

Chapter 12

Town Centres



Introduction

12.1 This chapter sets out the strategy for how our town and local centres can develop, as well as where new town centre uses should be brought forward. The Employment and Economic Study for Eastbourne and Wealden (April 2022) confirms that the largest employment sector in Wealden is wholesale and retail trade in 2019 at approximately 9,000 employees (16.7%), albeit that this is similar in percentage terms to other parts of the southeast. Employment within the retail trade for Wealden District has also grown by approximately 1,000 people between 2001 and 2019. However, there has been a number of events/trends that has changed the role of town centres nationally, including the rise of internet shopping, the recent Covid-19 pandemic and its impact that forced non-essential stores to close temporarily. There has also been the relaxation of planning regulations for town centre uses, which has allowed for certain town centre uses to interchange without planning permission, including the introduction of residential uses.

12.2 A key priority for the Council is to ensure that Wealden contains ‘vibrant places’ and for our town centres to adapt to contemporary needs, whilst providing a place for residents and visitors to enjoy. It is considered that the quality of places within Wealden, along with the right town centre offer (night-time economy and diverse shopping) will attract footfall and increase expenditure within the district’s towns and villages which is also another key priority. This would include preserving the heritage of our town and villages for visitors, whilst ensuring that there are viable town centre units catering for the retail and leisure needs of the modern consumer. Over the lifetime of the Local Plan, there may also be opportunities to consider enhancements to community facilities in those centres, as well as planning for climate change (i.e. the provision of EV charging points in town centre car parks).

12.3 The role and purpose of town and local centres is an issue nationally, as is the decline of physical retail stores on our high streets. Locally, Wealden’s town and local centres have fared reasonably well over the period 2016-2021 including through the Covid-19 pandemic, with the district having retained its market share of comparison goods over the period, even in light of sizable regional competitors, with minimal internal competition from out-of-centre destinations within Wealden. Nonetheless, Wealden’s centres do not provide significant comparison goods destinations in their own right and it is acknowledged that alternative uses will be required to support our centres to ensure they remain vibrant and viable in the future. Our strategy therefore is to be more flexible in our town and local centres, whilst still endeavouring to retain the core retail areas in our market towns and to improve the character of our centres.

What you have previously told us?

12.4 As part of the ‘Direction of Travel’ consultation, you told us that a key issue was to focus on transport and access to existing town centres. As part of this, respondents emphasised the importance of free car parking in supporting town centres as well as the need for better cycling, walking and public transport routes to our town centres. In addition, you considered the implications of the Covid-19 pandemic on town centres, as well as the influence of online shopping, and how physical retail floorspace can be re-utilised, with a potential repurposing of town centres to be service, leisure and community hubs. It was further suggested that this would need to be aligned with the Council’s evidence base for town centres and particularly an assessment of retail capacity in the future.

12.5 You told us that there should be a diversity and mix of uses within town centres, including post offices, the provision of services and community space and space for social activities,

leisure services and cafes, as well as other parts of the hospitality sector such as restaurants and public houses. There was support for the repurposing of unused space above shops for example, where the introduction of residential uses could increase footfall within town centres. Conversely, there was also support for the continuation of retail frontages at ground floor level to prevent residential schemes being introduced into core retail areas.

12.6 Respondents to the consultation also commented on the town centre environment and particularly retaining and preserving the character of our town centres (many of which are historic), the provision of additional space for pedestrian and leisure uses (including public realm improvements) and the provision of green space and/or green routes through our town centres. Lastly, a number of respondents suggested that the Council should reconsider the role that garden centres play in the district and particularly their impact of taking footfall away from town centres.

Policies

District, Service and Local Centre Hierarchy and 'Town Centre' First Principles

12.7 The NPPF confirms that local planning policies should define a network and hierarchy of town centres to promote their long-term vitality and viability.

