct location to concentrate major comparison goods retailing facilities.
 - § *The district centres* - whilst these are of varying sizes and offer a differing range of facilities, all these centres serve the retail and local service requirements of a significant proportion of the Borough's population. They generally contain above 20 retail units. Two of these - West Byfleet and Knaphill - stand out as having a wider geographical influence. Goldsworth Park also has a significant role because it has a relatively large modern foodstore with ample parking. They have been selected on the basis of one or more of the following criteria:
 1. the need to maintain a geographical spread of centres throughout the Borough
 2. the existence of particular facilities within the centre, for example, a range of foodstores
 3. the accessibility of the centre by a variety of transport methods, in particular, public transport

These centres may have scope to accommodate significant additional floorspace of up to 1000 sq. m., medium sized supermarkets and smaller

unit shops. However the exact amount will depend upon local needs and their individual character.

- § *Local centres* are generally the smaller, neighbourhood type centres which provide basic, mainly convenience, shops of a “top up” nature, for their immediate residential and working population. These centres have little scope for additional retail development, although very limited scale developments of up to 300 sq. m. may be acceptable. The boundaries of all these centres are shown on the Proposals Map with the exception of Mayford, Old Woking and Walton Road, which in effect consist of a collection of isolated shops and which cannot be readily shown on a Proposals Map. However, the relevant policy (SHP6) still applies.

SHP2• MAJOR NEW RETAIL DEVELOPMENT

THE PRIMARY LOCATION IN THE BOROUGH FOR LARGE SCALE RETAIL DEVELOPMENTS IS THE DEFINED SHOPPING CENTRE OF WOKING TOWN CENTRE.

IF IT CAN BE PROVED THAT NO SUITABLE SITE IS AVAILABLE IN THIS LOCATION, A SITE ON THE EDGE OF THE DEFINED SHOPPING CENTRE OF WOKING, OR WITHIN OR ON THE EDGE OF THE RETAIL SERVICE AREA OF A DISTRICT CENTRE AND EASILY ACCESSIBLE ON FOOT, MAY BE ACCEPTABLE

ONLY IF IT CAN BE DEMONSTRATED THAT NO SITES ARE AVAILABLE IN THE ABOVE LOCATIONS MAY A SITE ELSEWHERE IN THE URBAN AREA BE CONSIDERED. FOR SUCH SITES, THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA MUST BE MET:

- (I) IT MUST BE CLEARLY DEMONSTRATED THAT THE DEVELOPMENT(S) WOULD NOT HARM THE VITALITY AND VIABILITY OF ANY DEFINED SHOPPING AREA
- (II) THE SITE MUST BE EASILY ACCESSIBLE BY A RANGE OF TRANSPORT MODES, INCLUDING CYCLE, FOOT AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT, AND CONTRIBUTE TO THE OVERALL AIM OF REDUCING RELIANCE ON THE CAR FOR ALL TRIPS

JUSTIFICATION

- 8.17 Shopping provision should be compatible with changes in available retail expenditure, and it should not lead to an over-provision of retail floorspace which would cause retail closures thereby undermining the retail function of any centre. This principle guides the approach towards additional shopping development in the Borough. As explained in Policy WTC13, it is the defined Shopping Centre of Woking Town Centre which is the appropriate location for

additional large scale retail floorspace in excess of 1000 sq. m. Applications for such developments may require to be accompanied by a Retail Impact Assessment.

- 8.18 A recent Shopping Study of Woking Borough carried out by Consultants (Woking Borough Council - Retail Report - June 1994) concluded that expenditure in the Borough, both currently available and projected up to 2001, could justify, without detriment to Woking town centre, additional retail warehousing of 9,290 to 11,148 sq. m. (100,000 to 120,000 sq. ft.) and a further food superstore to serve the south side of the Borough. With the completion of a retail warehouse park at the Lion Works, Oriental Road (9,058 sq. m.), and the construction of three additional retail warehouse units at Royston Road, Byfleet (3,363 sq. m.), it is considered that there is currently no further need for retail warehouse provision in the Borough. Planning permission has been granted for a food superstore at Goldsworth Road, which will meet the food shopping requirements of Woking residents in the south and centre of the Borough (See Schedule of Proposals Site 25). Beyond this, there is considered to be no further scope, in terms of both available and projected expenditure up to 2001, for further food superstore developments within the Borough without adversely affecting the vitality and viability of Woking town centre or the District or Local centres.
- 8.19 Whether there is scope for additional retail floorspace in the period post 2001 will be determined when a meaningful assessment can be made of the likely future levels of expenditure within the catchment population. Permission would only be granted for additional shopping provision if surplus expenditure capacity could be clearly shown and if the other criteria in the policy are met. The catchment area will be assessed based on appropriate drive times for any proposed retail development. This assessment will also need to take full account of the impact of any development on the vitality and viability of nearby centres, the cumulative impact of both the development proposed and other recently permitted or constructed developments.
- 8.20 In Woking Town Centre any such development should ideally be situated within easy walking distance of the defined shopping centre so that people will be encouraged to use the other shops and facilities in the centre when they visit the new development. This is likely to mean a convenient level walk of no more than 200 - 300 metres. In district centres, the distance is likely to be less to ensure that new development integrates physically with the existing retail service area. The Council would require a retail impact assessment in all cases.

