

CHERWELL DISTRICT COUNCIL

Retail Study

October 2012

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1.0 Introduction

BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Cherwell District Council is preparing a suite of documents that will form its Local Development Framework. The first Development Plan Document (DPD) will be the Local Plan. The Local Plan is expected to be submitted to the Secretary of State in the latter part of 2012.
- 1.2 The Council will also prepare a Local Neighbourhoods DPD, which will include smaller site allocations, and a separate Development Management DPD. Site-specific Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) are also proposed; some of these are already in draft form, and masterplan-based SPDs are being prepared for Banbury and Bicester. All of these documents, and in particular the DPDs, need to be founded on a robust evidence base, including an up to date retail study. Cherwell District Council has instructed CBRE to prepare that study. The initial draft of this study informed the thinking behind the emerging Local Plan after it was issued to the Council in August 2012.

AIM OF STUDY

- 1.3 The aim of the study is to provide Cherwell District Council with a report that will:
 - Inform the overall strategy for retail and town centre development in its Local Plan, as well as helping to inform its emerging documents and strategies; and
 - Help inform its response to current and anticipated future planning applications for retail development.
- 1.4 This study will supersede the Council's earlier 'PPS6 Assessment' (CBRE, December 2006) and the Council's '2010 Retail Study Update' (CBRE, November 2010). The 2006 study undertook town centre health check assessments; provided a quantitative and qualitative assessment of need; and identified potential sites for development. The 2010 study updated the quantitative need assessment in light of the economic downturn and assessed a development opportunity at Bolton Road.

OUTPUTS OF THE STUDY

- 1.5 The brief for the study identifies a range of outputs. The outputs can be summarised under five headings, each of which form a section of this report:
 - Section 2: A summary and analysis of planning policy relating to retail and town centres, as well as a summary of the key issues facing the retail sector now and in the future;
 - Section 3: A profile of the role and health of Cherwell's centres and other retail destinations;
 - Section 4: An assessment of the need for new development;
 - Section 5: A review of potential development opportunities/sites required to meet the identified need; and
 - Section 6: Conclusions and recommendations.

2.0 The current position: policy and the economy

BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In this section we:
 - Review existing and emerging national planning policy relevant to retail and town centres; and
 - Review local strategies and emerging local planning policy.
- 2.2 We then identify wider trends affecting retail, including:
 - Changes in consumer preferences and retail trends (including the decline of some retail sectors and growth in ‘special forms of trading’); and
 - The current economic situation.
- 2.3 We do so by drawing on our knowledge of the retail sector and on the latest forecasts and projections published by Oxford Economics on long-term growth (though short-term decline) in consumer expenditure and growth in special forms of trading (non-store retail sales that do not take place through traditional store-based outlets), particularly the anticipated growth in online spend. We address convenience goods (day-to-day groceries) and comparison goods (less frequently purchased, often durable, goods) separately.

POLICY AND TECHNICAL GUIDANCE

National Policy and Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012)

- 2.4 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in March 2012. It replaced a large number of planning policy documents, including PPS4 which dealt with retail and other town centre uses.
- 2.5 The NPPF introduced a ‘presumption in favour of sustainable development’. It explains that for plan-making this means that:
 - Local planning authorities should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area; and
 - Local Plans should meet objectively assessed needs, with sufficient flexibility to adapt to rapid change, unless:
 - Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole; or
 - Specific policies in the Framework indicate development should be restricted.
- 2.6 This retail study contributes to those policy aspirations, identifying the need and then recommending ways in which it could be met.
- 2.7 In terms of policies in the NPPF relating specifically to retail and town centres, paragraph 23 says that in drawing up Local Plans, local planning authorities should:
 - Recognise town centres as the heart of their communities and pursue policies to support their viability and vitality;
 - Define a network and hierarchy of centres that is resilient to anticipated future economic changes;

2.0 The current position: policy and the economy

- Define the extent of town centres and primary shopping areas, based on a clear definition of primary and secondary frontages in designated centres, and set policies that make clear which uses will be permitted in such locations;
 - Promote competitive town centres that provide customer choice and a diverse retail offer and which reflect the individuality of town centres;
 - Retain and enhance existing markets and, where appropriate, reintroduce or create new ones, ensuring that markets remain attractive and competitive;
 - Allocate a range of suitable sites to meet the scale and type of retail, leisure, commercial, office, tourism, cultural, community and residential development needed in town centres;
 - Allocate appropriate edge of centre sites for main town centre uses that are well connected to the town centre where suitable and viable town centre sites are not available. If sufficient edge of centre sites cannot be identified, set policies for meeting the identified needs in other accessible locations that are well connected to the town centre;
 - Set policies for the consideration of proposals for main town centre uses which cannot be accommodated in or adjacent to town centres;
 - Recognise that residential development can play an important role in ensuring the vitality of centres and set out policies to encourage residential development on appropriate sites; and
 - Where town centres are in decline, plan positively for their future to encourage economic activity.
- 2.8 Notably, the NPPF says that:
- Need for retail, leisure, office and other main town centre uses should be met in full and should not be compromised by limited site availability; and
 - Local planning authorities should therefore undertake an assessment of the need to expand town centres to ensure a sufficient supply of suitable sites.
- 2.9 This study proceeds on that basis, identifying the full extent of the need for new retail floorspace together with sites and a strategy that could meet that need.

Practice Guidance on Need, Impact and the Sequential Approach (December 2009)

- 2.10 The Practice Guidance was published by CLG in December 2009 and was designed to support PPS4. Although PPS4 has been superseded by the NPPF, we have been advised by CLG that the guidance remains extant.
- 2.11 We therefore draw on the guidance throughout the study and reference relevant sections where we do so.

Regional Policy and Strategies

South East Plan (May 2009)

- 2.12 Abolition of the South East Plan is expected imminently. However, until it is abolished, development plan documents in the region must be consistent with the strategy and policies it sets out.

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- 2.13 Policy TC1 identifies Banbury as a Primary Regional Centre, though not one expected to see ‘significant change’. Policy TC2 says that after the Centres for Significant Change, the most significant growth is expected to be focused in the remaining Primary Regional Centres.
- 2.14 Policy TC2 also says that plans and strategies prepared by local authorities and other stakeholders should have regard to:
 - The need to support the function and viability of pre-eminent town centres to accommodate change and growth within each sub-regional strategy area;
 - The need to assess the capacity to accommodate change and growth in such areas;
 - The need to respect the historic character, environment and cultural value of existing town centres;
 - The need to ensure safe, secure and attractive environments for people to live, shop and work;
 - The need to promote new investment of an appropriate scale, in particular in vulnerable centres in need of regeneration;
 - The need to support sustainability objectives, including the role of regional hubs, taking account of the impact on traffic and the need to minimise reliance on the car/lorry and promote public transport accessibility; and
 - The potential impact on the vitality and viability of town centres.

County Policy and Strategies

Oxfordshire Structure Plan (October 2005)

- 2.15 The South East Plan superseded all but three of the policies in the Structure Plan. None of those remaining three policies are relevant to this study.

Local Policy and Strategies

Cherwell Sustainable Community Strategy (February 2010)

- 2.16 One of the aspirations set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy is to maintain the vitality of Cherwell’s urban centres as *‘economic, cultural and social hubs, offering improved leisure and shopping facilities as well as a diverse and vibrant evening economy’*.
- 2.17 It identifies two objectives relevant to this study:
 - To support town centres to maintain their economic viability through their shops and markets; and
 - To support the cultural economy across the district with the development of theatre facilities and other leisure facilities to encourage this economy to develop locally so that people go out locally if they wish rather than in Oxford or elsewhere.
- 2.18 For Banbury it notes:
 - A need to review and address the town’s transport needs and traffic control.
- 2.19 For Bicester it notes:
 - A need to implement the redevelopment proposals for Bicester town centre including bringing forward the environmental improvements programme for Market Square.

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2.20 For Kidlington it notes:

- An opportunity to encourage stronger links between industrial areas, the airport and local residents and the village centre; and
- The need to address the issue of the main road bisecting the village and traffic management.

2.21 For rural areas it notes the opportunity to ‘support local shops and businesses to serve their rural communities and create jobs’.

Cherwell Economic Development Strategy 2011 – 2016

2.22 The Cherwell Economic Development Strategy says that the Council will:

- Maximise the benefits of co-operation between local chambers and business networks to build relationships with each other, and with public and community partners;
- Promote the economic vitality of centres through successful services, shops markets and events;
- Undertake regeneration schemes and actions to enhance the attractiveness and success of the centres; and
- Maximise use of public and community assets in support of the local economy.

2.23 In terms of policy direction, it notes that the Council’s primary concern in Bicester is to ‘ensure that the town centre is vital and viable, and able to co-exist with Bicester Shopping Outlet Centre in a mutually productive way’.

WIDER TRENDS

Economic Growth and Impact on Retail Spend

- 2.24 The UK saw sustained growth in real household disposable income (RHDI) between the early 1980s and the early part of first decade of the 21st century¹. With that growth in disposable income came significant growth in spending on retail goods, with real terms spending more than doubling between 1983 and 2008, albeit with a minor contraction in 1991². Notably, growth in comparison goods retail spend was much greater than that for convenience goods retail sales: between 1983 and 2008, the real terms increase in convenience goods spend was some 19%, but for comparison goods it was more than 350%.
- 2.25 The recession in 2008/09 saw growth in retail spend fall to -3.6% in 2008 and -4.5% in 2009. The decline in growth had, however, started before that, falling to zero in 2006 and -0.6% in 2007.
- 2.26 Spending on comparison goods proved more resilient, with no negative growth until 2009. This is likely to reflect consumers’ preference for cutting back on ‘big ticket’ items (such as expensive holidays) and on transport, recreation and culture, rather than on clothing and footwear, along with more careful grocery shopping, whereby shoppers opt for cheaper lines and purchase less.

¹ See <http://www.oxfordeconomics.com/FREE/PDFS/UKCONSUMER.PDF> Access date: 30 April 2012

² See Table 3.5, Retail Expenditure Guide (Spending Update) for Expenditure Release 2011/2012 (Pitney Bowes Business Insight/Oxford Economics, November 2011)

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- 2.27 As the UK economy began to recover, comparison goods spend saw positive growth (at 2.6% in 2010). In the convenience sector, negative growth continued (at -0.9% in 2010).
- 2.28 The UK economy has now entered a second period of recession, and thus Oxford Economics' forecasts for future growth, which were prepared prior to this, must be treated with some caution. In summary, they forecast:
- Continued reduced rates of growth in convenience goods spend in 2011 and 2012 (at -2.5% and -0.6% respectively), before a gradual increase in the level of growth until 2015, until it begins to decline once again; and
 - Increased rates of growth in comparison goods spend are forecast until 2015 (at 1.3% in 2011, rising to 5.8% in 2015), before a gradual decline in the rate of growth.
- 2.29 Nevertheless, the assumptions behind their forecasts appear sound, notably that:
- The legacy of the recession will be a period of high unemployment and a severe fiscal squeeze;
 - Although the likely short-term response will be a low official interest rate, this will mainly impact upon the disposable incomes of people with tracker mortgages (a relatively small group of people);
 - Interest rates on consumer credit are likely to remain high, as will rates on new mortgages; and
 - Weak consumer confidence and a desire to limit borrowing will also impede economic growth.
- 2.30 We are, therefore, content with the broad thrust of the forecasts, albeit the recovery in retail spend may be slightly delayed. Indeed, that is the suggestion in a recent paper by Oxford Economics³, although the revised forecast has yet to be published in full.

Key Issues and Outlook for Town Centres, Neighbourhood Centres and Out Of Centre Retail

- 2.31 Verdict's UK Town Centre Retailing 2012 report usefully summarises some of the key issues facing town centres⁴ and, in particular, comparison goods retailers. It notes that:
- Retailers are seeking to improve their margins by closing underperforming town centre stores, and they will continue to do so;
 - Those retailers who are expanding are going out-of-town, where rents are lower and larger units are available, allowing for deeper and wider ranges;
 - As retailers cut back on space they are moving towards opening larger flagship stores in strategic markets which are then supported by smaller satellite stores and transactional websites;
 - The town centre will increasingly be used:

³ Available: <http://www.oxfordeconomics.com/FREE/PDFS/UKCONSUMER.PDF> Access date: 30 April 2012

⁴ Verdict define town centres as all areas that offer comparison shopping (as opposed to the mainly convenience shopping available at neighbourhood stores and destination shopping missions to out-of-town retail park superstores). Their definition includes, misleadingly in planning terms, factory outlet centres such as Bicester Shopping Outlet Centre.

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- For leisure activities, with more bars, restaurants, food-to-go outlets and community spaces opening in vacant units;
 - To support the e-retail channel, with click and collect points and safe drop boxes for customers to collect their online orders as well as satellite stores for customers to make online purchases; and
 - For residential use, as secondary and tertiary space which is surplus to requirements is converted.
- 2.32 Verdict also consider retailing outside town centres in their UK Out-of-Town Retailing 2012 report. In terms of comparison goods retail, the report notes that:
- While retailers continue to look towards out-of-town space for expansion, consumers cutting back on ‘big ticket’ items has had an impact on the sales of out of town stores; and
 - With sales growth in bigger ticket markets more challenging, the main area of focus for out-of-town retailers will be protecting their margins and positioning themselves to benefit from the uplift in demand when the market improves. Retailers are therefore examining their portfolios and shedding underperforming space where possible.
- 2.33 Turning to the convenience sector, research by CBRE⁵ suggests that the surge in foodstore (supermarket and superstore) development activity in recent years ‘still shows no signs of abating’ and looks likely to continue.
- 2.34 This is as true of smaller top-up stores in smaller centres as of larger out of centre stores. Verdict note in their UK Neighbourhood Retailers 2012 report⁶ that Sainsbury’s and Tesco have continued to expand their top-up shopping offer in neighbourhood locations, with Morrisons and Waitrose now following their lead with their M Local and Little Waitrose formats.
- 2.35 Verdict warn that the expansion of these grocers is putting pressure on symbol groups, such as Spar and Londis, on traditional newsagents and on independents, with the survival of the latter dependent on their ability to build specialism, provide good quality service and build on local ties.
- 2.36 Development of larger, out of centre stores also looks set to continue, although recent announcements suggest that the very largest stores with substantial non-food ranges may not proceed, after some grocery retailers reported disappointing non-food sales growth. This is despite the grocers’ share of non-food sales almost doubling over the past 10 years to 14%.