12.8 As part of the Wealden Town Centre Study (July 2022), and based on the definitions of town centres included in the NPPF, this study recommended the following Town Centre Hierarchy for our seven main centres in the district and also suggested several examples for local centres that are listed as follows:

- **District centres:** Uckfield, Hailsham, Crowborough and Heathfield all of which have a good level of retail provision (100 plus units) with a wide range of shops (supermarkets and some comparison retailing including that provided by national retailers). The centres also provide hubs for public transport and offer a good level of car parking. District centres provide jobs, services and offer a range of community facilities for the population of the town as well as surrounding settlements.
- **Service centres:** Polegate, Forest Row, Wadhurst all have a good level of retail provision (40-60 units) to cater for everyday needs but have significantly less provision than District centres, including a more limited comparison goods offer. These centres are less likely to attract national retailers, however, they do attract local businesses providing for special interests.
- **Local centres:** Pevensey Bay, Mayfield, Horam, Herstmonceux, Rotherfield and Jarvis Brook (Crowborough) are smaller centres providing a range of retail and service facilities catering for local needs. These centres have 10 or more units.

12.9 Policy TC1 sets the hierarchy of Wealden's defined centres and their protection. The hierarchy is based on their current position and function and seeks to both protect the position of each centre whilst also improving their viability and vitality.

12.10 The Wealden Town Centre Study (July 2022) has recommended several other policy considerations for our town centres. This includes encouraging flexible working practices and new formats for 'main town centre uses' through supporting the amalgamation or subdivision of existing town centre units, providing it only results in a minimal net loss of floorspace, and delivers a better standard of retail/leisure floorspace.

12.11 The Wealden Town Centre Study also confirms that policies should seek to support 'meanwhile' uses to temporarily occupy vacant units through occupiers seeking to test new

business concepts, pop-up stores and event spaces where they support the vitality and viability of designated centres. The government's most recent consultation on this issue (named, High Street Rental Auctions¹⁸⁴) intends to permit the change of use of an existing high street premises to another suitable high street use as determined by the local authority. This is supported in principle through this policy and the Council will consider any changes introduced through these proposed permitted development right changes. Support will also be given to other complimentary uses in town centres, including the construction of click and collect 'hubs', or delivery lockers that provide reasons to visit designated centres and provide opportunities for dwell time and linked trips to the centre.

12.12 The Council's Economic Development Strategy (2023) confirms that the quality of place is a fundamental strength of Wealden that along with the right town centre offer will attract footfall and spending. The 'greening' of centres, the provision of public realm features and support for the provision and connection of improved walking and cycling links and measures integrated with public transport are key to improving our centres. Applicants for new town centre development should consider Policy DE1: Achieving well-designed and high-quality places and Policy DE3: Spaces for people, nature and public realm of this Local Plan to ensure that opportunities to address the issues identified above are realised within new development of this nature.

12.13 In relation to residential development, the Council would not normally support the change of use of existing ground floor premises in a 'main town centre use' to residential development within defined centres. It is considered that residential uses on the ground floor level are unlikely to support 'active frontages' within our centres or the vitality and viability of those centres.

Policy TC1: District, Service and Local Centre Hierarchy and 'Town Centre' First Principles

- 1 Development proposals for main town centre uses will be expected to take a 'town centre first' approach and be located within district, service and local centres, as defined on the Policies Map. Main town centre uses should be located within these boundaries unless the proposal complies with the sequential test under Policy TC2 (Sequential and Local Impact Test).

The defined centres hierarchy for the district is as follows:

- a) District Centres: Uckfield, Hailsham, Crowborough; and Heathfield;
 - b) Service Centres: Polegate, Forest Row; and Wadhurst;
 - c) Local Centres: Pevensey Bay, Mayfield, Horam, Herstmonceux, Rotherfield; and Jarvis Brook (Crowborough).
- 2 Within the district, service and local centres, as defined on the Policies Map, proposals for 'main town centre uses' will be supported where they:

¹⁸⁴ Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (June 2023) 'High Street Rental Auctions'. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/high-street-rental-auctions/high-street-rental-auctions> (Accessed: 21 November 2023).