WOKING TOWN CENTRE

- 8.21 Retail policies relating to development in the town centre are set out at policies WTC13 to WTC16 of Chapter 12, 'Woking Town Centre'.

THE DISTRICT CENTRES

SHP3 • NEW RETAIL PROVISION IN THE DISTRICT CENTRES

WITHIN THE DISTRICT CENTRES AS DEFINED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP, EXTENSIONS TO EXISTING SHOPS AND ADDITIONAL RETAIL FLOORSPACE APPROPRIATE TO THE SCALE AND CHARACTER OF THE CENTRE WILL BE PERMITTED PROVIDED :

- (i) THE DEVELOPMENT IS LOCATED IN, OR IN CLOSE PROXIMITY TO, THE RETAIL SERVICE AREA; AND
- (ii) THE PROPOSAL HAS NO ADVERSE IMPACT ON OTHER SHOPPING CENTRES; AND
- (iii) THE RELEVANT DESIGN AND CAR PARKING REQUIREMENTS ARE MET

JUSTIFICATION

- 8.22 The seven District centres have been defined as locations where retail, recreational and service uses should be concentrated. Considerations used in identifying the centres are set out in para. 8.16
- 8.23 These centres provide a broad range of facilities and services and fulfil a function as a focus for both the community and public transport. As such, they are suitable locations for new retail developments such as medium sized foodstores meeting local needs or small scale developments of unit shops. However most will be unsuitable for larger shops which may attract a high level of car borne shoppers.
- 8.24 It is important that any proposal for such schemes should relate well to the existing centre, both in terms of size and function. As such, the preferred location for such developments will be within the retail service areas of District centres. However, given the scarcity of potential development sites, other locations within the District Centre may also be appropriate. In these cases they would need to complement the centre, in that customers of the new development would be encouraged to combine trips to any new shopping development with visits to the existing centre. In the event that large new retail development in or on the edge of the retail service area of the District Centre may be acceptable in the context of the sequential test set out in Policy SHP2, it should be of a physical design which reflects the scale and character of the centre and of the surrounding area.

SHP4 • CHANGE OF USE AND REDEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE RETAIL SERVICES AREAS OF DISTRICT CENTRES

WITHIN THE RETAIL SERVICES AREAS OF THE DISTRICT CENTRES, AS DEFINED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP, THE CHANGE OF USE OF GROUND FLOOR PREMISES FROM CLASS A1 TO A2, OR A3 WILL BE FAVOURABLY CONSIDERED.

CHANGES TO OTHER USES APPROPRIATE TO A SHOPPING AREA WILL BE FAVOURABLY CONSIDERED PROVIDED THE USE WOULD CONTRIBUTE TO THE VITALITY AND VIABILITY OF THE CENTRE.

IN ALL CASES THE COUNCIL WILL NEED TO BE SATISFIED THAT:-

- (i) AN ADEQUATE RANGE OF RETAIL (A1) USES REMAINS AND THE RETAIL CHARACTER OF THE CENTRE WILL NOT BE UNDERMINED
- (ii) THE A1 UNIT DOES NOT COMPRISE A LARGE “ANCHOR” RETAIL UNIT

ANY REDEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE RETAIL AND LOCAL SERVICE AREAS WILL BE EXPECTED TO PROVIDE UNITS AT GROUND FLOOR LEVEL IN ACCORDANCE WITH THIS POLICY.

