

3. TOWN CENTRES

3.1 Hillingdon's town centres are crucial to the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of the Borough. They provide local communities with a sense of individual identity, and being focused on public transport links provide a basis for sustainable urban living. As a result of competition both from other town centres and from out of town retail developments, as well as the changing retail behaviour of residents (with an increasing use of internet shopping), many town centres are now looking to diversify their roles.

Hierarchy of Centres

3.2 Hillingdon's established hierarchy is anchored by the Metropolitan Centre of Uxbridge, which has built on its retail, economic and locational strengths to expand onto the former RAF Uxbridge site. The Borough has five district centres, the largest being Hayes District Centre and Yiewsley-District Centre in the south of the Borough, where the new Crossrail stations are expected to bring significant regeneration opportunities. The remaining district centres are at Green Lane (Northwood), Eastcote, and Ruislip. Additionally, there are ten neighbourhood or local centres further classified into minor centres or smaller local centres. A number of local parades complete the hierarchy.

3.3 Table 3.1 below and Map 5.3 in Part 1 of the Local Plan outlines the hierarchy of town centres.

Table 3.1: Town Centre Hierarchy

Centre	Town	London Plan Description
Metropolitan Centre	• Uxbridge	Serves wide catchments which can extend over several boroughs and into parts of the wider south east region. Typically they contain at least 100,000 sqm of retail floorspace with a significant proportion of high-order comparison goods relative to convenience goods. These centres generally have very good accessibility and significant employment, service and leisure functions.
District Centres	• Ruislip • Eastcote • Green Lane (Northwood) • Yiewsley - West Drayton • Hayes	Distributed more widely than the metropolitan and major centres, providing convenience goods and services for more local communities and accessible by public transport, walking and cycling. Typically they contain 10,000–50,000 sqm of retail floorspace.
Minor Centres	• Ruislip Manor • Northwood Hills • Uxbridge Road, Hayes	Typically serve a localised catchment often most accessible by walking and cycling and include local parades and small clusters of shops, mostly for convenience goods and other services.
Local Centres	• Harefield • South Ruislip • Hillingdon Heath • North Hillingdon • Ickenham • Harlington • Willow Tree Lane, Yeading	They may include a small supermarket (typically up to around 500 sqm), sub-post office, pharmacy, laundrette and other useful local services. (In this Development Management document, the minor and local centres are defined as follows: minor centres are considered to have a comparison and higher order goods to serve a population within a 3 km radius; local centres provide a full range and choice of essential shop uses and other local services for people who do not live or work near a town centre).

Scale and Function of Centres

3.4 London Plan 2016 Policy 2.15: Town Centres (d) states that development proposals in town centres should be in scale with the centre. In ascertaining scale and suitability of the proposal to a centre, consideration should be given to the consistency of proposals with the definition of the centres in Table 3.1 above. All proposals for town centre uses will be expected to comply with other relevant policies in the development plan for Hillingdon. Proposed development should:

- enhance the town centres offer and be compatible with the nature, scale and function of the centre;
- have no deleterious impact on the function and vitality of the centre or on the Borough centres hierarchy;
- be in accessible locations or locations that are able to be made accessible by public and active transport; and
- in areas of regeneration, contribute positively to wider regeneration objectives.

3.5 Larger centres are considered appropriate locations for accommodating growth in comparison goods retail expenditure and floor space because they are the most accessible by public transport and have greater capacity to provide choice and competition. It is intended that major retail proposals with a significant proportion of high order comparison goods relative to convenience goods locate in the highest order centres in the Borough.

3.6 In order to protect the Borough's shopping hierarchy and the integrity of local parades, the Local Plan Part 1 notes that the Council will require an impact assessment for any retail proposal in an edge of centre or out of town centre location, which exceeds 200 square metres gross retail space. Development proposals of 1,000 sqm or more for individual or combined main town centre uses in out of centre locations will be required to provide an impact assessment.

Policy DMTC 1: Town Centre Developments

A) The Council will support ‘main town centre uses’ where the development proposal is consistent with the scale and function of the centre. Town centre development will need to demonstrate that:

- i) adequate width and depth of floorspace has been provided for the town centre uses; and**
- ii) appropriate servicing arrangements have been provided.**

B) Residential use of ground floor premises in primary and secondary shopping areas and in designated parades will not be supported.

C) Proposals for ‘main town centre uses’ in out of centre locations will only be permitted where there is no harm to residential amenity.