- a) Seek to maintain or enhance the role, character, overall mix and diverse offer of uses ensuring a range of main town centre uses to support local communities, without the over concentration of any one use;
 - b) Develop and enhance the evening and night-time economy without resulting in adverse impacts on residential amenity and daytime footfall and can demonstrate that such uses will add to the vitality and viability of the centre;
 - c) Are of an appropriate scale to the centre and reflect its function and position within the defined town centre hierarchy;
 - d) Support the creation of a safe, attractive, accessible and high-quality environment, taking into account the identity of centres, their heritage as well as their connections with other towns, attractions and accommodation. This will include taking opportunities to improve sustainable travel connectivity within the centres and adjoining areas where possible; and
 - e) Retain an active ground floor frontage.
- 3 Support will also be given, within district, service and local centre boundaries, as defined on the Policies Map, for:
- a) The amalgamation or subdivision of existing units that contain 'main town centre uses', providing it only results in a minimal loss of floorspace, but leads to an overall improvement to the format of the unit, an increase in jobs or meets the needs of a modern retail/leisure business;
 - b) Temporary 'meanwhile' uses to occupy vacant units where they support the vitality and viability of designated centres and do not compromise the future redevelopment of the unit/site;
 - c) Proposals for upper floor uses that contribute to the centres vitality and viability, including residential uses, subject to conformity with other policies in the Local Plan. The redevelopment of upper floor uses should not result in the loss of ancillary storage space or other beneficial uses to the extent that it would make a ground floor unit unviable; and
 - d) Delivery lockers, where it can be demonstrated that their installation would enhance the vitality and viability of the designated centre and would not restrict accessibility for pedestrians or harm the public realm.
- 4 The change of use of existing ground floor premises, that is defined as a 'main town centre use' to residential will not be supported within a defined centre.