⁵ Available: http://www.cbre.eu/portal/pls/portal/res_rep.show_report?report_id=1910 Access date: 9 July 2012

⁶ Verdict describe neighbourhood locations as those catering almost exclusively to the local populace, providing convenient sites for top-up, meal solution and distress purchases, with only limited comparison goods provision.

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Growth of Multi-Channel Retailing and Implications for Retail Floorspace

- 2.37 There is, inevitably, a close relationship between retail spend and the demand for new floorspace, although this has been complicated by growth in multi-channel retailing. Multi-channel retailing is the sale of goods to the public via more than one distribution channel, through mail order catalogues, 'bricks and mortar' stores, online, and via mobile technology.
- 2.38 In the convenience sector there has been growth in home delivery of groceries in recent years. However, that does not negate the need for new retail floorspace, as most convenience retailers fulfil home delivery orders by shelf-picking from stores. Only Ocado source products solely from warehouses, with Tesco and Waitrose using a mixture of shelf-picking from both stores and warehouses.
- 2.39 With that in mind, we follow advice from Oxford Economics⁷, which recommends we should assume that only 10% of all online convenience goods expenditure is directed towards goods sourced from non-retail floorspace. In other words, 10% of online expenditure on groceries is spent with retailers such as Ocado (and, to a lesser extent, Tesco and Waitrose) who source goods from warehouses, and the remaining 90% with retailers who source goods direct from stores.
- 2.40 There has also been significant growth in online spend in the comparison sector, and much of this has been through retailers such as Amazon, who source products from warehouses for home delivery. However, 'click and collect', whereby products are ordered (and sometimes, though not always, paid for) online is becoming increasingly popular. It has been growing strongly, whilst growth in home delivery sales has actually proved sluggish⁸. In addition, 'bricks and mortar' stores are increasingly used as showrooms, with the purchase made at a later date via a computer, or in situ via a mobile phone, and not necessarily from the same retailer.
- 2.41 Oxford Economics do not provide an estimate for the amount of online comparison goods expenditure directed towards goods sourced from non-retail floorspace. In the absence of such an estimate, we surmise that some 90% of online spend is directed towards goods sourced from non-retail floorspace. More information is provided in footnotes to the tables in Appendix F and G.
- 2.42 Looking to the future, it is difficult to forecast future internet market share. However, Oxford Economics note in their 2011 publication Retail Expenditure Guide 2011/2012:
- 'Internet sales penetration is already very high in the UK and is much higher than in continental Europe and even higher than in the USA. This means that we have no clear indication of a possible future saturation point.'*
- 2.43 However, they acknowledge that:
- 'Recent increases have ... been very rapid and it is difficult to see why they should suddenly level off when internet usage is still increasing and the use of smart-phone technology in retailing is only just taking off.'*

⁷ See page 25, Retail Expenditure Guide 2011/2012 (Pitney Bowes Business Insight/Oxford Economics, September 2011)

⁸ See http://www.cbre.eu/portal/pls/portal/res_rep.show_report?report_id=1845 Access date: 2 July 2012

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- 2.44 Others are more sceptical: CBRE's Retail Research team argues⁹ that the range of electronically transferrable retail items (such as e-books, music, film and computer software) remains far too narrow for the internet to make significant inroads into retailing as a direct channel. Moreover, the home delivery business model remains problematic: hence the belated shift to click-and-collect.
- 2.45 However, both CBRE's Retail Research team and Oxford Economics agree that the rate of growth in internet sales is likely to decline. Perhaps with that in mind, Oxford Economics' main forecast suggests that internet market share for comparison goods will level off at 14.7% by 2020 and that for convenience goods at 6.5% in the same year. We use this forecast in our quantitative assessment of need. More information is provided in footnotes to the tables in Appendix F and G.

Improvements in Sales Densities

- 2.46 Sales densities are the value of goods sold through retail outlets divided by the available floorspace (i.e. the turnover of retail floorspace per given area, usually square feet or square metres). As Oxford Economics note¹⁰, any increase in sales densities reduces the future need for retail floorspace. This is because shoppers have a finite amount of money to spend; if more of that money is directed to existing floorspace, there is a lower requirement for new floorspace
- 2.47 Recent years have seen significant increases in sales densities. Oxford Economics believe that the past rate of increase is unlikely to be sustainable partly because they were due to one-off changes, such as Sunday trading and 24-hour opening, both of which gave shoppers more opportunity to shop and, as a result, allowed stores to increase their turnovers. However, Oxford Economics consider it unlikely that there will be no future increases in sales densities, and settle on an increase of 0.3% per annum for convenience goods and 1.8% for comparison goods. In accordance with this guidance, our quantitative assessment has made this allowance for the improvement in sales densities.

⁹ See http://www.cbre.eu/portal/pls/portal/res_rep.show_report?report_id=1845 Access date: 2 July 2012

¹⁰ See page 26, Retail Expenditure Guide (2011/2012 (Pitney Bowes Business Insight/Oxford Economics, September 2011)

3.0 The current position: centre profiles

BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In this section we:
- Summarise the role of the town centres of Banbury and Bicester, the village centre of Kidlington and the Bicester Shopping Outlet Centre (in terms of their retail offer, market share and relationship to other centres and one another) through a combination of on-street observation, data available from Goad and household and on-street survey data (see below);
 - Examine the health of Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington through a combination of on-street observation and Goad data, CoStar Focus and other providers;
 - Summarise the main known aspirations for retail development, both those of the local authority and of developers and investors;
 - Consider in broad terms the role of village shops.
- 3.2 Where possible we compare the current position with the findings of our 2006 study.

TOWN CENTRE HEALTH CHECKS

- 3.3 Health check assessments are designed to measure the vitality and viability of a centre through a series of different indicators. These include the diversity of main town centre uses compared to the UK national average; and the proportion of vacancies in the centre.
- 3.4 The Practice Guidance on Need, Impact and the Sequential Approach establishes that health checks are a prerequisite for any town centre strategy in order to have a clear understanding of the scale and quality of existing provision of retail and other key town centres uses; the network and role of different centres; and their vitality and viability and how it has changed over time.
- 3.5 As well as providing important baseline data for retail/town centre assessments, health checks enable consideration of how a centre is performing relative to national trends. The Practice Guidance sets out that this type of analysis provides an important insight into whether the centre is improving, stable or declining, and will have a bearing when considering the need for new development and the likely impact of new developments.
- 3.6 A primer for health checks, included in Appendix A, provides a breakdown of the separate indicators that can be used to measure a centre's vitality and viability and how these indicators assess a centre's health. When assessing each indicator, it is vital to analyse all the data in accordance with the individual role of each centre. For example, not all centres are primarily focused on retail; some perform a wider role including services and leisure. Nor does a lack of multiple retailers automatically show that a centre is not vital and viable, but rather that it may be performing very well as a centre known for its independent and niche retailers.
- 3.7 Equally, while the proportion of vacant street level property provides a strong indication of the health of town centres, it should be used with a degree of caution as vacancies arise even in the strongest town centre, particularly where properties are undergoing alterations/extensions or as part of a wider tenant strategy. The presence of vacant units therefore does not, in itself, show that a centre is of poor health. Furthermore, vacant units allow a turnover in the tenant mix and provide opportunities for new retailers.
- 3.8 This section of the study assesses the health of Banbury and Bicester town centre, Kidlington village and Bicester's Shopping Outlet Centre. In consideration of the above, these health

3.0 The current position: centre profiles

checks measure the vitality and viability of each centre in accordance with their individual role and function.

THE 'ON-STREET' SURVEY

- 3.9 On-street surveys were commissioned to understand people’s perceptions of Banbury and Bicester town centres and identify any deficiencies in their offer. Given that it is much smaller than Banbury and Bicester, the Council chose not to commission an on-street survey for Kidlington. The surveys were undertaken by Research and Marketing Group. The results have informed our qualitative assessment.

BANBURY

Role and Description of the Centre

- 3.10 Banbury is the larger of Cherwell’s two main towns. It is described in the Cherwell Economic Development Strategy as ‘a sub-regional shopping centre, anchored by Castle Quay, attracting shoppers from a broad catchment of towns and villages’ (paragraph 3.17). It saw major retail development in the 1990s, with the development of Castle Quay shopping centre.

Image 3.1

Banbury town centre



- 3.11 The town’s shopping area, as defined on the proposals maps for the adopted Local Plan (1996) and the Non-Statutory Cherwell Local Plan (2011), is anchored by Castle Quay shopping centre, which lies within the north eastern quarter of the town centre. The primary shopping frontage extends from Bridge Street at the entrance to the bus station, westwards along High Street to the junction of Marlborough Road.
- 3.12 The town centre shopping area also includes the pedestrianised Broad Street, Church Lane, White Lion Walk, Market Place and Parsons Street. Larger retail units are located off Calthorpe Street and at the junction of Cherwell Street and George Street on the edge of the centre. The emerging Local Plan may alter boundaries and shopping frontages, although advice on revisions to frontages is beyond our scope of works for this study.

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3.13 The layout is typical of a historic market town, with winding streets branching from a central market area. The majority of the town centre lies within a conservation area and many buildings are listed.

Diversity of Main Town Centre Uses

3.14 According to a Goad Centre Report (2011), Banbury town centre has a total of 84,439 sqm of gross retail floorspace¹¹ across 413 units.

3.15 Table 3.1 and 3.2 set out the retail composition of Banbury town centre by the number of units and amount of floorspace. This data is compared to the UK national averages taken from the Goad Centre Report.

Table 3.1
Uses in Banbury town centre by number of units

RETAIL CATEGORY	NO. OF UNITS	% OF TOTAL	NATIONAL AVERAGE (%)	VARIANCE (% POINTS)
Convenience	27	6.38	8.57	-2.19
Comparison	176	41.61	41.43	+0.18
Service/Food/Drink	139	32.86	35.21	-2.35
Vacant	71	16.78	13.64	+3.14
TOTAL	413			

Source: Experian Goad Centre Survey (March 2011)

Table 3.2
Uses in Banbury town centre by floorspace (sqm gross)

RETAIL CATEGORY	FLOORSPACE (SQM GROSS)	% OF TOTAL	NATIONAL AVERAGE (%)	VARIANCE (% POINTS)
Convenience	3,623	4.22	17.11	-12.89
Comparison	50,641	58.93	46.60	+12.33
Service/Food/Drink	17,419	20.27	23.28	-3.01
Vacant	12,756	14.84	11.98	+2.86
TOTAL	84,439			

Source: Experian Goad Centre Survey (March 2011)

3.16 Table 3.1 and 3.2 show that there is a slightly below average representation in the number of convenience outlets in Banbury town centre and more significant below average representation in the amount of convenience floorspace compared to the UK national average. Banbury town centre is anchored by a Morrisons foodstore. A Tesco and Sainsbury’s are also represented in Banbury, but given that these are not located within the town centre boundary, Goad does not include them in their town centre floorspace figures.

3.17 Comparison retail units account for just under half of all the retail units in the town centre. Whilst the proportion of comparison retail outlets has declined since the 2006 study¹² (from

¹¹ Retail floorspace includes existing convenience, comparison, services and any vacant shop units within a centre. It does not include miscellaneous floorspace which includes employment floorspace, such as offices and residential dwellings within a centre.

¹² Cherwell District Council – PPS6 Assessment (CBRE, December 2006)

3.0 The current position: centre profiles

49% of the total units to 41%), current provision remains above the national average, both for the number of units and the overall amount of comparison floorspace.

- 3.18 The reduction in comparison retail presence has been partly counterbalanced by an increase in service businesses since the 2006 study (from 31% to 35% of total units). The 2006 study identified a continuing need to attract other comparison retail operators, in particular high order luxury retailers.
- 3.19 Banbury’s service sector represents the second largest retail category. A number of service units, particularly food and drink establishments, are clustered along Parsons Street and North Bar Street, although provision generally is spread throughout the centre. This sector contributes to Banbury’s leisure and night-time economy.
- 3.20 Overall the diversity of main town centre uses in Banbury town centre represents a healthy mix which is broadly in line what you would expect of a centre of this size. The mix of uses facilitates linked trips to the centre and enables town centre vitality throughout the day and evening through a healthy proportion of retail, service and leisure uses.

Retailer Representation

- 3.21 Table 3.3 shows Banbury’s multiple retailer representation. It indicates that whilst Banbury has a high level of multiple retailer representation, it lacks some of the major foodstores (such as Tesco and Sainsbury’s), and department stores (such as John Lewis and House of Fraser). However, Debenhams operate a department store in the town centre and we would not expect a town centre of this size to be represented by more than one large department store.

Table 3.3
Key multiple retailers in Banbury as defined by Goad (2011)

KEY RETAILER	NO.	KEY RETAILER	NO.
Argos	1	Next	1
BhS	1	O2	1
Boots	1	Phones 4 U	1
Burton	1	Primark	0
Carphone Warehouse	1	River Island	1
Clarks	1	Sainsbury’s	0
Clintons	2	Superdrug	1
Debenhams	1	TK Maxx	1
Dorothy Perkins	1	Tesco	0
H & M	1	Topman	0
HMV	1	Topshop	1
House of Fraser	0	Vodafone	1
John Lewis	0	Waitrose	0
Marks & Spencer	1	Waterstones	1
New Look	1	WH Smith	1
		Wilkinsons	1

Source: Experian Goad Centre Report (March 2011)

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- 3.22 Banbury has a high level of 'multiple outlets' (i.e. those outlets which form part of a network of nine or more outlets operated by the same retailer), the presence of which can greatly enhance the appeal of a centre. A total of 39% of multiple outlets are present in Banbury's town centre, compared to the UK national average of 29%. This suggests it is an attractive location for retailers.
- 3.23 The convenience offer in Banbury town centre falls below the national average, albeit only marginally, by two percentage points. The current offer comprises smaller independent grocery stores: an Iceland, Tesco Express, and a Marks & Spencer foodhall. These basket stores operate from small units or from within larger stores and only provide a top-up offer. The Tesco Express and the Marks & Spencer foodhall appeared to be trading well, although the Iceland less so.
- 3.24 The larger superstores, which can offer a main food shop, are located on the outskirts of the town centre. These stores include Morrisons, Tesco and Sainsbury's, and are relatively inaccessible on foot. Each of the stores offers a range of non-food goods including homewares. On the day of the survey all three of the stores appeared to be trading reasonably well.
- 3.25 Banbury town centre can be divided into several distinct areas, each with a slightly different retail offer:
- Castle Quay Shopping Centre – provides the majority of the mid-market multiples. The centre offers a good variety and representation of comparison stores such as Gap, H&M and Next alongside the larger department stores including Debenhams.
 - Market Place, High Street and Broad Street – are Banbury's main open air shopping streets which predominantly comprise a concentration of service retailers such as banks, travel agents, hair and beauty salons. A number of high street retailers complement the shopping centre offer of Castle Quay, although they are distinctly less fashion orientated in comparison and represent the variety and catalogue store sector.
 - Malthouse Walk, Cherwell Centre and the Calthorpe Centre – provide Banbury with a number of large format, purpose built, retail warehouse type units which suit the needs of the discount retailers including TK Maxx and Matalan which operate in these locations.
 - Parsons Street and Church Lane – provide further shopping areas within the town. The pedestrianised streets are dominated by independent retailers and service retail providers. The unit sizes in these areas are much smaller, reflecting the fact that this is the more historic part of the town and the retail offer tends towards the mid to lower end of the market. In addition, Parsons Street, extending into North Bar Street, provides a concentration of bars, cafes and restaurants and a focus for the night time economy.
- 3.26 In addition, a market operates in the Market Place every Thursday and Saturday. This was trading during our visit. On inspection, the stalls offered a variety of retail goods including homewares and food, and appeared to be well frequented by shoppers. Banbury also holds a farmers' market on the first Friday of every month. This adds another dimension to the retail offer and brings vitality to the town centre.