D) The Council will:

- i) expect proposals for ‘main town centre uses’ to demonstrate that there are no available or suitable sites in a town centre where an edge of centre or out of centre location is proposed, using a sequential approach; and**
- ii) consider the effect of the proposal, either individually or cumulatively on the vitality and viability of existing town centres. Development proposals in out of centre and edge of centre locations, which exceed 200 sqm of gross retail floorspace, or 1,000 sqm of combined main town centres uses, will require an impact assessment.**

Metropolitan, District and Minor Centres

3.7 Ensuring the viability of Hillingdon’s retail centres by managing their land uses is considered integral to the economic and social prosperity of Hillingdon. Vibrant town centres need to have a “critical mass” appropriate to their role in the network and an appropriate level of diversity of retail development to attract consumers of all ages and backgrounds on a regular basis at different times of the day and throughout the year. However, the Council will consider proposals which constitute a departure from policies in this chapter, where they provide clear and long lasting benefits to the vitality and viability of town centres in the borough.

3.8 Whilst seeking to encourage vitality and viability, the Council recognises the different retail functions that take place within its town centres:

- **Primary Areas**, which are the focus of retail activity in the centres and are either already generally dominated by retail shops or are areas which the Local Planning Authority considers have prime retail potential. Therefore in these areas at least 70% of the primary frontage should be maintained in Use Class A1 and concentrations of service uses avoided.
- **Secondary Areas**, peripheral to the primary areas in which shopping and service uses are more mixed, should still retain a high proportion of Class A1 shops. In these areas, at least 50% of the frontage should be in Use Class A1 and concentrations of service uses avoided. Where non-retail uses are permitted, the retention of an appropriately designed shop front can help mitigate the visual effect of a break in the shopping frontage.
- **Other Areas**, outside the primary and secondary areas which are appropriate both for retail and for other town centres uses.

3.9 To ensure the frontages are kept as an area of retailing activity, interruptions in the shop frontage will be minimised and supporting uses are to be dispersed within shopping areas. In primary frontages, the length of continuous frontage in non-retail use should be limited. Separation or an increase in the separation of Use Class A1 units by other uses should be no more than about 12m (broadly the width of two typical shop fronts) and in general, no more than one in three units should be non - A1 use. In addition, the concentration of other (service) uses should be minimised.

3.10 Hot food takeaways (Class A5) have specific issues in terms of parking and impact on the vitality of a shopping area. In order to prevent problems caused by parking on the street or on the pavement outside the premises, adequate off street parking for customers and delivery vehicles will be required. In order to prevent unacceptable effects on local amenity, shopping frontages and the daytime vitality of shopping parades, Use Class A5 hot food takeaways will be limited to 15% of the total number of units present in a centre or a local parade.

3.11 The town centre boundaries as set out in the former Unitary Development Plan have been reviewed and updated. Uxbridge Town Centre boundary is extended onto the former RAF Uxbridge and into the Highbridge Industrial Estate. Boundaries for Ruislip Manor and Harefield have also been amended. The town centre boundaries including primary and secondary shopping areas are defined in Appendix D.

Policy DMTC 2: Primary and Secondary Shopping Areas

A) In primary shopping areas, the Council will support the ground floor use of premises for retail, financial and professional activities and restaurants, cafes, pubs and bars provided that:

- i) a minimum of 70% of the frontage is retained in Use Class A1;**
- ii) Use Class A5 hot food takeaways are limited to a maximum of 15% of the frontage;**
- iii) the proposed use will not result a separation of more than 12 metres between A1 retail uses; and**
- iv) the proposed use does not result in a concentration of non retail uses which could be considered to cause harm to the vitality and viability of the town centre.**

B) In secondary shopping areas, the Council will support the ground floor use of premises for retail; financial and professional activities; restaurants, cafes, pubs and bars; launderettes and other coin operated dry cleaners; community service offices, including doctor's surgeries provided that:

- i) a minimum of 50% of the frontage is retained in retail use; and**
- ii) the uses specified in policy DMTC4 are limited to a maximum of 15% of the frontage;**
- iii) the proposed use does not result in a concentration of non retail uses which could be considered to cause harm to the vitality and viability of the town centre.**
- C) The Council will give consideration to the provision of community facilities within secondary frontages where it can be demonstrated that theses will be open to members of the public and would support the vitality and viability of the centre.**
- D) Outside of defined primary and secondary areas, proposals for a change of use from A1 retail will be permitted, provided the change does not result in the loss of an essential local service.**

Local Centres and Local Parades

3.12 Shopping areas that meet local shopping needs over and above daily food shopping have been designated local centres in the Borough hierarchy. These centres provide for the needs of people who do not live close to a town centre and may also provide a range of other services and community functions. Local centres are generally much smaller than town centres and to protect their retail function, policies governing changes of use for A1 (units) are more restrictive than those for town centres.