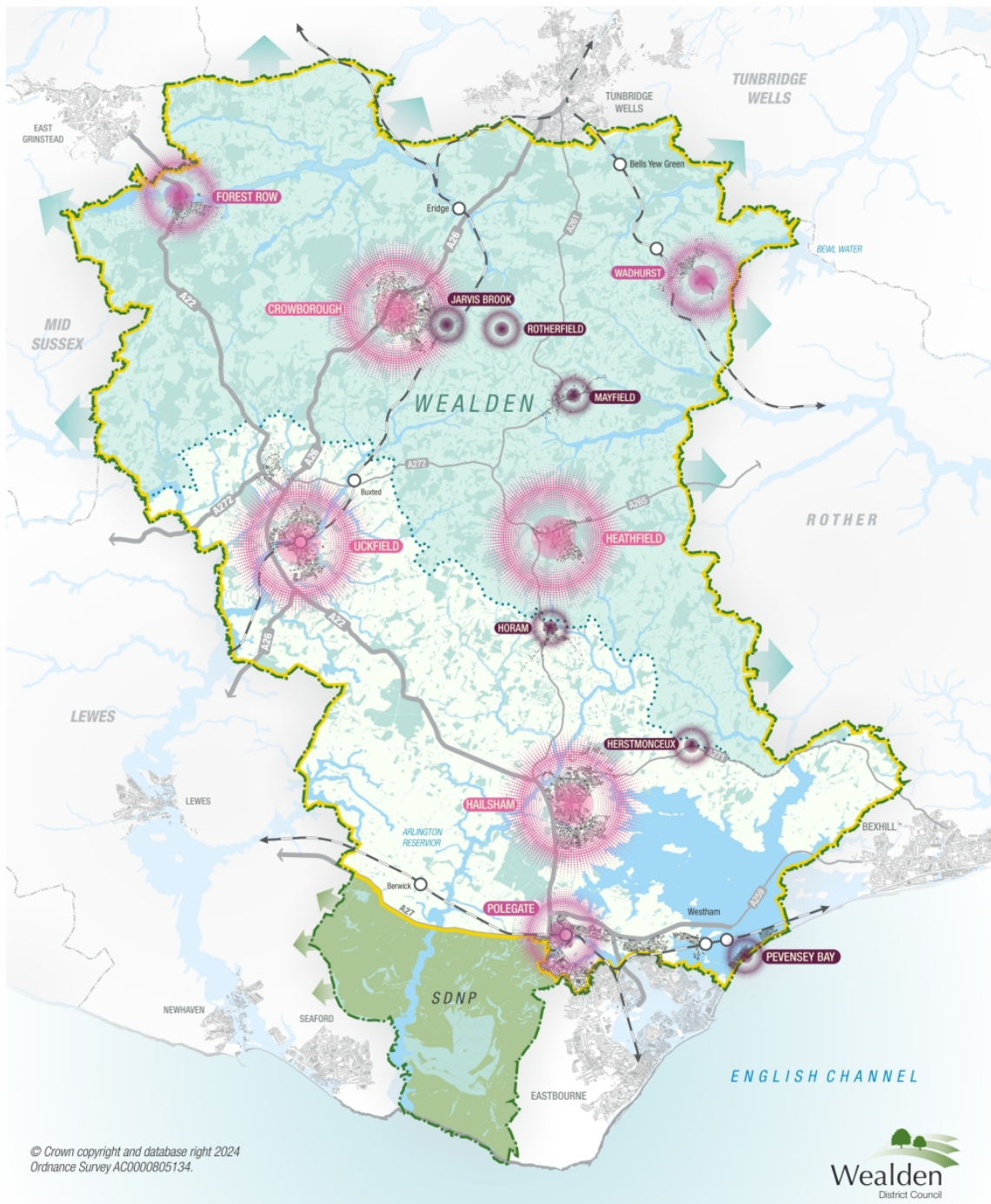
Supporting Text

12.14 Policy TC1 confirms that proposals for 'main town centre uses' should be of an appropriate scale to the centre and reflect its function and position within the District, Service and Local Centre Hierarchy. For example, the Council would not normally consider proposals for major retail development to be appropriate in Local Centres. It is expected that most new retail floorspace will be met within the District Centres. However, this 'hierarchy' only demonstrates an understanding of how the centres interact with each other, and it is not designed to favour one centre over another (particularly when in the same category) or to direct investment decisions.

12.15 All proposals for ‘main town centre uses’ should seek to enhance the role, character and overall mix and diverse offer of uses in individual town and local centres, without the over concentration of any particular use. For example, although sui generis uses are supported in town centres to enhance the evening and night-time economy (i.e. bars, public houses, venues for live music performances), the applicant would need to demonstrate that the location of that use would not result in either an over concentration of the use, an adverse impact on daytime footfall or an adverse impact on residential amenity.

12.16 It is noted that ‘meanwhile’ uses to occupy vacant units will be supported in principle to ensure the vitality, vibrancy and viability of existing centres. Where required, the Council may choose to apply planning conditions to such uses (if they require planning permission) to safeguard neighbouring occupiers (i.e. opening times), as well as a time limit for the use.

Map 10 Town Centre Hierarchy



Existing Assets

- Wealden District Boundary
- Local Plan Area
- Major A Roads
- Minor A Roads
- Rail
- Rail Stations
- Settlements
- South Downs National Park (SDNP)
- Woodland
- Water
- High Weald National Landscape

Town Centres

- Town Centres
- District Centres
- Local Centres

Question 80

Consultation Questions

- a Do you agree with draft Policy TC1 District, Service and Local Centre Hierarchy and 'Town Centre' First Principles
- b Do you agree with the 'centres' included with the District, Service and Local Centre Hierarchy and their position within the hierarchy? Please explain your answer.
- c Should we change anything? If so, what should we change and why?
- d Have we missed anything? If so, what have we missed and how should it be included?

Sequential and Local Impact Test

Sequential Test

12.17 A key issue for our defined centres is the provision of both edge of town and 'out-of-town' retailing in the district. National planning policy supports a 'town centre' first approach, in that all new town centre uses should seek to locate themselves within designated district, service and local centres, before considering other locations outside of those centres. Our local plan supports this principle to ensure that 'out-of-town' retail is only delivered where there is no viable alternative within existing centres, and where it is shown demonstrably that there is no detrimental impact on existing nearby centres.

12.18 The NPPF confirms that local planning authorities should apply a sequential test to planning applications for main town centre uses¹⁸⁵, which are neither in an existing centre nor in accordance with an up-to-date plan. National planning policy on this matter confirms that main town centre uses should be in town centres first before edge of centre locations¹⁸⁶ can be considered. Only if suitable sites are not available within town centres or edge of centre locations (or are expected to become available within a reasonable period) should out of centre sites be considered. Given the evidence within the Wealden Town Centre Study (July 2022), which confirms that there is a limited quantitative need for either retail or leisure floorspace until 2039, coupled with vacancies within Wealden's town centres, the Council's preferred approach is to direct such development towards the defined centres first and apply the sequential approach for main town centre uses proposed outside of these boundaries.

Local Impact Test

12.19 The NPPF confirms that retail and leisure developments greater than 2,500 sqm (gross) floorspace, proposed either in edge of centre or out-of-centre locations will be subject to the assessment of the impact criteria. It also notes that local planning authorities are able to set

185 This is defined in the NPPF at Annex 2: Glossary and includes retail development; leisure, entertainment and more intensive sport and recreation uses; offices; and arts, culture and tourism development.