Vacant Retail Property

- 3.27 The number of vacant premises has increased significantly since the last retail survey in 2006, from 38 units to 71 units. This equates to 12,756 sqm.

3.0 The current position: centre profiles

- 3.28 In terms of locations, this is particularly evident along the High Street towards the junction with Horse Fair, where a number of the smaller units are boarded up. Coupled with a high concentration of fast food take-away restaurants in this area this has a negative impact on the vitality of this part of the centre.
- 3.29 In contrast, we noted only two small vacancies within the Castle Quay shopping centre.
- 3.30 Despite this, the proportion of vacancies is close to the UK national average and to some extent reflects the current economic climate.

Retailer Requirements

- 3.31 According to CoStar Focus there are requirements from:
- Fashion accessories retailer Glitz Accezzoriez (37-93 sqm);
 - Book retailer Bargain Book Time (floorspace requirement unknown);
 - 'Rent-to-own' retailer Bighthouse (210-325 sqm ground floor sales with c93 sqm ancillary accommodation);
 - Home furnishing retailer Linens Direct (floorspace requirement unknown);
 - Calendar specialist Calendar Club (October-January only) (floorspace requirement unknown);
 - Budget frozen food retailer Cool Trader (186-372 sqm ground floor sales with c93 sqm ancillary accommodation); and
 - French bakery specialist Maison Blanc (floorspace requirement unknown).
- 3.32 It should be noted that whilst these are listed as retailer requirements for Banbury they may in fact be UK-wide requirements, with Banbury just one of a range of towns that will be considered.

Pedestrian Flow

- 3.33 At the time of our visit there was high footfall across the Market Place and around its periphery towards Parsons Street, and south, towards the High Street. This may have been attributed to the market which was open that day, and reflects the positive role markets can play in town centres.
- 3.34 Castle Quay was reasonably active, although we suspect that this centre becomes much busier at the weekends when people take advantage of the car parking directly adjacent and accessible from the centre itself.
- 3.35 Towards the periphery of the town centre, along the far end of Parsons Street and the High Street, which leads onto North Bar Street and Horse Fair, there was very little footfall during the time of our visit, at mid-afternoon.

Accessibility

- 3.36 Banbury has good accessibility by car, from the local and national road network. There is plenty of car parking provision, including a large multi-storey car park adjacent to the Castle Quay shopping centre.
- 3.37 Public transport is well catered for and well located for ease of access to the town centre on-foot. The town benefits from a train station and a bus station which were both well used during the time of visit.

3.0 The current position: centre profiles

Environmental Quality

- 3.38 Overall, the environmental quality of Banbury is good. The modern shopping centre is clean and well maintained; the footways are clear and easy to navigate. On the whole there is little in the way of places to sit throughout the centre, which is something that could be improved. However, the entrances to Castle Quay and Market Place do benefit from a number of outdoor seating areas. This is offered by the various food and drink service retailers which add to the vibrancy of the street scene. The local market which was set up on the day of our survey further added to the ambience of the area. There is little evidence of graffiti or vandalism, and the centre felt safe which could be partly attributed to the presence of CCTV.
- 3.39 The High Street area benefits from a number of public realm improvements including planters and historic-style signage; the paving is generally well maintained. Towards the far end of the high street, away from the Market Place, a number of the shop fronts would benefit from enhancement and the vacant units detract from the street scene.
- 3.40 The entrance to White Lion Walk, which adjoins the High Street, is in need of investment and the vacant unit at 64 High Street now looks tired. This detracts from the White Lion Walk itself which is quite attractive and well maintained.
- 3.41 The Parsons Street and Church Lane area are much narrower than the High Street, but benefit from being pedestrianised. Both streets again would benefit from shop front improvements as a number are beginning to detract from the overall environmental quality of the area. There is also a lack of public realm features such as benches and planters, which if installed would add to the street scene and create consistency with other parts of the centre.

Customer and residents' views and behaviour

- 3.42 As we note above, we instructed a market research company to undertake a survey of people visiting Banbury town centre. The full results are available in Appendix B.
- 3.43 Some 150 people were interviewed: 50 on Saturday and 25 on each of the preceding four days. They were interviewed at a number of different locations: 50 were interviewed at Castle Quay, 25 at Market Place, 50 at the corner of Bread Street and High Street and 25 at the junction of Parsons Street and Church Lane. The interviews were evenly spread during the day, with the first interviews undertaken from 10am and the last interviews shortly before 4pm.
- 3.44 The survey suggests that people travel to the centre by a variety of means. Some 47% travel to the centre by car, whether as the sole occupant or as a passenger. Nearly 35% travel on foot, and 13% by bus. The remaining 6% travel by train, cycle or taxi.
- 3.45 In terms of the main purpose of interviewees' visits, around 35% of people were visiting the centre for non-food shopping, with a further 19% visiting to undertake food shopping. Nearly 11% were visiting to meet family or friends. A further 11% were using services in the centre (including financial services) and 5% were visiting the market.
- 3.46 The survey results suggest that visitors generally choose to visit the centre because of its proximity to their home, but a large proportion also identified the good range of non-food shops and the Castle Quay Shopping Centre as key draws. Indeed, some 35% of people who were interviewed bought clothes and/or shoes on their visit.
- 3.47 Some 46% of interviewees visited the centre at least once a week for food shopping; 52% visited at least once a week for non-food shopping. It is a less frequent destination for

3.0 The current position: centre profiles

financial and personal services, although 93% visit at least once a month to take advantage of them. Leisure facilities and visits to pubs/cafes/restaurants/nightclubs are less popular. In both cases, only 38% of people visit at least once a month.

- 3.48 Turning to what interviewees liked about Banbury town centre as a place for shopping and services (with interviewees able to identify more than one factor), 27% identified a good range of food shops, 33% a good range of non-food shops, 17% the market and 25% Castle Quay Shopping Centre. Nearly 20% liked the attractiveness of the centre and 11% the traffic free environment. A little over 29% liked the fact it was easy to get to from their home.
- 3.49 As for things they did not like, 70% said 'nothing or very little'. The only major concerns were a poor range of shops (11%) and the cost of parking (5%).
- 3.50 Notably, Banbury is the main destination for non-food goods purchases for nearly 69% of interviewees, suggesting a high level of satisfaction with the centre, although 11% shop more frequently in Oxford city centre and 4% in Milton Keynes city centre. The main reasons for doing so are the better range of shops and proximity to home. Nearly 13% of interviewees shop in Milton Keynes city centre and 8% in Oxford city centre, though less frequently than they do in Banbury

Conclusions

- 3.51 The centre of Banbury benefits from having an attractive historic character. Although generally well maintained, further investment in the side streets could allow the town centre to attract a greater number of higher quality and luxury retailers, as Brighton City Centre has accomplished with its focused approach to the identified different parts of the city centre. Such uses would complement rather than compete with the Castle Quay shopping centre and would be better suited to the smaller size of units.
- 3.52 Overall, Banbury is performing well as a town centre, offering a wide variety of facilities and services that go beyond just a local offering from mid-market fashion retailers and large discount fashion outlets through to smaller independent retailers and service outlets. This is reflected in the very high proportion people expressing satisfaction with the centre in the on-street survey.

BICESTER

Role and Description of the Centre

- 3.53 Bicester is a rapidly expanding historic market town, the majority of which is located within a Conservation Area.
- 3.54 The Cherwell Economic Development Strategy describes the town as having 'a stronger retail offering than would be expected in a centre of this size' (paragraph 3.26), reflecting the presence of the Bicester Shopping Outlet Centre retail development.
- 3.55 It goes on to note that by drawing visitors from a very wide area, the Council expects that Bicester will show an 'increase in specialist high-value retailers appealing to discerning but affluent customers alongside its good range of local services in a revitalised town centre'.

3.0 The current position: centre profiles

Image 3.2
Bicester town centre



- 3.56 As defined in the Non-Statutory Cherwell Local Plan (2011), the primary shopping frontage extends along the pedestrianised area of Sheep Street, from its junction with Bell Lane to Market Square. The rest of the town centre comprises a number of pedestrianised shopping arcades including the Crown Walk shopping centre and Market Square. The emerging Local Plan may alter boundaries and shopping frontages.
- 3.57 The emerging Local Plan indicates that Bicester town centre has grown significantly in recent years and will continue to do so through the plan-period. Permission has already been granted for a £50m redevelopment of the town centre (09/01687, as amended) to include a Sainsbury’s supermarket (circa 8,900 sqm gross), other retail premises (circa 3,900 sqm gross), a 7 screen cinema, a library and new civic building. This scheme is currently under construction and is due to be completed in 2013.

Diversity of Main Town Centre Uses

- 3.58 According to the Goad Centre Report (2011), Bicester town centre has a total of 29,673sqm of gross retail floorspace over 183units.
- 3.59 Table 3.4 and 3.5 set out the retail composition of Bicester town centre by the number of units. This data is compared to the UK national average taken from the Goad Centre Report.

Table 3.4
Use in Bicester town centre by number of units

RETAIL CATEGORY	NO. OF UNITS	% OF TOTAL	NATIONAL AVERAGE (%)	VARIANCE (% POINTS)
Convenience	15	8.06	8.57	-0.51
Comparison	70	37.63	41.43	-3.80
Service/Food/Drink	75	40.32	35.21	+5.11
Vacant	23	12.37	13.64	-1.27
TOTAL	183			

3.0 The current position: centre profiles

Source: Experian Goad Centre Report (March 2011)

Table 3.5
Use in Bicester town centre by floorspace (sqm gross)

RETAIL CATEGORY	FLOORSPACE (SQM GROSS)	% OF TOTAL	NATIONAL AVERAGE (%)	VARIANCE (% POINTS)
Convenience	5,806	19.24	17.11	+2.13
Comparison	12,691	42.06	46.60	-4.54
Service/Food/Drink	9,123	30.23	23.28	+6.95
Vacant	2,053	6.80	11.98	-5.18
TOTAL	29,673			

Source: Experian Goad Centre Report (March 2011)

- 3.60 Services, including food and drink uses, comprise a significant proportion of units in Bicester town centre at 40%, which is five percentage points above the national average. The total number of units has increased since the study was conducted in 2006, which reflects Bicester’s predominant role as a service centre.
- 3.61 These service uses are predominantly located around the Market Square and in the small shopping arcades off the high street, and comprise a concentration of banks, restaurants and takeaways.
- 3.62 Convenience retail provision in Bicester town is broadly in line with the national average with a 0.5% variance in proportion for the number of convenience units and a 2.13% variance in the amount of convenience floorspace. However, Bicester’s future offer will soon include the large format Sainsbury’s superstore which is being built-out directly behind Sheep Street on Bure Place which will increase the proportion of convenience floorspace in the town centre. Comparison retailers are underrepresented by 3.8 percentage points below the national average for the number of units and 4.5 percentage points below for the amount of floorspace. Nevertheless, Bicester has a good provision of mid-market comparison retailers given the size of the centre, which are predominantly clustered on Sheep Street. Unit size is larger here than the surrounding streets and arcades, where units are typically small and are unlikely to suit the needs of national operators.

Retailer Representation

- 3.63 From a total of 31 key retailers identified by Goad for enhancing the appeal of a centre, Bicester town centre is currently occupied by nine of those identified. As set out in Table 3.6, these key retailers include Marks & Spencer, Dorothy Perkins, New Look and WH Smith.

Table 3.6
Key multiple retailers in Bicester town centre as defined by Goad (2011)

KEY RETAILER	NO.	KEY RETAILER	NO.
Argos	1	Next	0
BhS	0	O2	0
Boots	1	Phones 4 U	0
Burton	0	Primark	0
Carphone Warehouse	0	River Island	0
Clarks	0	Sainsbury’s	0

3.0 The current position: centre profiles

Clintons	1	Superdrug	1
Debenhams	0	TK Maxx	0
Dorothy Perkins	1	Tesco	1
H & M	0	Topman	0
HMV	0	Topshop	0
House of Fraser	0	Vodafone	0
John Lewis	0	Waitrose	0
Marks & Spencer	1	Waterstones	0
New Look	1	WH Smith	1
		Wilkinsons	0

Source: Experian Goad Centre Report (March 2011)

- 3.64 When considering the total of all multiple outlets, the latest Goad survey data shows that Bicester town centre has a representation above the national average (35% compared to the national average of 29%).
- 3.65 Comparison retail in the centre is aimed at mid-market value, including a number of national retailers such as Dorothy Perkins and New Look. There is a lack of high quality or luxury retail offer. However, this may be a consequence of its proximity to the Bicester Shopping Centre Outlet, which specialises in designer clothing and luxury brands, including Mulberry, Ted Baker, and Pandora.
- 3.66 The convenience offer is made up of Marks & Spencer Simply Food, Iceland and Tesco Metro. At the time of our visit these stores were relatively quiet but were well stocked. The Sainsbury’s superstore, which is currently under construction, is to the rear of the Tesco store. It is due to open in 2013.
- 3.67 A large proportion of units in the centre are occupied by independent retailers, particularly within the service sector. Service retailers dominate the Market Square and Causeway, comprising chains such as Pizza Express alongside a number of independent restaurants and takeaways. On the day of our inspection a number of these units did not open until the evening. This detracted from the day-time vitality of this part of the centre. However, the restaurants will contribute to an active evening economy.
- 3.68 In addition to the traditional high street retailers, there is a farmers’ market every Thursday on Sheep Street which appeared popular on the day of our visit, despite the poor weather, selling a range of goods which included fish and home baking products.