JUSTIFICATION

- 8.25 It is important that the predominant use in the District centres remains retailing (Class A1), to ensure basic convenience shopping facilities for local residents who either have no access to a car and/or choose to do their food shopping locally. However, this policy also recognises the changing habits of shoppers has reduced demand for small shops in District Centres. Accordingly, “retail services areas” have been defined, where alternative uses will be permitted, provided certain criteria are met. These areas are defined on the Proposals Map.
- 8.26 An A1 use is the first preference for the majority of units the retail services areas. It is especially important to retain “anchor” retail units such as supermarkets, and other larger shops of more than 300 sq. m, since the loss of such a unit, which will often be in a prominent location, may have more serious implications for the nature of the centre than the loss of a smaller one. In the case of such units therefore, the Council will have to be completely satisfied that there is no demand for the retention of the unit in A1 use and will usually require evidence that attempts have been made to let the unit for A1 purposes for a substantial period before being willing to grant any planning permission for change of use. However, provided the Council is satisfied that a change of use will not undermine the shopping function of the centre, Financial and

Professional Services (Class A2), Food and Drink (Class A3) or related uses such as dry cleaners will be permitted, as such uses also provide services to local people and attract visitors to the centre. In respect of A3 and sui generis uses, these will also be expected to conform with the relevant policies on amenity at SHP8 and SHP9.

- 8.27 Further uses such as leisure and community uses including cinemas, surgeries, gyms, bingo halls etc. may also be permitted provided they contribute to the vitality and viability of the centre and criteria i) and ii) are met. The Council may impose conditions to ensure that the unit cannot change to another use (including within the same Use Class where appropriate) without applying for planning permission. Within established retail frontages, uses such as B1 are unlikely to meet the requirement of contributing to the vitality and viability of District centres, but exceptionally, may be permitted, again provided criteria i) and ii) are met.
- 8.28 Such an approach recognises that new forms of retailing have a legitimate role and also acknowledges the importance of community and leisure facilities in stimulating local identity. These proposals are therefore intended to stimulate diversity in the District centres. They should also contribute to sustainability objectives, since they will allow a wide range of people's need to be met locally.

SHP5 • CHANGES OF USE OUTSIDE THE RETAIL SERVICES AREAS OF DISTRICT CENTRES

OUTSIDE THE RETAIL SERVICES AREAS IN DISTRICT CENTRES, THE CHANGE OF USE OF GROUND FLOOR UNITS FROM AN "A" CLASS TO ANY USE APPROPRIATE TO A SHOPPING AREA OR TO B1 USE WILL BE PERMITTED.

OTHER USES MAY BE PERMITTED WHERE IT CAN BE DEMONSTRATED THE PROPOSED USE WOULD HAVE NO MATERIALLY ADVERSE EFFECT ON THE AMENITY OF THE AREA OR ADJOINING OCCUPIERS.

THIS POLICY WILL ALSO APPLY TO PROPOSALS FOR THE REDEVELOPMENT OF UNITS AT GROUND FLOOR LEVEL IN THESE AREAS OF THE DISTRICT CENTRES.

JUSTIFICATION

- 8.29 Most of the district centres include areas outside the retail services area, but where retail and service uses are still in evidence. This policy will allow the introduction of a wide range of uses into the fringe areas of the District centres, provided there is no adverse effect on amenity. Accordingly, in the areas

outside the retail services areas as defined on the Proposals Map, a broad range of uses may be acceptable. In practice, in addition to uses appropriate to a shopping area, the types of use likely to be acceptable in such locations are small offices, craft workshops and uses such as health practitioners; other D1 and D2 uses will also generally be acceptable. A change of use to residential will be preferred where the unit in question is in a predominantly residential area or at the extreme margin of the centre.

- 8.30 In all cases, there should be no adverse effect on amenity, for example, arising from increased traffic generation, noise or smells.

LOCAL CENTRES

SHP6 • NEW DEVELOPMENT AND CHANGE OF USE IN THE LOCAL CENTRES

WITHIN THE LOCAL SHOPPING CENTRES, AS DEFINED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP, ONLY VERY LIMITED ADDITIONAL RETAIL DEVELOPMENT, APPROPRIATE TO THE SIZE AND FUNCTION OF THE CENTRE, WILL BE PERMITTED.

PROPOSALS FOR THE CHANGE OF USE OF GROUND FLOOR PREMISES FROM CLASS A1 TO ANY USE APPROPRIATE TO A SHOPPING CENTRE WILL BE PERMITTED PROVIDED:

- (i) AN ADEQUATE RANGE OF RETAIL (A1) USES REMAINS AND THE RETAIL CHARACTER OF THE CENTRE WILL NOT BE UNDERMINED
- (ii) THE A1 UNIT DOES NOT COMPRISE A LARGE "ANCHOR" UNIT
- (iii) THE PROPOSED USE WOULD CONTRIBUTE TO THE VITALITY AND VIABILITY OF THE CENTRE AND
- (iv) IT IS SHOWN THAT THE UNIT HAS BEEN UNSUCCESSFULLY MARKETED FOR A1 PURPOSES FOR A PERIOD OF AT LEAST 12 MONTHS

ALTERNATIVE USES WILL ONLY BE CONSIDERED IF NONE OF THE PREFERRED USES ARE FORTHCOMING AND THEN ONLY IF A FURTHER PERIOD OF MARKETING HAS BEEN CARRIED OUT.