186 This term is defined in the NPPF at Annex 2 for retail development, main town centres uses and offices. In determining whether a site falls within the definition of edge of centre, the Council will take account of local circumstances, as well as guidance in the NPPF.

local impact thresholds which are lower than 2,500 sqm (gross), after consideration of the criteria in the PPG¹⁸⁷.

12.20 The Wealden Town Centre Study (July 2022) confirms that the average size of occupied town centre units in the district is 174 sqm, with the median size being 90 sqm. The average retail unit across the district (including vacancies) is slightly larger, measuring 239 sqm. Notwithstanding that Wealden's centres have been relatively resilient to losses during the Covid-19 period, the evidence base confirms the potential draw of regional centres on the edge of the district to continue to cumulatively impact the vitality and viability of Wealden's centres. In considering the evidence it was recommended that retail developments falling below the current national threshold have the potential to impact the health of all town, service, and local centres within Wealden and that a locally set impact threshold is justified.

12.21 Given the existing scale of retail units in Wealden and noting that relatively small retail units located in out-of-centre locations do have the potential to cause harm to existing town centres, the local impact threshold recommended within the Wealden Town Centre Study (July 2022) is 350 sqm (gross). It is considered that this threshold would capture larger convenience retailers, whilst avoiding placing an undue burden on small new stores and extensions, as well as most comparison goods retailers on edge of centre or out-of-centre retail parks. This will ensure that the impact of proposals for retail development outside of town centres can be fully considered and will ensure that existing town centres are not harmed through reduced footfall/expenditure. The evidence base does not recommend a locally set impact threshold for leisure uses.

Policy TC2: Sequential and Local Impact Test

- 1 To support the vitality and viability of town, service and local centres as defined on the Policies Map, the sequential approach as set out in the NPPF will be applied where main town centre uses are proposed on the edge of or outside of centres.
- 2 Where the sequential test is met for proposals at the edge of an existing centre or in out-of-centre locations, these are expected to provide specific measures that will, where appropriate, establish new or improve the quality and function of, sustainable connections to the centre, in particular walking/cycling routes and public transport links. The nature and extent of the measures should be directly related to the scale of the proposal.
- 3 Proposals should demonstrate flexibility on issues such as the format and scale of the development, so that opportunities to utilise suitable town centre or edge of centre sites are explored first before out-of-town locations are considered.
- 4 Applications for developments outside of defined centres above the following thresholds will be expected to be accompanied by an impact assessment:
 - a) Over 350 square metres (gross) for retail proposals
 - b) Over 2,500 square metres (gross) for leisure proposals

187 [PPG – Paragraph: 015 Reference ID: 2b-015-20190722](#)

- 5 In both cases, the impact assessment must sufficiently demonstrate that it will not have a significant adverse impact on the district's defined centres, either on their own or cumulatively in consideration of other commitments in the area.
- 6 Where necessary, planning conditions and/or legal agreements will be applied to any new planning permission outside of defined centres, including defining the nature and extent of the proposed use to ensure no future adverse impacts on existing defined centres.

Supporting Text

12.22 In relation to the sequential test, the NPPF confirms that the sequential approach should not be applied to applications for small scale rural offices or other small scale rural development, albeit that national policy does not provide a definition for small-scale in terms of floorspace. Small scale rural offices, retail development and other 'main town centre uses' within rural areas will therefore be considered on a case-by-case basis and the Council will take a proportionate view of the requirements for the sequential test in such cases. However, in line with the Wealden Town Centre Study (July 2022) small scale rural office, retail development and other 'main town centre uses', to be defined as small-scale in the context of the sequential test, would normally be smaller than the recommended local impact threshold of 350 sqm and closer to the median unit size in Wealden's centres of 90 sqm.

12.23 In relation to the Local Impact Test, although all planning applications for retail development of over 350 sqm (gross) outside of defined centres will be expected to submit an impact assessment, national guidance indicates that the impact test should be undertaken in a proportionate and locally appropriate way. The level of detail for the submission of an impact assessment would typically be agreed with Council officers during the pre-application process, but this will need to ensure, at a minimum, an assessment of:

- the impact of the proposal on existing, committed and planned public and private investment in a centre or centres in the catchment area of the proposal; and
- the impact of the proposal on vitality and viability of the defined centre, including local consumer choice and trade in the town centre and the wider retail catchment (as applicable to the scale and nature of the scheme).