Vacant Retail Property

- 3.69 Vacancy rates of units in Bicester town centre sit just above the national average. Despite Sheep Street appearing to be vital and viable with little sense of decline, the centre is let down by a concentration of vacancies in the small shopping arcades.
- 3.70 Crown Walk appears to be suffering particularly. A significant number of shops within this arcade are currently vacant. Others are filled with temporary uses including the Council’s own Town Centre Redevelopment Hub (an office providing information on works on Bure Place), the Crown Emporium Pop-up Shop (selling second-hand wares) and a Community Shop.

3.0 The current position: centre profiles

Image 3.3
Crown Walk, Bicester town centre



Retailer Requirements

- 3.71 According to CoStar Focus there are requirements from:
- Bedding and homeware retailer The Wool Room (60-93 sqm sales with c46 sqm ancillary accommodation);
 - Womenswear specialist Phase Eight (65-139 sqm sales with 23-46 sqm ancillary accommodation); and
 - American/Italian 50s-style UK restaurant operator Frankie and Benny’s (344-465 sqm).
- 3.72 It should be noted that while these are listed as retailer requirements for Bicester they may in fact be UK-wide requirements, with Bicester just one of a range of towns that will be considered.

Pedestrian Flow

- 3.73 Footfall was highest on the pedestrianised Sheep Street and towards Market Square. A number of people were taking advantage of the outdoor seating areas at the food service retailers and others were browsing the market.
- 3.74 Lower numbers of people were found in the shopping arcades. For example, Crown Walk and Dean Court were particularly quiet in comparison to Sheep Street. Towards the Causeway end of Market Square and Church Lane, footfall declined significantly. However, this part of the centre became increasingly more residential, which explains why footfall is lower.

Accessibility

- 3.75 Bicester town centre is well connected to the local and major road network and the centre is served by two railway stations, Bicester North and Bicester Town. However, both are some distance from the main shopping areas.

3.0 The current position: centre profiles

- 3.76 In terms of parking, current provision is relatively poor and the town does not benefit from free parking. Car parks were poorly signposted and the narrow roads increased the poor legibility of the long stay park, which was also quite far from the centre. However, it may be that this is a temporary solution until the construction of the new Sainsbury's store and car park is completed.
- 3.77 Pedestrian access from the surrounding residential areas seemed to be good with a number of shoppers appearing to be able to walk into the centre from the surrounding area. Cycle parking provision had been made with the addition of racks along Sheep Street.

Environmental Quality

- 3.78 Generally, the environmental quality of Bicester town centre was good. Efforts have been made to introduce planters, benches and signposting to enhance the public realm.
- 3.79 The pedestrianised area of Sheep Street is well maintained, with good paving. Outdoor seating, outside a number of the cafes, added to the vibrancy of the street scene.
- 3.80 Towards Market Square, the car park dominates the pedestrian environment and it is difficult to navigate across the square. This part of the town is more historic and the buildings reflect this, comprising much smaller units than on Sheep Street. The pavements become narrower and the number of benches, planters and public realm enhancements declined in comparison to Sheep Street.
- 3.81 The arcades were reasonably well maintained. However, the large proportion of vacant shops and the lack of footfall made these areas, particularly Crown Walk, seem more run-down than they would otherwise. There was, however, no evidence of graffiti on the day of our visit.

Customer and residents' views and behaviour

- 3.82 As we note above, we instructed a market research company to undertake a survey of people visiting Bicester town centre. The full results are available in Appendix C.
- 3.83 Some 150 people were interviewed: 20 on Monday, 25 on Wednesday, 54 on Thursday and 51 on Saturday. They were interviewed at a number of different locations: 49 were interviewed at Sheep Street, 26 at the junction of Sheep Street and Crown Walk, 50 at London Road and 25 at the junction of Causeway. The interviews were evenly spread during the day, with the first interviews undertaken from 10am and the last interviews shortly before 4pm.
- 3.84 The survey suggests that people travel to the centre by a variety of means. Some 51% travel to the centre by car, whether as the sole occupant or as a passenger. Nearly 33% travel on foot, and 13% by bus. The remaining 2% travel by train or taxi.
- 3.85 In terms of the main purpose of interviewees' visits, around 33% of people were visiting the centre for non-food shopping, with a further 14% for services in the centre (including financial services).
- 3.86 Visitors generally chose to visit the centre because of its proximity to their home and its easy accessibility by car.
- 3.87 Some 69% of interviewees visited the centre at least once a week for food shopping. Interestingly, 62% visited at least once a week for non-food shopping, higher than in Banbury, but the proportion of people purchasing clothes and shoes is much lower, with a greater focus on other non-food goods.

3.0 The current position: centre profiles

- 3.88 It is a less frequent destination for financial and personal services, although 86% visit at least once a month to take advantage of them. Leisure facilities and visits to pubs/cafes/restaurants/nightclubs are less popular. In both cases, only 33% of people visit at least once a month.
- 3.89 Turning to what interviewees liked about Bicester town centre as a place for shopping and services (with interviewees able to identify more than one factor), 17% identified the small shopping arcades, nearly 35% liked the attractiveness of the centre and a little over 35% liked the traffic free environment. Around 31% liked the fact it was easy to get to from their home.
- 3.90 As for things they did not like, 55% identified a poor range of shops, 22% the cost of parking and 19% the difficulty in parking near shops. Just over 23% said 'nothing or very little'.
- 3.91 Bicester is the main destination for non-food goods purchases for 58% of interviewees, although 15% shop more frequently in Oxford city centre, 12% in Banbury town centre and 4% in Milton Keynes city centre. For more than 91% of people, the main reason for doing so is the better range of shops in other centres. Nearly 25% of interviewees also shop in Banbury, 17% in Oxford city centre and 8% in Milton Keynes city centre, though less frequently than they do in Bicester.

Conclusions

- 3.92 Overall, Bicester town centre is a healthy centre which is well patronised. It has a broad range of convenience and comparison retail floorspace which will be complemented by the Sainsbury's superstore which is under construction and will open in 2013. However, some visitors to the centre are disappointed with the range of shops, and it is certainly the case that the centre lacks many of the key national multiples identified by Goad, albeit overall representation of national multiple retailers is good.
- 3.93 The centre has a good quality environment which many visitors cite as one of the things they like about it. Completion of the Sainsbury's scheme will help to improve the environment.
- 3.94 Notably, though not unexpectedly given its smaller size, many people also shop in other centres, most notably Banbury, Milton Keynes and Oxford. This is to be expected, given their wider retail offer.

3.0 The current position: centre profiles

KIDLINGTON

Role and Description of Centre

- 3.95 Kidlington is a large village located close to Oxford. It is considerably smaller than the town centres of Banbury and Bicester; however, the centre plays an important role serving the local population.

Image 3.4

Kidlington village centre



- 3.96 The Cherwell Economic Development Strategy notes that the economy in Kidlington is dominated by the proximity of Oxford, and that its future is 'intimately linked' with the future of the city. It is in that context that the role of the centre should be viewed.
- 3.97 The shopping area is principally situated on the High Street, with an extension of units along the adjoining streets of Banbury Road and Oxford Road. The Kidlington Centre, which is located off the High Street, comprises a small covered arcade which comprises a number of small retail units.
- 3.98 The village centre health check from the study carried out in 2006 found that Kidlington operates as a local shopping centre which primarily serves customers from the local vicinity. The village centre fulfils the roles of 'top-up' or convenience shopping.
- 3.99 The emerging Local Plan indicates that shopping, leisure and other town centre uses will be supported within the boundary of Kidlington village centre.

Diversity of Main Town Centre Uses

- 3.100 According to the Goad Centre Report (2011), Kidlington village centre has a total of 11,446 sqm of gross retail floorspace over 61 units.
- 3.101 Table 3.7 and 3.8 sets out the retail composition of Kidlington village centre by the number of units. This data is compared to the UK national average taken from the Goad Centre Report.

3.0 The current position: centre profiles

Table 3.7
Uses in Kidlington Village Centre by Unit

RETAIL CATEGORY	NO. OF UNITS	% OF TOTAL	NATIONAL AVERAGE (%)	VARIANCE (% POINTS)
Convenience	7	11.48	8.57	+2.91
Comparison	24	39.34	41.43	-2.09
Service/Food/Drink	28	45.90	35.21	+10.69
Vacant	2	3.28	13.64	-10.36
TOTAL	61			

Source: Experian Goad Centre Survey (March 2011)

Table 3.8
Uses in Kidlington Village Centre by floorspace (sqm)

RETAIL CATEGORY	FLOORSPACE (SQM GROSS)	% OF TOTAL	NATIONAL AVERAGE (%)	VARIANCE (% POINTS)
Convenience	3,493	30.52	17.11	+13.41
Comparison	4,255	37.18	46.60	-9.42
Service/Food/Drink	3,521	30.76	23.28	+7.48
Vacant	177	1.54	11.98	-10.44
TOTAL	11,446			

Source: Experian Goad Centre Survey (March 2011)

- 3.102 Since the 2006 study, the number of comparison retailers has declined slightly (from 26 to 24 units), and Kidlington falls just below the national average for comparison units and 9.42 percentage point below the national average in terms of comparison floorspace. The majority of comparison retailers are independent and concentrated on the High Street and in the covered arcade known as the Kidlington Centre.
- 3.103 Service units account for approximately half of all the retail units and represent the largest retail category in Kidlington centre. Current provision remains above the national average by approximately 10 percentage points. These uses dominate the High Street and Oxford Road and comprise a number of offices, banks, a dental surgery and betting office – many of which do not have an active shop frontage. This has a negative impact on the vitality of the High Street and particularly on the night time economy as the High Street becomes quieter once these units close after office hours.
- 3.104 The convenience offer comprises Co-operative Food (Co-op), Tesco and Iceland stores. The number of units has declined slightly since the study in 2006 (from eight to seven), but representation remains above the national average.

Retailer Representation

- 3.105 From a total of 31 key retailers identified by Goad for enhancing the appeal of a centre, Kidlington village centre is currently occupied by only two from the list below. As set out in Table 3.9, these key retailers are Superdrug and Tesco.

3.0 The current position: centre profiles

Table 3.9
Key multiple retailers in Kidlington as identified by Goad (March 2011)

KEY RETAILER	NO.	KEY RETAILER	NO.
Argos	0	Next	0
BhS	0	O2	0
Boots	0	Phones 4 U	0
Burton	0	Primark	0
Carphone Warehouse	0	River Island	0
Clarks	0	Sainsbury's	0
Clintons	0	Superdrug	1
Debenhams	0	TK Maxx	0
Dorothy Perkins	0	Tesco	1
H & M	0	Topman	0
HMV	0	Topshop	0
House of Fraser	0	Vodafone	0
John Lewis	0	Waitrose	0
Marks & Spencer	0	Waterstones	0
New Look	0	WH Smith	0
		Wilkinsons	0

Source: Experian Goad Centre Survey (2011)

- 3.106 The lack of key multiple retailers reflects Kidlington’s role and size and should not be seen as an indication of poor health. That said, Kidlington has a slightly above average representation of ‘other’ multiple outlets, with 33% of units on the High Street comprising a multiple outlet retailer, compared to the national average of 29%.
- 3.107 At the time of our visit both the Co-op and Tesco appeared busy. The stores are well integrated into the pedestrianised area of the centre, along the High Street, and underpin the function of the centre, particularly into the early evening.

Vacant Retail Property

- 3.108 The proportion of vacant units has fallen (from 6.45% to 3.28%) since the study in 2006. The number of vacant units is low and is significantly below the national average, indicating a healthy centre with strong demand.

Retailer Requirements

- 3.109 According to CoStar Focus there are requirements from:
 - Charity shop Helen House and Douglas House (46-140 sqm, plus 28-93 sqm ancillary); and
 - Coffee shop Costa Coffee (at least 93 sqm).

3.0 The current position: centre profiles

Pedestrian Flow

- 3.110 At the time of the survey, the High Street was very quiet as was Oxford Road and Banbury Road. Footfall was highest around the Co-op and Tesco and between these stores and the adjacent car parks, which corroborates the fact that this is a local centre predominantly serving the needs of the surrounding community.
- 3.111 We note that the low levels of footfall observed are a general indication and the time of day should be taken into account. However, evening footfall could be increased by enhancing the provision of food and drink service retailers along the High Street, which could contribute to a more active night time economy.

Accessibility

- 3.112 Kidlington is easily accessibility by car and foot. The centre offers a good level of car parking provision which is free for visitors to use. This helps to maintain the vitality of the High Street. The centre is well connected to the local and primary road network and is well placed to serve through traffic.
- 3.113 The centre is easy to navigate and is easily accessible to the surrounding communities on foot. The centre also has good cycle provision with cycle stands located on the High Street.

Environmental Quality

- 3.114 Overall, the centre of Kidlington is a well maintained centre and offers an attractive shopping environment. The High Street benefits from being pedestrianised, and the paving, road crossings and carriageway are all in good condition.
- 3.115 The High Street may benefit from additional public realm features as the street scene feels quite bare, particularly when the centre is quiet. Although investment in planting and some benches are evident, these seem lost given the width of the High Street. The environment could benefit from investment in a greater number of benches or street art in the middle of the pedestrianised street in order to soften the high streets appearance and create a focal point.
- 3.116 The Kidlington Centre, a small covered arcade off the High Street adds to the shopping environment. The shop fronts are well maintained and benefit from a number of public realm enhancing features.
- 3.117 Outside of the main High Street, the environment is generally well maintained, although begins to decline along Banbury Road. This was compounded by the major thoroughfare which was particularly busy at the time of our visit.
- 3.118 At the time of our visit, the centre was free from graffiti and felt safe and secure, even along side streets, despite the lack of footfall. Further work could be done to capitalise on the pedestrianised square to the rear of the Co-op which would add to the vibrancy of this area.

Conclusions

- 3.119 Overall, Kidlington performs its role as a local service centre well. It is easily accessible and offers an adequate range of convenience and service retailers to accommodate the everyday needs of the surrounding community.
- 3.120 Kidlington is dominated by independent retailers and lacks key multiple occupiers, particularly fashion operators. However, this is unsurprising given the proximity of the centre

3.0 The current position: centre profiles

to Oxford and its role as a local, top-up centre. This should not, therefore, be regarded as an indication of poor health.