THIS POLICY WILL ALSO APPLY TO PROPOSALS FOR THE REDEVELOPMENT OF UNITS AT GROUND FLOOR LEVEL IN THE LOCAL CENTRES.

JUSTIFICATION

- 8.31 The Council's objective for the local shopping centres is to retain them as locations where basic food shopping needs may be met. However, due to the reduced demand for shops the retention of a full range of shopping facilities is not a realistic proposition. Therefore, where criteria (i) and (ii) above are met, the loss of units in A1 use may be acceptable provided the level of A1 provision which would remain if the unit were lost would be adequate to serve the basic food shopping needs of the nearby population. In general terms, this would mean a shop or range of shops where people are able to purchase fresh foods such as milk, bread, fruit and vegetables and grocery products. In practice, this is likely to mean that the loss of a large anchor unit in A1 use in these centres is unlikely to be acceptable, since this would probably result in an inadequate level of A1 provision remaining. Any alternative use should also contribute to the character and vitality of the centre insofar as it would need to attract visitors who may also use the other facilities of the centre.
- 8.32 A period of 12 months unsuccessful marketing must be demonstrated because, due to the small number of units in most local centres, the impact of the loss of an A1 unit could have significant consequences and it is important to establish that there is no demand for the use of the unit for retail purposes. In the event that the generally permitted range of uses are not forthcoming and alternative uses such as residential or B1 may be considered suitable, in preference to a unit remaining vacant.
- 8.33 As set out in Policy SHP1, the local centres are not considered suitable locations for additional large scale development, should there be demand for such provision. Small scale developments of up to 300 sq. m. may be acceptable.
- 8.34 The boundaries of the Local Centres are shown on the Proposals Map with the exception of Mayford, Old Woking and Walton Road, for reasons explained under para. 8.16 above, i.e. they in effect consist of a collection of isolated shops and cannot be readily shown on a Proposals Map. Policy SHP6 applies to all shops within these areas. The majority of local centres are shown on Inset Proposals Maps. For those shown on the main map Appendix 5 lists the properties covered by the designation.

SHP7 • CHANGE OF USE OF ISOLATED SHOPS

THE CHANGE OF USE OF ISOLATED SHOPS TO RESIDENTIAL WILL BE PERMITTED PROVIDED THAT:

- (i) A DESIGNATED DISTRICT OR LOCAL CENTRE IS WITHIN 400 METRES OR
- (ii) IT IS SHOWN THE PREMISES HAVE BEEN UNSUCCESSFULLY MARKETED FOR A1 PURPOSES FOR A PERIOD OF AT LEAST 12 MONTHS

OTHER USES MAY BE PERMITTED PROVIDED THERE IS NO ADVERSE EFFECT ON THE AMENITY OF THE AREA.

JUSTIFICATION

- 8.35 It is important that corner type shops and small groups of shops are retained where possible to serve day to day shopping needs and the requirements of those who do not have access to a car. Where closure does inevitably occur, it will be incumbent upon the owner to demonstrate that a realistic marketing exercise has been undertaken - this will usually need to occur over a period of at least 12 months, without success. The Council will be concerned to ensure that any alternative use is compatible with the surrounding area and residential will be permitted in these circumstances. New retail development will not normally be permitted in isolated locations.

SHP8 • RESTAURANTS, WINEBARS, PUBS AND HOT FOOD TAKEAWAYS

RESTAURANTS, WINEBARS, PUBS AND HOT FOOD TAKEAWAYS WILL BE PERMITTED IN WOKING TOWN CENTRE, THE DISTRICT AND LOCAL CENTRES PROVIDED THE PROPOSAL:

- (i) COMPLIES WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE RELEVANT POLICY ON CHANGE OF USE AND
- (ii) DOES NOT HAVE A MATERIALLY ADVERSE EFFECT IN TERMS OF NOISE OR DISTURBANCE TO OCCUPIERS OF NEARBY PROPERTIES AND
- (iii) DOES NOT GENERATE AN UNACCEPTABLE INCREASE IN KERB-SIDE PARKING