12.24 Lastly, the introduction of Use Class E will enable retail uses to occupy non-retail premises (in Use Class E) in out of centre locations, thereby circumventing the 'town centre first' principle. Where this could impact on the health of district, service or local centres, the Council may attach a planning condition in out of centre locations to restrict the use applied for.

Question 81

Consultation Questions

- a Do you agree with draft Policy TC2 Sequential and Local Impact Test?

- b Is the Local Impact Test threshold for retail of 350 sqm correct in the Wealden context? Please explain your answer.
- c Should we change anything? If so, what should we change and why?
- d Have we missed anything? If so, what have we missed and how should it be included?

Primary Shopping Areas

12.25 The NPPF confirms that planning policies should define the extent of defined centres and primary shopping areas, and then make clear the range of uses permitted in such locations, as part of a positive strategy for the future of each centre. Primary Shopping Areas are defined in the NPPF as ‘defined areas where retail development is concentrated’.

12.26 The Wealden Town Centre Study (July 2022) focused on our seven main district/service centres that are included within the District, Service and Local Centre Hierarchy (namely Uckfield, Hailsham, Crowborough, Heathfield, Polegate, Forest Row and Wadhurst) and all these centres have recommendations within the evidence base for both a wider defined centre boundary¹⁸⁸ and primary shopping area boundary. In general, areas that are isolated, or operate as a distinct separate parade of shops, or where they do not function as part of the collective retail, leisure, commercial and service offering of ‘main town centre uses’ have not been included within the relevant defined centre boundaries.

12.27 Wealden’s defined centres are comprised of close groupings of shops, cafes and other businesses selling a relatively wide range of products and services. For convenience goods and day-to-day services, customers can fulfil the majority of their day-to-day needs in our centres (and some comparison purchases) in one trip. The presence of non-retail uses in primary shopping areas can dilute the core purpose of our centres and may disincentivise shoppers to come into those centres, thereby reducing their vitality and viability.

12.28 Although Wealden recognises the role that residential development has to play in centres, particularly in terms of delivering footfall to these centres, it is considered that this will need to be balanced with protecting our defined centres, including the possibility that such uses will erode some of the characteristics of our centres that supports their vitality and vibrancy, through the removal of active frontages. Residential uses at ground floor level in primary shopping areas can also give rise to practical issues, such as the creation of incompatible living conditions for potential occupiers and the conversion of traditional shop frontages (particularly in conservation areas) to residential frontages that can cause detrimental impacts to the character of the area. For these reasons, the Council’s preferred approach is to only support residential uses outside of primary shopping areas (unless residential use is on the upper floors).

12.29 The Council recognises the introduction of Use Class E¹⁸⁹ in September 2020 that combined a number of town centre uses (shops, cafes, restaurants, offices, fitness and gyms, creches, estate agents etc.) into one use class. The Council also notes changes to permitted development rights that were introduced in August 2021¹⁹⁰ that allows for uses falling within

188 The NPPF defines a town centre boundary as an ‘area defined on the local authority’s policies map, including the primary shopping area and areas predominantly occupied by main town centre uses within or adjacent to the primary shopping area’.

189 Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2020.

190 The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015.

Use Class E to be dwelling houses without planning permission (but subject to a prior approval process). It is noted that several of our centres (Forest Row, Wadhurst, Mayfield etc.) are washed by the High Weald AONB designation and therefore do not benefit from such permitted development rights. Therefore, where planning permission is required, Policy TC3 will apply.

Policy TC3: Primary Shopping Areas

- 1 Retail uses will be encouraged in Primary Shopping Areas, as defined on the Policies Map, to ensure that these central areas retain their role as shopping destinations meeting the shopping needs of the community and generating the required footfall during the day for our centres to continue to be vibrant and viable.
- 2 Uses that are likely to detract from the overall shopping function and have closed or inactive frontages will be resisted in the Primary Shopping Area, as this will detract from the overall shopping function.