BICESTER SHOPPING OUTLET CENTRE

Role and Description

- 3.121 The Bicester Shopping Outlet Centre offers a wide range of premium designer brands at discounted prices. It is located just off the M40 motorway, on the outskirts of Bicester town centre, approximately one mile away.
- 3.122 The centre is not designated as a town centre in adopted planning policy. It is one of the UK's largest shopping outlet centres with current opening times extend from 10am to 8pm Monday to Saturday, and to 7pm on Sunday.
- 3.123 The centre first opened in 1995 and was extended in both 2000 and 2008 to provide a greater number of retail units and additional car parking facilities. A planning application was received in August 2012 to extend the centre further. The application (Ref: 12/01209/F) proposes the demolition of the existing Tesco at Pingle Drive (and its relocation to Oxford Road) to provide an extension to comprise 5,181 sqm (gross internal area) of new retail floorspace at the Bicester Shopping Outlet Centre. The application for the extension of the outlet centre and the relocation of the Tesco are awaiting determination.
- 3.124 It comprises an open air linear parade of shop units running along both sides of a wide pedestrianised shopping street. The units have been purpose built and are relatively uniform in appearance, with subtle signage and awnings customised to the individual tenant.
- 3.125 The centre benefits from a significant amount of car parking comprising approximately 760 spaces in a surface level car park and a further 750 spaces in a multi-level car park, all offered free of charge to visitors. This is likely to contribute to the appeal of this out of centre facility.
- 3.126 Since opening, it has become the district's most visited tourist destination, popular with international visitors to the south east of England who take advantage of the 'Shopping Express', a coach service which provides a daily connection to and from central London.

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Image 3.5
Bicester Shopping Outlet Centre



Diversity of Main Town Centre Uses

- 3.127 According to the Goad Centre Report (2011), Bicester’s Shopping Outlet Centre has a total of 25,910 sqm of gross retail floorspace over 140 units.
- 3.128 Table 3.10 and 3.11 sets out the retail composition of Bicester’s Shopping Outlet Centre by the number of units. This data is compared to the UK national average taken from the Goad Centre Report.

Table 3.10
Use in Bicester Shopping Outlet Centre by Units

RETAIL CATEGORY	NO. OF UNITS	% OF TOTAL	NATIONAL AVERAGE (%)	VARIANCE (% POINTS)
Convenience	1	0.71	8.57	-7.86
Comparison	128	91.43	41.43	+ 50
Service/Food/Drink	9	6.43	35.21	-28.78
Vacant	2	1.43	13.64	-12.21
TOTAL	140			

Source: Experian Goad Centre Report (April 2011)

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Table 3.11
Use in Bicester Shopping Outlet Centre by Floorspace (sq m)

RETAIL CATEGORY	FLOORSPACE (SQM GROSS)	% OF TOTAL	NATIONAL AVERAGE (%)	VARIANCE (% POINTS)
Convenience	3,567	13.77	17.11	-3.34
Comparison	19,565	75.51	46.60	+28.91
Service/Food/Drink	2,462	9.50	23.28	-13.78
Vacant	316	1.22	11.98	-10.76
TOTAL	25,910			

Source: Experian Goad Centre Report (April 2011)

- 3.129 Since the retail study conducted in 2006 the number of service retailers has expanded from five to nine. This has significantly improved the level of food and drink offer at Bicester’s Shopping Outlet Centre, which now benefits from a Jamie Oliver Fabulous Feasts, a Busaba Eathai and Villandry Grand Cafe. Such establishments positively add to the night time economy. In addition to the sit-down eateries, there is also a stand-alone crepe stand situated on the village high street itself.
- 3.130 The under representation in the number of convenience and service units (compared to the UK national average) is not an indication that this centre is not performing well, but rather a reflection of the type of niche comparison shopping centre role that it performs.
- 3.131 The role of the Bicester Shopping Outlet Centre is clearly one of providing a strong comparison retail offer. In accordance with this the number of comparison retailers has increased by 35% (from a total of 95 units to 128 units). This comparison offer is considerably above the national average which is unsurprising given this unique comparison centre.

Retailer Representation

- 3.132 From a total of 31 key retailers identified by Goad for enhancing the appeal of a centre, Bicester’s Shopping Outlet Centre is currently occupied by only two of the list. As set out in Table 3.12, these key retailers are Clarks and Tesco.
- 3.133 This is not an indication of poor health but reflects the niche retailer offer at this shopping outlet. The number of key multiple retailers is therefore misleading.. According to the Goad survey, Bicester’s Shopping Outlet Centre actually has a multiple outlet representation significantly above the national average (73.57% compared to 29.49%).

3.0 The current position: centre profiles

Table 3.12
Key multiple retailers in Bicester Shopping Outlet Centre defined by Goad (2011)

KEY RETAILER	NO.	KEY RETAILER	NO.
Argos	0	Next	0
BhS	0	O2	0
Boots	0	Phones 4 U	0
Burton	0	Primark	0
Carphone Warehouse	0	River Island	0
Clarks	1	Sainsbury's	0
Clintons	0	Superdrug	0
Debenhams	0	TK Maxx	0
Dorothy Perkins	0	Tesco	2
H & M	0	Topman	0
HMV	0	Topshop	0
House of Fraser	0	Vodafone	0
John Lewis	0	Waitrose	0
Marks & Spencer	0	Waterstones	0
New Look	0	WH Smith	0
		Wilkinsons	0

Source: Experian Goad Centre Report (April 2011)

- 3.134 This discrepancy is an indicator of the high number of top end multiple retailers such as The North Face, Monsoon, Ted Baker and French Connection which do not fall within the identified 31 key retailers, as these tend to be mid-range brands or larger department stores.
- 3.135 The centre also offers retail space for pop-up shops. At the time of our survey, the outlet centre was to host a pop-up shop for British Fashion, a temporary use to display the work of luxury British designers at reduced prices.
- 3.136 The convenience element at Bicester's Shopping Outlet Centre is entirely comprised of the large 24 hour Tesco superstore in Pingle Drive. At the time of our visit the store was operating well and the car park was relatively full. Within the store, 90% of the checkouts were open and there were between two and three people queuing at each of the open checkouts. Shelves were well stocked and in addition to the food offer, the store provides a Costa Coffee, delicatessen, click and collect service and a petrol station.

Vacant Retail Property

- 3.137 The number of vacancies at Bicester's Shopping Outlet Centre is significantly below the national average. The Goad survey figure recorded in 2011, as referenced above, indicates that there are two vacant stores. However, on our visit in May 2012 there did not appear to be any vacancies at all. New retailers, Basler and K.I.D.S., now occupy those units which had previously been identified as vacant.
- 3.138 This indicates a strong demand for a retail presence from luxury and high-end retailers at Bicester's Shopping Outlet Centre, despite the economic down-turn, and the continued security of Bicester as a vital and viable centre. The demand for retail at the outlet centre is further evidenced by the planning application (Ref:12/01209/F) which was submitted in

3.0 The current position: centre profiles

August 2012 to extend the centre by a further 5,181 sqm gross internal area. The planning application is currently awaiting determination.

Retailer Requirements

- 3.139 According to CoStar Focus there are requirements from:
- Condiments retailer Oil & Vinegar (floorspace requirement unknown);
 - Clothing retailer Austin Reed (various floorspace requirements);
 - Clothing retailer Golfino (floorspace requirement unknown); and
 - Calendar specialist Calendar Club (October-January only) (floorspace requirement unknown).
- 3.140 Note that while these are listed as retailer requirements for Bicester's Shopping Outlet Centre they may in fact be UK-wide requirements. We certainly think it is unlikely that Calendar Club would take space at Bicester's Shopping Outlet Centre or be a target tenant for the landlord.

Pedestrian Flow

- 3.141 The shopping outlet centre was relatively busy, given the timing of our visit on a weekday morning. By 11am the main surface level car park was full.
- 3.142 Footfall was highest around the food and drink offer and at those entrances closest to the car parks as customers began to arrive.
- 3.143 Footfall across the rest of the centre was well spread out, but given its size it felt quiet towards the periphery, particularly those exits furthest away from the car park. We understand that at weekends it can be even busier with tourists and therefore the footfall observed during our survey was probably not representative of peak times.

Accessibility

- 3.144 Bicester's Shopping Outlet Centre benefits from good road and public transport accessibility. For those arriving by car there are two large car parks located within walking distance of the centre. The centre is predominantly aimed at car users and is set up to accommodate their needs. A valet service is also provided for those wishing to use it.
- 3.145 For those without a car, a daily coach service known as the 'Shopping Express' travels from central London to Bicester's Shopping Outlet Centre. Regular trains from London and Birmingham to Bicester North station also benefit from the Bicester Shopping Outlet Centre shuttle bus service which will transport visitors to and from Bicester North station and Bicester Shopping Outlet Centre. In addition, there are regular Stagecoach buses which operate between Oxford and Bicester Shopping Outlet Centre.
- 3.146 It is more difficult to access the centre on foot and by cycle. Cycle storage is limited.

Environmental Quality

- 3.147 The environmental quality of Bicester's Shopping Outlet Centre is of a high standard. The outlet centre is well maintained contributing to a pleasant public realm.
- 3.148 A significant effort has been put into maintaining a high standard of public realm, including planting, statues and paving. Outdoor seating is conveniently placed along the outlets centre's high street outside the various retail service units, which in turn is interspersed with

3.0 The current position: centre profiles

planters and street lighting. The street is well paved and maintained and there is no evidence of graffiti.

- 3.149 The centre felt safe and secure, with security guards and CCTV visible on the day of the visit.
- 3.150 The linear form of the shopping centre, together with clear signposting, makes the outlet centre easy to navigate and enables customers to find the nearest public facilities, cafes and cash machines with ease.

Conclusions

- 3.151 Overall, Bicester's Shopping Outlet Centre Shopping Outlet Centre is performing well. The distinctive nature of the outlet centre provides a niche offer, albeit mainly for visitors to the area rather than people living locally, which is a major strength of the centre.
- 3.152 The centre is modern, attractive and well-kept ensuring retailers and customers alike continue to be attracted to the centre. This is reflected in the low number of vacancies, which appear to have declined to zero on inspection, updating the Goad survey which was prepared in 2011.
- 3.153 Predominantly the Shopping Outlet Centre is a comparison offer, which is unsurprising given its factory outlet status. However, the service offer has increased since the last study undertaken in 2006, doubling the range of cafes and restaurants on offer.
- 3.154 Most shoppers appear to travel to the shopping outlet centre by car; this is unsurprising given the centre's out of centre location and good accessibility by road. The addition of dedicated services such as the Shopping Express coach service, to and from London, will undoubtedly draw a greater number of customers and will be particularly attractive to international tourists who do not have access to a car.
- 3.155 Overall, Bicester's Shopping Outlet Centre is a vital and viable centre which fills a niche in the market for high-end designer clothing and provides Cherwell with a successful tourist attraction.

VILLAGES

- 3.156 It is beyond the scope of this study to examine all of the villages in the district, but we note that many offer top-up grocery shopping and, in some cases, the sale of fresh produce, services including post offices and hairdressers, and even some specialist retailers, such as antiques. Many also include public houses.
- 3.157 Where present, these shops and services generally contribute to the vitality and viability of the villages, as well as reducing the need to travel, as they allow local residents to undertake top-up shopping near their homes.

CONCLUSIONS

- 3.158 Overall, Cherwell's main centres are in good health and are performing well. Visitors to Banbury are particularly satisfied with the centre. However, there is some dissatisfaction with the range of shops in Bicester as it lacks some of the major multiple retailers, although overall representation of multiples is good.
- 3.159 Kidlington is in good health and although it lacks multiple retailers this simply reflects its role as a local, top-up, centre. Cherwell's remaining main retail location, Bicester Shopping

3.0 The current position: centre profiles

Outlet Centre, is performing very well, although it serves a wide catchment, well beyond Cherwell District.

4.0 The need for new development

OVERALL APPROACH

- 4.1 In this section we consider the need for new development, both:
- Quantitatively, taking into account the latest forecasts of the growth/decline in expenditure per capita; population; Special Forms of Trading (SFT)¹³, most notably online spend; and overtrading; and
 - Qualitatively, taking account of the changes in consumer preferences and retail trends identified previously.

QUANTITATIVE NEED

Overall Approach

- 4.2 We have undertaken a household survey to inform the need assessment. This provides an up to date picture of trading patterns. Our assessment of need is founded on the basis that:
- There are two main types of goods:
 - Convenience – day-to-day groceries; and
 - Comparison – less frequently purchased, often durable, goods
 - In the study area, each individual is forecast to spend a given amount per year on each of these types of goods; and
 - The market is currently in equilibrium - this assumes that under current shopping patterns, there is enough floorspace to support available spend.
- 4.3 Building upon the baseline 'equilibrium' position, we explore the capacity for further convenience and comparison retail floorspace at the agreed test dates of 2012; 2017; 2022; 2027; and 2031.
- 4.4 The assessment of future need is prepared on the basis that capacity can arise through one or more of:
- Population growth and/or growth in expenditure per person – more people with more money available to spend means that more floorspace is required;
 - Improved market share (including 'clawing back' expenditure which is regarded as 'leaking' to other locations); and
 - Addressing 'overtrading' (typically only for convenience floorspace).
- 4.5 Key data inputs include:
- The results of the household telephone survey;
 - Estimates of population in the survey area, both now and at each of the test dates;
 - Available expenditure in the survey area, both now and at each of the test dates; and
 - Floorspace data.
- 4.6 The 'spare' expenditure we identify, if any, will be converted to a floorspace requirement.

¹³ Non-store retail sales that do not take place through traditional store-based outlets.

4.0 The need for new development

The Study Area

- 4.7 The study area, Appendix D, is based on that used in the 2006 study. We consider that this study area reflects the catchment of most of the expenditure attracted to Bicester and Banbury, with the exception of the Bicester Shopping Outlet Centre. The study area is formed of postcode sectors. The shopping patterns of the households within these sectors can then be identified through the household survey. However, since the 2006 study we have amalgamated the zones to assist in identifying the shopping patterns of the three main centres. This has resulted in:
- 2012 zone 1 equates to 2006 zones 4 and 5;
 - 2012 zone 2 equates to 2006 zones 6 and 7;
 - 2012 zone 3 equates to 2006 zones 1 and 3; and
 - 2012 zone 4 equates to 2006 zones 2, 8 and 9.
- 4.8 Although the household survey was undertaken on a zonal basis, it reveals that Banbury and Bicester do not have natural catchments. In particular many people living in the Bicester area shop at Banbury town centre and elsewhere. We have therefore not calculated capacity by zone, but instead for the district as a whole. In making recommendations later in this study on where new floorspace should be directed to meet the identified quantitative need, we have taken a more qualitative approach, allowing us to take account of the different centres' positions in the retail hierarchy, the Council's broad aspirations for each of the centres and the availability of sites.