IN CONSIDERING PROPOSALS THE COUNCIL MAY IMPOSE CONDITIONS RELATING TO :

- § THE HOURS OF OPENING AND THE PLAYING OF MUSIC
- § PROVISION OF ADEQUATE SOUND PROOFING
- § COMPLIANCE WITH RELEVANT CAR PARKING STANDARDS
- § INSTALLATION OF A VENTILATION/EXTRACTION SYSTEM WHICH EFFECTIVELY REMOVES COOKING SMELLS, BUT DOES NOT INVOLVE UNSIGHTLY DUCTING
- § PROVISION OF SATISFACTORY STORAGE FACILITIES FOR REFUSE

JUSTIFICATION

- 8.36 Provided certain criteria are met food and drink (Class A3) uses can make a positive contribution to the village and neighbourhood centres, act as a vehicle for their regeneration and as a focus for community activities. The relevant criteria on permitting a change of use are set out in policies SHP4, 5, 6, WTC14, 15, and 16. However certain amenity problems can be caused by food and drink outlets, and this policy seeks to ensure that these are addressed in any application. Where there are already a number of restaurants in an area, the cumulative effect of an additional permission will be taken into account. However, the Council cannot control the number of restaurants in an area for other than land-use planning reasons.

SHP9 • AMUSEMENT CENTRES, MOTOR VEHICLE SHOWROOMS AND EXHAUST FITTING SERVICES

THE COUNCIL WILL PERMIT USES SUCH AS AMUSEMENT CENTRES, MOTOR VEHICLE SHOWROOMS AND EXHAUST FITTING SERVICES WITHIN THE TOWN CENTRE AND DISTRICT CENTRES PROVIDED THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA ARE MET:

- (i) THE USE IS SITUATED WITHIN A SECONDARY SHOPPING AREA OF WOKING TOWN CENTRE OR IN THE DISTRICT CENTRES OUTSIDE THE RETAIL SERVICES AREAS, AND IS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE RELEVANT CHANGE OF USE POLICY.
- (ii) HOURS OF OPENING ARE RESTRICTED IN APPROPRIATE CASES, THE EXACT TIMES TO BE DETERMINED THROUGH CONDITIONS ATTACHED TO THE PLANNING PERMISSION
- (iii) NOISE ATTENUATION MEASURES ARE TAKEN WHERE NECESSARY
- (iv) THE PROPOSAL WOULD NOT HAVE A MATERIALLY ADVERSE EFFECT ON NEIGHBOURING OCCUPIERS

JUSTIFICATION

- 8.37 A small number of uses appropriate to a shopping area are excluded from any specific use class, so that the use of any premises for that purpose will always require planning permission. These include car showrooms, exhaust and tyre fitting and amusement centres. The reason for the extra control is the degree of general disturbance which such uses may be expected to generate. It may be appropriate to attach conditions limiting opening hours and to require that noise attenuation measures be implemented, although account will also need to be taken of the amount of noise already generated in the area. Changes of use would need to conform to policies SHP5 and WTC15.

- 8.38 Such uses are often best located in secondary shopping areas or in areas of mixed commercial development - they are unlikely to be acceptable in close proximity to residential areas.

SHP10 • FARM SHOPS

PROPOSALS OUTSIDE THE TOWN CENTRE, DISTRICT AND LOCAL CENTRES, FOR FARM SHOPS AND/OR RETAIL NURSERIES WILL BE PERMITTED WHERE THE GOODS RETAILED ARE PREDOMINANTLY GROWN ON SITE AND:

- (i) THEY COMPLY WITH THE COUNCIL'S POLICIES FOR PROTECTING THE GREEN BELT (GRB1 - GRB5)
- (ii) THERE WOULD BE NO ADVERSE EFFECT ON THE VIABILITY OF ANY NEARBY SHOP OR SHOPS
- (iii) ADEQUATE ACCESS AND PARKING CAN BE PROVIDED

JUSTIFICATION

- 8.39 Farm shops provide a source of fresh produce not always available elsewhere. Such produce is increasingly in demand. The horticultural sector in the Borough is of some significance and should be encouraged.
- 8.40 Therefore, whilst there may be some scope for limited facilities for the sale of goods produced on individual land holdings, such developments will be strictly controlled by the Council to ensure that they remain of a size commensurate to the agricultural and /or market gardening activity and they are in keeping with their surroundings. They should therefore be of a small scale and, in accordance with Policy GRB2, should make use of existing vacant agricultural buildings wherever possible rather than involve the construction of a new building.