3.13 The Council will resist proposals that would result in the loss of a Use Class A1 shop in core areas and will examine very closely similar proposals for other parts of these centres.

3.14 The Borough hierarchy of shopping centres also includes local shops and Local Parades, which fulfil a convenience shopping function. The list of Local Parades is in Table 3.2. These parades or local shops are retained to meet the day to day shopping needs of local residents, minimise the need to travel by car or public transport and address wider social, inclusion and accessibility objectives. The following uses are considered important at the local level - pharmacy, post office, grocer, baker, butcher, greengrocer and newsagent - and are referred to as essential shops.

3.15 A walking distance of 800m is applied (about a 10 minute walk) to establish a shop's catchment. Residential areas which are not within 800m of at least five essential shop uses are defined as being deficient. When considering applications for a change of use, accessibility to alternative shops that are available to residents within 800m will be taken into account by the Council. For those areas with an insufficient population to support essential shops, the Council will seek to ensure that all residential areas are within half a mile of at least five essential shop.

3.16 The Council will, in assessing proposals, ensure that parades and local centres retain as many essential shops as possible with no less than three in smaller parades and a choice of essential shops in the larger parades and in local centres. The Council will ensure that at least 50% of a shopping parade is retained as Use Class A1 shops.

Table 3.2: Local Parades

LOCAL PARADES		
Colham Green • Field Health Road • Violet Avenue Cowley • Station Road/High Street • Dellfield Parade/The Parade, High Street Cowley Peachy • High Road • Moorfield Road Eastcote Village Goulds Green • 305 -315 Harlington Road Hayes • 124-152 Uxbridge Road • Kingshill Avenue • Lansbury Drive • Bourne Circle/ Gloucester Parade, Bourne Avenue/ Cranbourne Drive • 641 -693 Uxbridge Road, Wood End • Dawley Parade, Dawley Road • 1 – 29 Dawley Road, Hayes town • Hayes End 625 – 849 (south) 1172 – 1380 (north) Uxbridge Road	Harlington • Cranford Parade, 141 - 171 Northfield Parade, North Hyde Road/High Street • Redmead Road, • St Dunstan's Close Harmondsworth • Harmondsworth Village • Bath Road Hillingdon • Ryefield Avenue, • Sutton Court Road, • Crescent Parade, Long Lane/Uxbridge Road Hillingdon Hill • Royal Lane/Hillingdon Village Ickenham • 55 -97 High Road Northwood • Northwood High Street • Pinner Road, • Salisbury Road Ruislip • Howletts Lane, Ruislip Gardens • West End Road/ New Pond Parade Sipson • 41- 47 Sipson Way	South Ruislip • 702 –724 Field End Road • 439– 490 Victoria Road, • 1-24 Station Approach • Whitby Road Uxbridge • Cowley Road (Trumper Way-Myddleton Road) • 98-118 Cowley Road • Brunel University West Drayton • 58-66 Swan Road, • 81 Swan Road and the Green • 107 –147 Station Road West Drayton • Mulberry Crescent • Harmondsworth Road/Sipson Road Laurel Lane • Byron Way/ Coleridge Way West Ruislip • (Station) Ickenham Road • Station Parade, Ickenham Road Yeading • Welbeck Avenue • Yeading Lane Yiewsley • Falling Lane/Royal Lane

Policy DMTC 3: Maintaining the Viability of Local Centres and Local Parades

A) The Council will protect and enhance the function of local centres and local shopping parades by retaining uses that support their continued viability and attractiveness to the locality they serve. In considering applications for changes of use of shops the Council will ensure that:

- i) the local centre or shopping parade retains sufficient essential shop uses to provide a range and choice of shops appropriate to the size of the parade, and its function in the Borough shopping hierarchy;**
- ii) at least of 50% of the local centre or shopping parade is retained as Use Class A1 shops; and**
- iii) the surrounding residential area is not deficient in essential shop uses.**

Location and concentration of town centre uses

3.17 Given the mixed use nature and higher density of development in town centres, it is important to ensure that there is a mix and balance of complementary night time and day time uses that can co-exist successfully with neighbouring residential areas and create an attractive and vibrant area. Certain types of uses can cause detrimental cumulative impacts as a result of their concentration or location. The Council will therefore resist applications for such uses where they would cause harm to the character, function and amenity of an area or negatively impact on the health and wellbeing of the Borough's residents.