Population Data

- 4.9 Pitney Bowes Business Insight have provided the current population of the study area and each of the zones within it, as well as population projections for each of the forecast years (2017, 2022 and 2027 and 2031). These are set out on the first page of the capacity analysis at Appendix F and G.
- 4.10 The population projections are based on the latest available ONS mid-year population estimates and a set of demographic assumptions about future fertility, mortality and migration based on analysis of trends and expert advice. They are produced using the internationally accepted cohort component method. This method accounts for changes which increase or decrease the population (births, deaths and net migration) and models the effect of these changes and the passage of time on the age structure of the population.
- 4.11 The population projections provide the population levels and age structure that would result if underlying assumptions about future fertility, mortality and migration were to be realised.

The Household Survey

- 4.12 A telephone-based household survey (Appendix E) was undertaken in June 2012 in order to provide information on shopping patterns in the study area. The sample size was 1,000 respondents and was undertaken by Research and Marketing Group. This is considered appropriate in order to provide a picture of the 'market share' (the proportion of expenditure captured) of different stores and centres in the study area.

Commitments

- 4.13 Commitments refer to new retail floorspace which has been granted planning permission but that has not yet been implemented. Commitments must be taken into account as they

4.0 The need for new development

will not yet be reflected in the responses of the household survey and as such reflected in the existing spending patterns, but will have an impact on available expenditure once they have been implemented and are occupied. There are a number of retail commitments in Cherwell District which have been identified through the Council’s data. Our quantitative assessment takes account of the largest commitments, over 500 sqm gross. Commitments below the 500 sqm threshold will have a minimal turnover and limited impact on the floorspace capacity. Our list of commitments have included the Banbury Gateway scheme, which the Council resolved to grant consent for at the March 2012 Planning Committee, subject to completion of a legal agreement and reference of the application to the Secretary of State.

- 4.14 The details of all the commitments which have been taken into account, including their floorspace areas and turnovers, are listed in Appendix F, Table F5 and repeated in Appendix G, Table G5. To summarise these commitments include:

In Banbury:

- Banbury Cross Retail Park - Installation of 799 sqm gross mezzanine through the removal of restrictive condition 4 of CHN.1/90. (Planning Ref: 11/01903/F); and
- Banbury Gateway - Demolition of existing units. Construction of new retail units (Use Class A1) including an M&S (6,689 sqm net); Next Home and Garden (4,556 sqm net) and other comparison retail units (7,678 sqm net). (Planning Ref: 11/01870/F).

In Bicester:

- Bicester Town Centre Development (Bure Place) - to include a 7,162 sqm net Sainsbury's foodstore and 3,122 sqm net non-food retail floorspace. (Planning Ref: 09/01687/F).

Elsewhere:

- Land north east of Oxford Road, west of Oxford Canal & east of Bankside - Outline application for a residential development with associated facilities including a school, local shops & community facilities. The consented retail element of the application will include approximately 1,300 sqm gross. (Planning Ref: 05/01337/OUT);
- Land at Whitelands Farm, south west of Bicester - Outline application for a residential development & health village to including a local centre comprising shops, nursing home etc. The consented retail element of the application will include approximately 1,300 sqm gross. (Planning Ref: 06/00967/OUT); and
- Heyford Park - Outline application for new settlement including associated works and facilities. The consented retail element of the application will include approximately 1,400 sqm gross. (Planning Ref: 10/01642/OUT).

Convenience Goods

Capacity arising through increase in population and expenditure per person

- 4.15 Estimates of expenditure per capita on convenience goods have been sourced from Pitney Bowes Business Insight. This source provides the most up-to-date data from 2009, and growth rate projections provided by Pitney Bowes Business Insight are used to estimate expenditure per capita in our base year of 2012 and our forecast years of 2017, 2022 and 2027 and 2031.

4.0 The need for new development

- 4.16 The population of the study area is then multiplied by the forecast spend per person. This provides us with the total expenditure available to support spending on convenience goods (and therefore to support convenience retail floorspace). In summary, £952.1m is available across the study area in 2012, rising to £1,047.1m at 2017, £1,099.6m at 2022, £1,147.2m at 2027, and £1,185.7m at 2031.
- 4.17 The results of the household survey are then used to identify where people shop for convenience goods, and therefore the 'market share' for stores and centres in Cherwell District. We then produce a composite market share for convenience goods which combines the responses to the questions on 'main food' shopping and 'top-up' shopping, weighted in favour of main food (80% of expenditure) to reflect the fact that more money is generally spent on main food shopping trips than on top-up (20% of expenditure) shopping.
- 4.18 The detailed market shares are summarised in Table F3 in Appendix F. The spending patterns they imply, and the market share of stores in Cherwell District in each zone and the study area as a whole, are in Table F4. It indicates some 40% of all available convenience expenditure in the study area is currently spent on trips to stores in the district. This equates to around £376.2m at 2012. The remaining 60% is currently flowing to centres outside the council's administrative boundary.
- 4.19 We assume that 90% of all web-based shopping (SFT) is sourced from stores, rather than from a warehouse, as many of the home delivery services operated by the leading supermarkets rely on in store 'shelf picking'. Of this, it is assumed that around 40% comes from stores in Cherwell District, the same proportion as for conventional shopping. This equates to around £15.2m of all available expenditure, as shown in Appendix F, Table F4.
- 4.20 Stores in Cherwell District therefore capture £391.4m (£376.2 + £15.2m) in 2012. This around 41% of all available convenience expenditure in the study area.
- 4.21 After this, 'commitments' are identified and the anticipated turnover is calculated. Commitments are new convenience retail floorspace which have permission but have not yet been implemented. The anticipated turnover is worked out by multiplying the committed floorspace by the anticipated turnover for each store based on company averages or CBRE assumptions where not available. This is set out in Appendix F, Table F5. It indicates that new floorspace in Cherwell District will turnover at some £86.8m at 2017.
- 4.22 We then turn to examine the capacity (or 'need') for new floorspace. The district-wide analysis is set out at Table F6 of Appendix F. As noted above, it is assumed that in 2012 the market is in equilibrium, i.e. there is sufficient floorspace to support available expenditure, and no more is required. There is, therefore, enough floorspace to support the £391.4m identified in Table F4, together with some inflow of expenditure, which we estimate at 2% of all expenditure, equivalent to £8.0m. This implies a total expenditure of £399.4m supported by existing floorspace.
- 4.23 By 2017, assuming a constant market share of 41%, and continued inflow of 2% of all expenditure, some £439.3m is available. Existing stores turnover at only £399.4m, suggesting capacity (or 'headroom') of £39.9m (£439.3 - £399.4m).
- 4.24 We then make a deduction of £0.4m for an increased proportion of expenditure being spent via the web for home delivery, though only where it would be sourced from warehouses rather than in store shelf picking. The headroom therefore falls to £39.5m (£39.9m - £0.4m).

4.0 The need for new development

- 4.25 We also make a deduction for improvements in floorspace efficiency, assuming an improvement in the sales density of existing floorspace of 0.3% per annum, for the reasons explained in section 2.
- 4.26 Finally, we factor in the commitments identified in Table F5. We assume all of these are built and trading by 2017, with a turnover of £86.8m. This leaves a negative capacity for new floorspace, of -£53.4m. Translated to floorspace, by assuming a notional turnover for new floorspace of £12,000/sqm at 2012 (grown in future years to reflect improvements in floorspace efficiency), there is a forecast oversupply of 4,384 sqm net convenience floorspace by 2017 (Appendix F, Table F6).
- 4.27 This picture continues to 2022, to 2027 and to 2031, during which period we make an allowance for existing and committed floorspace to improve its efficiency, as well as assuming a higher notional turnover for future floorspace, again allowing for greater efficiency. Although available expenditure continues to increase, it is still insufficient to ‘soak up’ the turnover of new floorspace. The oversupply of floorspace therefore remains across the plan period. A summary of the capacity for new floorspace, or rather lack of it, is set out in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1
District-wide capacity for new convenience floorspace

	2012	2017	2022	2027	2031
Net sales floorspace (sqm)	0	-4,384	-3,146	-2,107	-1,294
Gross floorspace (sqm)	0	-6,262	-4,494	-3,011	-1,849

Source: Table F6, Appendix F

Capacity arising through improved market share

- 4.28 If a study area’s market share is low, it may be sensible to improve this and ‘clawback’ some of the residents’ spending which is leaking to other locations. But this must be realistic; there is little prospect of clawing back expenditure if several large superstores lie outside but close to the edge of the study area.
- 4.29 Moreover, there must be some benefit in planning terms. Either the vitality and viability of an existing centre must improve as a result, or there would need to be a reduction in unsustainable travel.
- 4.30 Having examined the market shares in Table F4 we see no immediate justification for seeking to improve the market share of Cherwell District, or at least not until the new Sainsbury’s in Bicester town centre has opened and trading patterns have settled, at which point its impact on Cherwell’s market share will become clear.

Capacity arising through overtrading

- 4.31 Overtrading means, in quantitative terms, that stores are trading above the average for the operator. If left unchecked a store will not be able to cater to shoppers needs and two possible outcomes can result - customers will seek alternative stores, or development will come forward which will satisfy the identified overtrading.
- 4.32 If this overtrading is converted to floorspace, this can provide additional capacity. However, this needs to be backed up by ‘on the ground’, qualitative evidence of overtrading (such as long queues at checkouts, narrow or congested aisles and difficulties in keeping shelves full).

4.0 The need for new development

- 4.33 In Table F7 each of the main convenience stores in Cherwell District and the extent to which they are trading above their company average is examined. We assume the turnover which is above the company average is available to support new floorspace.
- 4.34 In Table F8 the additional capacity arising from overtrading is added to the available expenditure. The exercise is otherwise exactly the same as in Table F6. It suggests that there is current capacity for 9,189 sqm in 2012, but much of this is absorbed by commitments hence capacity falls to 4,669 sqm net by 2017. By 2022 it has increased to 5,772 sqm net and 6,678 sqm net by 2027; and 7,387 sqm net by 2031. These increases reflect growth in population and expenditure per capita. Table 4.2 provides a summary of the capacity that arises.

Table 4.2

District-wide capacity for new convenience floorspace (allowing for overtrading)

	2012	2017	2022	2027	2031
Net sales floorspace (sqm)	9,189	4,669	5,772	6,678	7,387
Gross floorspace (sqm)	13,128	6,670	8,246	9,540	10,553

Source: Table F8, Appendix F

Comparison Goods

Capacity arising through increase in population and expenditure per person

- 4.35 In assessing the capacity for comparison goods the same broad approach has been undertaken as for convenience goods.
- 4.36 Table G6 illustrates that the district as a whole has a market share of some 34%, i.e. people living in the study area make just under a third of their purchases (by value) in Cherwell district. Given the competing centres around the study area, such as Oxford and Milton Keynes, we consider this is a reasonably strong market share. We then make an allowance for internet-based shopping sourced from stores and an allowance for inflow of expenditure.
- 4.37 Assuming 'equilibrium' in the base year (2012) and a constant market share, population growth and expenditure per capita growth increases total available expenditure to £734.7m in 2017. Existing stores turnover at £547.7m. Once an allowance has been made for increased internet-based spending, for improvements in sales densities and for trading of commitments, available expenditure falls to -£14.2m in 2017. Assuming a notional turnover for new floorspace of £5,000/sqm (in 2012, and then grown to allow for improvements in floorspace efficiency), that implies an oversupply of some 2,597 sqm of comparison net floorspace. By 2022, however, there is a requirement for some 19,000 sqm net, 42,000 sqm by 2027 and 68,000 sqm by 2031. This is shown in detail in Appendix G, Table G6 and summarised in Table 4.3 below.

Table 4.3

District-wide capacity for new comparison floorspace

	2012	2017	2022	2027	2031
Net sales floorspace (sqm)	0	-2,597	19,012	41,949	68,210
Gross floorspace (sqm)	0	-3,246	23,765	52,436	85,263

Source: Table G6, Appendix G

4.0 The need for new development

Capacity arising through improved market share

- 4.38 As we note above, the district's market share is reasonably high, given the proximity of competing retail destinations. We therefore see no case, given the amount of capacity identified, for seeking to improve Cherwell District's market share at this time.

Capacity arising through overtrading

- 4.39 Given the nature of comparison goods shopping patterns, it is not appropriate to quantitatively analysis the implied trading of comparison goods stores against company averages. Overtrading is not, therefore, dealt with further at this stage.

Summary of Quantitative Need

- 4.40 When assessing need for convenience goods floorspace in the district, an oversupply of floorspace is identified through the plan period. In other words, there is already more than enough floorspace to meet the requirement of the existing and future population of the district (Appendix F, Table G6).
- 4.41 However, this takes no account of the overtrading of existing stores, some of which are overtrading to a significant degree. If it is assumed that all stores should trade at the average for the operator there is a requirement for new floorspace of 4,669 sqm net by 2017, even taking into account committed convenience retail floorspace (Appendix F, Table F8).
- 4.42 It does not necessarily follow that all stores should trade at their company average. Any quantitative assessment of overtrading should be complemented by a qualitative assessment (see below) in order to understand the full extent of the need. This is because the overtrading needs to be demonstrated 'on the ground'.
- 4.43 Turning to comparison goods, our analysis suggests that current commitments will meet the identified need in the short- to medium-term, but by 2022 there will be a requirement for some 19,000 sqm net, rising to 68,000 sqm net by the end of the plan period.
- 4.44 We have not run alternative scenarios allowing for the improvement of the market share of Cherwell's centres as we think that they already capture a significant amount of expenditure considering their size and their proximity to other, higher order centres, notably Oxford and Milton Keynes.

QUALITATIVE NEED

Background

- 4.45 The Practice Guidance on Need, Impact and the Sequential Approach notes that qualitative need is a more subjective concept than quantitative need, with five frequently identified considerations:
- Deficiencies or 'gaps' in existing provision;
 - Consumer choice and competition;
 - The quality of existing provision;
 - Overtrading, congestion and overcrowding of existing stores; and
 - Location specific needs such as deprived areas and underserved markets.