Supporting Text

12.30 The overarching purpose of designating Primary Shopping Areas is to ensure that these core areas within our centres retain their role as shopping destinations to meet the needs of the community (and visitors) in order to generate footfall during the day and to ensure that these centres remain vibrant and viable. Uses that would detract from the overall shopping function of these Primary Shopping Areas will be resisted where planning permission is required, including those sui generis uses that mainly relates to the night-time economy (i.e. public houses, bars, takeaways and live music venues) that may reduce daytime footfall, or uses that have closed or inactive frontages (i.e. some professional service uses or offices).

12.31 The Council recognises that the introduction of various permitted development right changes within the planning system and the implications thereof. However, the loss of an active ground floor frontage to residential use will not be supported within primary shopping areas where planning permission is required, particularly where such proposals would result in a gap between active frontages, where it would be incompatible with existing uses (i.e. the residential amenity of future occupiers would be unsatisfactory) and where conversions of traditional shopfronts to residential harm the existing built form and/or character of the area.

Question 82

Consultation Questions

- a Do you agree with draft Policy TC3 Primary Shopping Areas?
- b Should we change anything? If so, what should we change and why?
- c Have we missed anything? If so, what have we missed and how should it be included?

Garden Centres

12.32 Owing to the rural nature of Wealden and the location of some of its countryside on the outskirts of large towns, there has historically been a significant number of horticultural nurseries and garden centres scattered throughout the district, many of which are located outside of existing development boundaries on major road routes or outside of market towns. Traditionally, such garden centres were predominantly businesses selling plants, horticultural products, garden buildings and garden furniture/ornaments, but have over time, been increasingly looking to sell other household goods including comparison goods (clothes, household goods, indoor furniture) and convenience goods (food products) that can be found in many of Wealden's defined centres. This has the potential to have a detrimental impact on the vitality and viability of these existing centres in the district, particularly when selling convenience and comparison goods that can be found on the local high street.

12.33 To ensure that defined centres are protected, the Council considers it necessary to provide a criteria-based policy for the expansion/extension of existing garden centres that are located in the least sustainable locations (i.e. outside of development boundaries) to ensure that such enterprises do not detrimentally impact the vitality and viability of nearby retail centres.

12.34 The following policy sets out the criteria which will be considered when determining planning applications for the expansion/extension of existing garden centres outside of development boundaries.

Policy TC4: Garden Centres

- 1 Proposals for the expansion/extension of existing garden centres outside of development boundaries as defined on the Policies Map, will be permitted when the following criteria is met:
 - a) the sale of plants, horticultural products, garden buildings, garden furniture and ornaments within the garden centre remains the principal use;
 - b) the additional traffic generated does not have an adverse impact on local roads by reason of their inadequate capacity or rural nature;
 - c) it can accommodate the car parking requirements satisfactorily within the immediate surrounds of the building, or where this is not suitable due to highway safety concerns, an alternative solution is agreed; and
 - d) the site has good accessibility to an existing sustainable settlement and is not situated in an isolated location.
- 2 Where a significant extension to an existing garden centre is permitted, the Council will consider whether a planning condition is necessary to ensure the retail floorspace principally relates to the sale of garden/horticultural products.
- 3 It should be noted that all extensions to existing garden centres that are proposed to have retail floorspace above 350 square metres gross will be subject to the Local Impact Test under Policy TC2: Sequential and Local Impact Test of this Local Plan.
- 4 All other ancillary uses that defined as 'main town centre uses' within national planning policy (i.e. cafes/restaurants) may also be considered under the sequential test.

Supporting Text

12.35 Where a significant extension to an existing garden centre is permitted, the Council will consider whether a planning condition to ensure the retail floorspace of the garden centre principally relates to the sale of garden/horticultural products is required. This will be considered on a case-by-case basis, in line with the NPPF and will only be imposed where they are necessary, relevant to planning and to the development being permitted, enforceable, precise and reasonable in all other respects. Both the scale of the extension and the sustainability of the location are key matters in determining whether the Council will seek to impose a planning condition of this nature, and this will be discussed with applicants at an early stage.

12.36 It should be noted that all proposals for the expansion/extension of garden centres in all locations (i.e. inside and outside development boundaries) will continue to be subject to the sequential test and local impact assessment if outside of a designated town centre boundary (Policy TC2 – Sequential and Local Impact Test).

Question 83

Consultation Questions

- a Do you agree with draft Policy TC4 Garden Centres?
- b Should we change anything? If so, what should we change and why?
- c Have we missed anything? If so, what have we missed and how should it be included?