3.18 In assessing the likely impacts of a proposal on the surrounding area, various factors will be taken into account such as the type of use, the proposed hours of opening, size of premises, operation and servicing, parking requirements, and measures to mitigate odour and noise. Proposals that would result in unreasonable adverse cumulative impacts that cannot be adequately mitigated will be resisted.

3.19 When considering applications for adult-orientated activities, such as alcohol consumption, gambling, and adult entertainment, the proximity of the site to housing, places of worship, schools, hospitals and other sensitive community facilities will be considered.

3.20 The Mayor of London's Town Centres SPG encourages boroughs to manage over concentrations of certain activities, such as betting shops, hot food takeaways and pay day loan outlets. The Council will apply the maximum threshold for these uses of 15% of primary and secondary frontages set out in criteria A ii) and B ii) of Policy DMTC 2: Primary and Secondary Shopping Areas. A Supplementary Planning Document will be prepared to provide more detailed guidance on the issues raised by these sites, including the proximity of hot food takeaways to schools.

Betting shops

3.21 The London Plan Town Centres SPG identifies the need to control the proliferation of betting shops and to address the implications this can have on maintaining the vitality and viability of town centres and protecting amenity and safety. It highlights the issues affecting amenity and the continued success of town centres which justify planning authorities to consider the merits of proposals for betting shops.

3.22 For any planning proposals for betting shops that fall outside permitted development rights, the Council will consider impacts on amenity, concentration of similar uses, security of the locality and proximity to sensitive uses.

Restaurants and Takeaways

3.23 Unlike shops and many other services, restaurants and takeaways have limited opening hours and they can create problems of noise, odours, litter and on street parking. Saturating an area with these uses can impact on local amenity as well as on the broader vitality of a shopping frontage.

3.24 Planning permissions for restaurant and takeaway proposals may need planning conditions to secure acceptable hours of operation, adequate ventilation and filtration equipment which also avoid adverse impacts on visual amenity and to ensure that adequate arrangements are made for the storage and disposal of refuse.

3.25 Ducting and ventilation equipment can cause noise and nuisance (from noise, odours and emissions) to neighbours and when inappropriately or retrospectively placed, can impact on the visual amenity of the street frontage, the building or surrounding area. This is of particular relevance for Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas.

3.26 Proposals for Use Classes A3/A5 requiring ventilation or ducting equipment should include the details of this as part of the planning application to ensure that the Council can assess the acceptability of the proposals. As a guide, exterior ducting should be placed so as not to impact on the

streetscape or amenity of the area and consideration is required as to the impacts on any adjoining residential uses.

Night time economy

3.27 The London Plan Town Centres SPG notes the evening and night time uses can contribute to the vitality of the town centre and make town centres feel safer by increasing activity and providing passive surveillance.

3.28 However evening and night time uses can also be associated with noise, crime, antisocial behaviour, community safety problems and detrimental effects on public health which, without appropriate management and mitigation, impacts on the quality of life of local residents.

3.29 Planning applications for evening and night time uses will need to demonstrate that the proposed use will not result in adverse impacts, particularly on residential amenity or result in an unacceptable concentration of uses.

Minicab offices

3.30 Whilst minicab offices provide a service to the public, they can cause nuisance through inadequate parking provision, leading to street congestion and noise during evening operations. In assessing planning applications the Council will therefore consider the adequacy of car park provision, hours of operation, suitability of traffic arrangements and impacts on congestion and local vehicle movement as well as surrounding land uses.

Policy DMTC 4: Amenity and Town Centre Uses

Proposals for restaurants and hot food takeaways, drinking establishments, betting shops, night clubs, casinos, amusement centres, minicab offices and other similar uses will only be supported provided that they:

- i) would not result in adverse cumulative impacts due to an unacceptable concentration of such uses in one area;**
- ii) would not cause unacceptable disturbance or loss of amenity to nearby properties by reason of noise, odour, emissions, safety and security, refuse, parking or traffic congestion; and**
- iii) would not detrimentally affect the character or function of an area by virtue of the proposed use or visual impact.**