4.0 The need for new development

- 4.46 We have drawn on our own observations as well as the results of the on-street surveys (Appendix B and C) to inform our assessment of qualitative need.

Convenience Goods

- 4.47 There are no immediate deficiencies or 'gaps' in existing provision. Top-up and specialist shopping is well provided for and, in terms of foodstores capable of offering a main food shop:
- Banbury is served by a Sainsbury's superstore, a Tesco Extra superstore, a Morrisons superstore and an Aldi store;
 - Bicester is served by a Tesco superstore, an Aldi store and a Lidl store, and will soon be served by a Sainsbury's store;
 - Kidlington is served by a Sainsbury's store and, to a lesser extent in terms of main food provision, a Tesco Metro.
- 4.48 This wide range of operators suggests that consumer choice and competition is good, with these operators offering a wide range of goods at a variety of price points.
- 4.49 Our ability to make a qualitative assessment of overtrading, congestion and overcrowding of existing stores was restricted to a single visit to key stores. As these were undertaken on weekdays they may not have given a full picture of peak trading, which is likely to be on weekday evenings and at weekends. It was, however, notable that the Tesco store at Pingle Drive in Bicester was trading very well, although to some extent that is likely to be relieved by the opening of the Sainsbury's store currently under construction in the town centre.
- 4.50 We are not aware of any location specific needs, such as deprived areas and underserved markets, notwithstanding our comments above about overtrading.
- 4.51 Overall, there is no immediate qualitative need, other than to relieve overtrading, which we consider further below.

Comparison Goods

- 4.52 Dealing first with gaps in provision, most residents of Cherwell benefit from relatively easy access to Banbury and Bicester. Oxford and Milton Keynes, both of which lie relatively close to many residents, also add to the offer. There is, therefore, no immediate gap in provision.
- 4.53 Turning to the quality of existing provision, only 11% of people interviewed in the on-street survey undertaken in Banbury town centre said that they were disappointed by the poor range of stores in the centre, and that comes as no surprise, given the range of multiple retailers represented in the town, many of which are 'key' multiple retailers.
- 4.54 There is less satisfaction with the retail offer in Bicester town centre, probably reflecting the lack of 'key' multiple retailers in the centre, albeit the overall representation of multiple retailers is good. That suggests some qualitative need, although given its proximity to Banbury and retailers' increasing preference for rationalising their offer in fewer, larger stores, Bicester's ability to attract 'key' multiple retailers may be limited.
- 4.55 We saw no evidence of overtrading, congestion or overcrowding of existing stores, nor are we aware of any location-specific needs such as deprived areas and underserved markets.
- 4.56 Overall, taking into account the locations of Banbury and Bicester, the high level of satisfaction with the former, their proximity to one another and the complementary offer at other centres, we do not see an overriding qualitative need for new comparison floorspace.

4.0 The need for new development

The exception may be at Bicester, where some new comparison floorspace would help to address current visitors' concerns about the range of shops. This is, however, subject to there being the demand from major multiple retailers for the space, and we suspect this may be limited.

CONCLUSIONS

- 4.57 As part of this study we have assessed whether capacity exists for additional convenience and comparison floorspace over the plan period.
- 4.58 Based upon a constant market share (41%) and making no allowance for overtrading there was an oversupply of convenience floorspace over the plan period. However, based upon the household survey, it is evident that, with the exception of Kidlington, the district's foodstores are all trading at above company averages with some significantly in excess of what would be expected. This overtrading currently represents approximately £110m. By applying a typical company foodstore average (£12,000/sqm net in 2012), this could support 9,189 sqm net by 2012. Approximately £87m of this additional expenditure will be absorbed by commitments at 2017. Nevertheless this still provides available capacity of 4,669 sqm net at 2017, rising to 5,772 sqm net at 2022.
- 4.59 The district's market share for comparison goods, given competing retail destinations, is already reasonable high. We have therefore not sought to increase this. Based upon its current market share (34%) and after allowing for commitments, there is an oversupply of capacity (-2,597 sqm net at 2017). This is as a result of assuming that all commitments (with a collective turnover of £122m) will be built and trading at 2017. From 2022 capacity of 19,000 sqm net can be supported increasing to 42,000 sqm net by 2027.
- 4.60 In relying upon these figures, care should be taken when assessing capacity towards the later stages of the plan period i.e. particularly post 2022. This is because a number of the assumptions may have changed and it is therefore best practice to update your evidence base every five years.
- 4.61 Having identified capacity, consideration needs to be given to where this could be accommodated. This is dealt with in the following section.

5.0 Development opportunities

BACKGROUND

- 5.1 Our approach to reviewing potential and proposed development sites follows the guidelines in part six of the CLG Practice Guidance on Need, impact and the sequential approach (CLG, 2009). Potential development sites are assessed against the following criteria: availability, suitability and viability. The practice guidance defines these terms below:
- Availability – whether sites are available now or are likely to become available for development within a reasonable period of time (determined on the merits of a particular case, having regard to inter alia, the urgency of the need). Where sites become available unexpectedly after receipt of an application, the local planning authority should take this into account in their assessment of the application.
 - Suitability – with due regard to the requirements to demonstrate flexibility, whether sites are suitable to accommodate the need or demand which the proposal is intended to meet.
 - Viability – whether there is a reasonable prospect that development will occur on the site at a particular point in time. Again the importance of demonstrating the viability of alternatives depends in part on the nature of the need and the timescale over which it is to be met.
- 5.2 The practice guidance says that the sequential test should be applied when determining the most appropriate location for retail development. This sequential test requires that town centre sites should be the preferred location for new retail development, followed by edge of centre sites and then out of centre locations.
- 5.3 Therefore, our review focuses on sites located in, or adjacent to, the designated shopping centres of Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington.
- 5.4 In considering the timescales for bringing these sites forward we have assumed the following:
- Short term – the next five years; and
 - Medium-long term – five to ten years.

BANBURY

Site 1 – Land at Bolton Road

Description

- 5.5 Bolton Road is an adopted highway providing access to the rear of the properties in North Bar Street and Parsons Street, surface car parks and the Bolton Road multi-storey car park which is currently still in operation. The site currently comprises:
- A multi-storey car-park (630 spaces);
 - A tyre centre;
 - A bingo hall;
 - Offices;
 - Trelawn House, a Grade II listed building on North Street; and
 - An elderly persons 'drop-in' centre, operated by WRVS.

5.0 Development opportunities

5.6 It is a proposed allocation in the emerging Local Plan.

Figure 6.1
Location of proposed allocation at Bolton Road



Image 6.1
Proposed allocation at Bolton Road



Availability

5.7 The site is currently occupied by various users, and the car park remains in operation. Such uses would need to be relocated or replaced on site or elsewhere, including a bingo hall and tyre centre, in order to make the site available. It is therefore not likely to be available until the medium- to long-term.

Suitability

5.8 The site sits within the Banbury town centre boundary but outside of the primary shopping frontage and is therefore an edge of centre site in policy terms. The Council consider that this site would be suitable for a number of uses including a foodstore; larger comparison retail units, replacement car park, leisure facility and hotel.

5.0 Development opportunities

Viability

- 5.9 The site was identified in the 2006 study and the 2010 update as a key redevelopment opportunity. Since then, the Council has placed a high priority on bringing this site forward through the preparation of a masterplan. Furthermore, the Council has recently appointed WYG consultants to prepare as masterplan for Banbury, including the Bolton Road site outlined in red on the map above.
- 5.10 The Council acknowledges that there is a variety of private ownerships and expects the developer responsible to assemble land in a way that facilitates delivery of the site. If this issue could be overcome, we consider that this project may be viable in the medium- to long-term.

Site 2 – Calthorpe Street Car Parks

Description

- 5.11 This area including Calthorpe Street comprises several large surface car parks and a number of purpose built retail units which are currently occupied by a variety of retailers including TK Maxx, Iceland and Farmfoods.

Figure 6.2

Location of possible development site at Calthorpe Street



5.0 Development opportunities

Image 6.2

Possible development site at Calthorpe Street



Availability

- 5.12 The site is occupied by a mix of landowners and the Council would need to lead discussions with the occupiers to assess the feasibility of relocation. In terms of timescales, this site could come forward in the medium- to long-term.

Suitability

- 5.13 The car park is located within the town centre boundary but outside of the conservation area boundary. It lies some distance from the primary shopping area and is therefore classed as edge of centre in policy terms. It is important that the development of the site assists in maintaining and improving the vitality and viability of this part of the town centre.

Viability

- 5.14 The site was recognised in the 2006 study after it was identified as a proposed allocation in the Non Statutory Local Plan. The Council promotes the site for comprehensive treatment rather than piecemeal development for a mix of uses, as well as recognising a requirement to re-provide some public car parking.

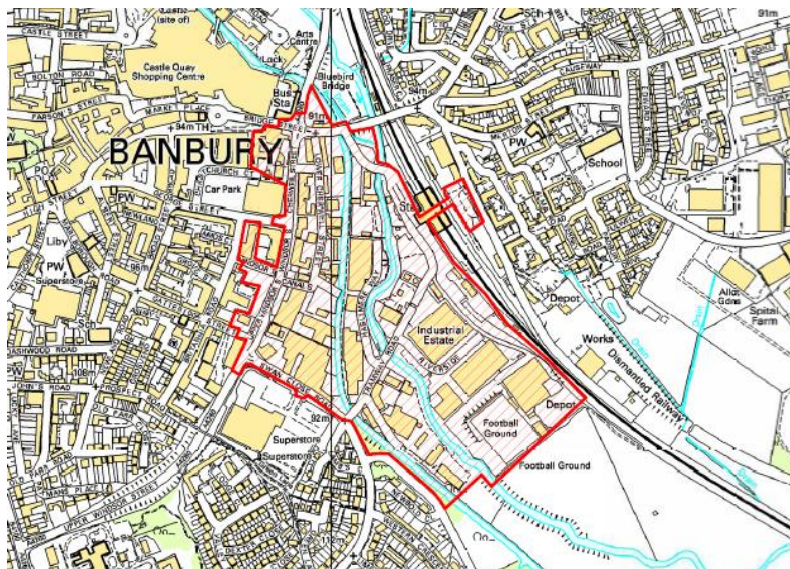
Site 3 – Canalside

Description

- 5.15 The site lies on the eastern side of the town centre and is mainly occupied by industrial uses and warehouses. It is a proposed allocation in the emerging Local Plan.

5.0 Development opportunities

Figure 6.3
Location of proposed allocation at Canalside



Availability

- 5.16 Any future development proposals would need to resolve the issues regarding multiple land ownerships to enable land assembly.

Suitability

- 5.17 The site currently falls outside the town centre boundary but the emerging Local Plan proposes the northern part of the site (as shown in the image) is included. The Council identifies this area for 17,500 sqm of retail/commercial development in its draft Canalside SPD.
- 5.18 The emerging Local Plan identifies the Canalside area as a strategic housing allocation. In addition to this, the northern area (between Upper Windsor Street and the railway station) is allocated for retail and commercial uses.
- 5.19 It is acknowledged that this area will form an important link between the railway station and new housing to the south and heart of the centre. This area has been identified specifically for the creation of a new canal basin and destination for the town centre.

Viability

- 5.20 The Banbury Canalside SPD indicates that the Council would ideally like to see development being promoted for the wider site, through an outline planning application made by a master developer or collaboration between landowners. The site will also be considered in the Banbury Masterplan.

Site 4 – Spiceball Development Area

Description

- 5.21 The site lies to the north east of the Castle Quay Shopping Centre. The site comprises the Mill Arts Centre, the Banbury Museum and the former Spiceball Leisure Centre (a new Spiceball Leisure Centre was completed on the other side of the river in December 2009).

5.0 Development opportunities

The Council has identified land between the canal and River Cherwell to be developed to provide a mixture of town centre uses, comprising new retail and leisure uses associated with strengthening the night time economy of the centre of Banbury.

Figure 6.4
Location of proposed allocation at Spiceball Development Area



Availability

- 5.22 The former sports centre site has been cleared and is available for development.

Suitability

- 5.23 While the site currently falls outside of the town centre boundary, the Council considers that the site is well placed to deliver a natural extension to the town centre. We agree.
- 5.24 The Council’s aspiration to bring the site forward as a proposed town centre allocation in the emerging Local Plan incorporates the proposal to refurbish the Arts Centre and provide a new library, public space and car parking. Such existing surrounded uses, including the Spiceball Leisure Centre, make the site a suitable location for additional leisure and night time economy uses. Furthermore, the site’s location alongside the canal and river provide an excellent opportunity for additional recreational uses.
- 5.25 The Council acknowledges that the site has strong linkages with the existing town centre. We therefore consider that some retail uses would also be suitable at the site, alongside a leisure-led scheme.

Viability

- 5.26 The Council is currently working with the County Council to deliver development at the site. Development of the site is likely to be viable in the medium to long term.

5.0 Development opportunities

BICESTER TOWN CENTRE

- 5.27 Since the publication of the 2006 study, Bicester town centre is now undergoing major works on Bure Place and adjacent land to transform the town centre offer. This development was outlined in the 2006 assessment prior to the submission of a planning application.
- 5.28 The planning application for the scheme (ref 09/01687, as amended), submitted by WYG Planning and Design, was approved at committee on 3 September 2009. The application proposes to provide a mixed use town centre development of up to four storeys incorporating supermarket and cafe, multi-screen cinema, public library, 25 new retail units, extensions to three existing units, provision of restaurants and cafes and the refurbishment of Crown Walk. Bure Place is situated to the west of the main shopping area, Sheep Street.
- 5.29 The Council has recently appointed WYG to prepare a masterplan for Bicester. The masterplan will look to take advantage of the new East-West rail link to create a larger town centre with more shops, restaurants and overnight accommodation.

Site 1 – Wesley Lane

Description

- 5.30 The site is currently occupied by a small number of independent operators, and a Coral betting office. However, it is heavily dominated by vacant premises which detract from the character of this shopping area.

5.0 Development opportunities

Figure 6.5

Location of possible development site at Wesley Lane



Image 6.3

Possible development site at Wesley Lane



Availability

- 5.31 It is possible that the buildings are in different ownerships, and this may make land assembly difficult.

Suitability

- 5.32 The area falls within the town centre boundary, therefore in policy terms it is a suitable location for development. It forms a central access route during the redevelopment of Bure Place.

5.0 Development opportunities

Viability

- 5.33 The area is characterised by small units which are often difficult to let in the retail market. The Bure Place redevelopment should increase the opportunity for redevelopment of this area and revitalise the areas where clusters of vacant units have been identified.
- 5.34 As part of the Bure Place redevelopment, it is intended that part of this site will be redeveloped for new retail units. In light of this, there may be increased imperative to improve this site, in order to prevent the vacant units becoming a blight on the new development.

Site 2 – Victoria Road

Description

- 5.35 This cluster of service area and yards, together with the car repair unit, surface car parking, undertakers and wholesale outlet which could form a development site of 0.8ha.

Figure 6.6

Location of possible development site at Victoria Road



5.0 Development opportunities

Image 6.4

Possible development site at Victoria Road



Availability

- 5.36 It is likely that the site is in multiple ownership, which may make land assembly difficult.

Suitability

- 5.37 The site falls within the town centre boundary, so is therefore suitable in retail development terms. However the principal challenge with this site is to achieve a suitable pedestrian link to Sheep Street, as currently it is poorly connected. Without such improvements the suitability of the site for retail development is compromised.

Viability

- 5.38 The viability of this site is subject to overcoming land assembly and relocation issues, in addition to the ability to achieve good pedestrian links. Any applicant would need to overcome issues of land assembly in order to bring forward a suitable retail or mixed use scheme.

Site 3 – Claremont Road Car Park and Deans Court

Description

- 5.39 The site is currently occupied by Claremont Road car park which lies at the southern end of the town centre to the rear of Deans Court. Deans Court comprises a number of smaller units, which are modern but constrained by small units.

5.0 Development opportunities

Figure 6.7

Location of possible development site at Claremont Road Car Park and Dean Court



Image 6.5

Possible development site at Claremont Road Car Park and Dean Court



Availability

- 5.40 A number of the smaller units are currently vacant and footfall is considerably lower than the rest of the town centre. However the car park is still in use, and the availability of parking at this location is important whilst provision elsewhere is restricted by the construction works at Bure Place.
- 5.41 In order to assess the level of opportunity on this site further work would need to be undertaken to assess the current parking requirements in Bicester. Given that there is a much larger multi-storey car park proposed as part of the new Bure Place development, the need for such another surface level car park may diminish.

5.0 Development opportunities

Suitability

- 5.42 The previous local plan identified the site for mixed use development. Some of the key issues to be considered with this site are the poor visibility of the site and the limited pedestrian linkages between Market Square and Sheep Street.
- 5.43 Mixed use development is likely to be more successful given the considerable size of the site. Further investigation will be required to assess what level of further development the town centre can support, particularly in light of the sizeable scheme at Bure Place.

Viability

- 5.44 The 2006 study acknowledged that there is potential for this site to be considered in conjunction with Site 2 – Land at Victoria Road. A more comprehensive approach would involve the corridor to the east of Sheep Street as a single opportunity.
- 5.45 Any proposals which come forward would need to overcome issues of land assembly and accessibility.

KIDLINGTON

Site 1 – Car parks to the north of the high street

Description

- 5.46 This area currently provides a large car park, service yards and access to the Tesco and Iceland stores.

Figure 6.8

Location of possible development site at car parks to the north of the high street



5.0 Development opportunities

Image 6.6

Possible development site at car parks to the north of the high street



Availability

- 5.47 This site would require further assessment to understand Kidlington’s parking requirements before it could be considered available. However given that there is further parking behind the Co-op store, there may be consideration for consolidation of existing provision, should a potential developer come forward.

Suitability

- 5.48 The car park falls within the Kidlington Shopping Centre area, therefore in policy terms it is suitable for development. However, given its proximity to residential areas and its location within the wider centre, proposals for mixed use development may be preferable.

Viability

- 5.49 According to the 2006 study, the land is currently in joint ownership and a covenant restricting this land to car parking use. Any future applications would need to overcome these land assembly issues in order to bring the site forward as a whole, rather than as piecemeal development.

Site 2 – Co-operative Food car park, Sterling Road Approach

Description

The site is located to the rear of the Co-op stores and is currently used as a car park. It is easily accessible from the main road and well signposted.

5.0 Development opportunities

Figure 6.9

Location of possible development site at Sterling Road Approach



Image 6.7

Possible development site at Sterling Road Approach



Availability

- 5.50 Further research will be required to assess Kidlington’s parking requirements before the future of this site can be determined. However given the availability of parking behind the Tesco store, there may be potential for some degree of consolidation, given that Kidlington is only a small centre.

Suitability

- 5.51 The Non Statutory Local Plan identifies this site as falling within the Kidlington Village Centre boundary, therefore in policy terms it would be considered suitable in principle.

5.0 Development opportunities

Viability

- 5.52 The site could be brought forward as part of wider development with adjacent land and the Red Lion Public House which sits to the west of the site. This may increase the viability of future schemes, as both sites individually are likely to be considered too small to accommodate larger mixed use schemes.

CONCLUSIONS

- 5.53 Our review of development sites leads us to conclude that there are limited opportunities for sites to be brought forward in the short term. However given the work undertaken to date by the Council, Bolton Road does and should continue to be the primary focus for accommodating additional convenience floorspace in Banbury.
- 5.54 Further consideration will need to be given to the ability of Bolton Road, Calthrope Street Car Parks, Canalside and the Spiceball site to accommodate comparison new floorspace in the medium to long term. However, the Council’s draft Canalside SPD has indicated that the Canalside site could accommodate c17,500 sqm of retail/commercial development.
- 5.55 Turning to Bicester the opportunity exists for some additional comparison floorspace to come forward on the Wesley Lane site as part of the wider Bure Place development, and if linkages to Sheep Street can be addressed, Victoria Road may also be capable of accommodating some of the identified district-wide comparison capacity.

6.0 Conclusions and recommendations

SUMMARY

- 6.1 CBRE has been commissioned to prepare a study for Cherwell District Council to:
 - Inform the overall strategy for retail and town centre development in its Local Plan, as well as helping to inform the Delivery DPD and SPDs; and
 - Help inform its response to current and anticipated future planning applications for retail development.
- 6.2 The study is informed by a household survey of people living in and around the district, a survey of shoppers in Banbury and Bicester town centres and our own observations in the centres of Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington, as well as the Bicester Shopping Outlet Centre. We have also used a variety of secondary sources.
- 6.3 We have found that:
 - Banbury is performing well as a town centre, offering a wide variety of facilities and services that go beyond just a local offering from mid-market fashion retailers and large discount fashion outlets through to smaller independent retailers and service outlets;
 - Bicester is a healthy centre which is well patronised, as evidenced by the levels of footfall;
 - Kidlington serves as a local service centre, offers a range of convenience and service retailers to meet the everyday needs of the surrounding community; and
 - Bicester Shopping Outlet Centre is performing well. The distinctive nature of the centre provides a niche offer, albeit mainly for visitors to the area rather than people living locally, which is a major strength of the centre.
- 6.4 We have identified quantitative need (or ‘capacity’) for additional A1 retail floorspace, which we summarise in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1
Capacity for additional A1 retail floorspace

YEAR	CONVENIENCE (SQM NET)	CONVENIENCE (SQM NET)	COMPARISON (SQM NET)
	Before allowing for overtrading	Allowing for overtrading	
2012	0	9,189	0
2017	-4,384	4,669	-2,597
2022	-3,146	5,772	19,012
2027	-2,107	6,678	41,949
2031	-1,294	7,387	68,210

LOCATION OF NEW RETAIL FLOORSPACE

- 6.5 We now turn to consider where the identified need might be accommodated, taking into account the role and function of Cherwell’s main centres and potential development sites.
- 6.6 The capacity we identify for convenience goods arises from overtrading of existing stores and unless additional development takes place this will continue. We therefore recommend that the Council allocates sites to meet most or all of the capacity, unless officers have

6.0 Conclusions and recommendations

evidence ‘on the ground’ which suggests that some or all of the existing stores are not in fact trading as well as the quantitative analysis suggests.

- 6.7 Banbury offers the greatest opportunity to accommodate new floorspace, in part on the Bolton Road site and also on the Canalside site. Banbury would benefit from a town centre foodstore and we recommend therefore that the Council continues to promote the redevelopment of the Bolton Road site.
- 6.8 Turning to comparison goods, we recommend that the majority of new floorspace is directed to Banbury, reflecting the fact that it is a larger centre. This would consolidate its role as the key centre in Cherwell and ensure that the district maintains its market share in the face of competition from Oxford, Milton Keynes and other centres. Moreover, it is likely to be a more attractive location to larger retailers.
- 6.9 However, some floorspace should be directed to Bicester town centre. Certainly we are mindful that the shopper survey revealed greater dissatisfaction with the range of shops in Bicester, which suggests a need to target new floorspace there. However, to a large extent this will depend on the ability of sites to accommodate new development.
- 6.10 We suggest that until Bure Place is completed, there is no need to bring forward an additional foodstore in Bicester, although this should be reviewed once the Sainsbury’s store has opened and trading patterns have settled.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL CENTRES

Banbury Town Centre

- 6.11 In qualitative terms, we note that the Council’s Economic Development Strategy seeks, amongst other things, to improve the distinctiveness of Banbury town centre. We think that is a sensible aspiration. One way of doing so is to develop distinct quarters, similar to those in Brighton, so that different parts of the centre have different functions. That would help to focus investment and give different parts of the centre clear identities and roles.

Bicester Town Centre

- 6.12 Aside from retail, our survey of the centre revealed a possible need to improve the food and drink offer in the centre. The addition of more cafes would, in our view, be particularly welcome.
- 6.13 Turning to the town centre’s relationship with Bicester’s Shopping Outlet Centre, it is clear from the household survey that the two are different shopping destinations serving very different markets. The physical separation between them is such that it is likely to be difficult to encourage shoppers at the outlet centre to visit the town centre as part of linked trips. However, there may be an opportunity for the Council to work with the Bicester Shopping Outlet Centre to promote the town centre in marketing material for the shopping outlet. In theory, it might also be possible to reroute the bus from the railway station to the shopping outlet so that visitors can also visit the town centre.

Kidlington Village Centre

- 6.14 We see no case for directing significant new development towards Kidlington; to do so could change its role and the market it serves. In qualitative terms, the centre would benefit from some improvements to the environment (such as new street furniture). The Council may also wish to consider encouraging food and drink uses if it wishes to improve the vitality of the centre in the evening.

6.0 Conclusions and recommendations

Bicester Shopping Outlet Centre

- 6.15 The household survey indicates that Bicester’s Shopping Outlet Centre secures only 0.5% (or £7.5m) of all expenditure on comparison goods available from residents of the study area. Even in the zone in which it is located it secures only 0.9% (£5.3m) of comparison expenditure available from residents of that zone. This is clearly a gross underestimation of the centre’s turnover and further reflects its unique role as a national/international retail destination.
- 6.16 There is little benefit in seeking its expansion to serve residents of Cherwell District, as it clearly serves a very limited role for them at present, although there may be a case for an expansion to serve a wider market.

Villages

- 6.17 Small shops add to the vitality of villages and can reduce the need to travel, particularly for small ‘top-up’ items. However, we recognise that competition from larger stores nearby can often impact upon on the viability of these kinds of shops.
- 6.18 To guard against this, we recommend that the Council carefully considers the likely impact of proposals for new retail development at edge and out of centre locations, including applications for floorspace falling below the 2,500 sqm default threshold in the NPPF. We consider this further below.
- 6.19 We also recommend that, where possible, the Council supports proposals for community shops such as that in Islip¹⁴.
- 6.20 We are also aware that pubs can play an important role in villages, but that in some cases their viability can also be marginal. We therefore recommend that the Council supports proposals for innovative dual uses for pubs, particularly where these involve small shops serving the immediate area¹⁵.

POSSIBLE DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT POLICIES

Policies for applications for major new development

Definition of frontages and Primary Shopping Areas

- 6.21 The NPPF sets out the approach to determining applications for new retail development. It says that:
Where an application fails to satisfy the sequential test or is likely to have significant adverse impact on one or more of the above factors, it should be refused.
- 6.22 The sequential test:
 - Must be applied to applications for main town centre uses that are not in an existing centre and are not in accordance with an up-to-date Local Plan;

¹⁴ See <http://www.islip.org.uk/index.php?menu=shop> Access date: 12 March 2012

¹⁵ See examples of integrated pubs and shops at http://www.pubisthehub.org.uk/case_studies/all Access date: 18 July 2012

6.0 Conclusions and recommendations

- Requires that main town centre uses be located in town centres, and then in edge of centre locations and only if suitable sites are not available should out of centre sites be considered.
- 6.23 For retail uses the town centre is defined as the Primary Shopping Area (PSA), which is formed of a centre’s primary shopping frontages and those secondary shopping frontages which are adjoining and closely related to the primary shopping frontage. For other town centres uses it means the defined centre as a whole.
- 6.24 It is, therefore, important that the primary and secondary shopping frontages, the PSA and the town centre boundary are established as soon as possible. This falls outside the scope of this study, but we would be happy to advise further if required.

Application of impact assessment

- 6.25 The impact test must be applied to all applications for retail, leisure and office development outside of town centres which are not in accordance with an up-to-date Local Plan, provided the development is over a proportionate, locally set floorspace threshold. If no threshold is set locally, the default threshold is 2,500 sqm. The NPPF does not state whether this threshold refers to gross or net floorspace, but the Practice Guidance on Need, Impact and the Sequential Approach suggests it is the former.
- 6.26 In our view, the key factors to consider in setting a threshold are:
- The existing vitality and viability of town centres;
 - The likely future vitality and viability of the centre, taking into account recent permissions at edge and out of centre location; and
 - The size of the centre.
- 6.27 This is because the less vital and viable a centre is, and the smaller it is, the more vulnerable it is likely to be to new development at edge and out of centre locations.
- 6.28 We note in section 3 that all the centres we have assessed are in reasonably good health, so that does not in itself provide a justification for a threshold of less than 2,500 sqm gross. However, the Council has recently resolved to grant permission for a major new retail development at the Prodrive site in Banbury, which is likely to have at least some impact on the town centre.
- 6.29 Moreover, new floorspace of 2,500 sqm gross would be large in comparison to Bicester and Kidlington, albeit it would be relatively small in comparison to Banbury:
- Bicester town centre has a total gross retail floorspace of 29,673 sqm, and 2,500 sqm represents 8.4% of that total;
 - Kidlington village centre has a total gross retail floorspace of 11,446 sqm, and 2,500 sqm represents 21.8% of that total; and
 - Banbury town centre has a total gross retail floorspace of 84,439 sqm, and 2,500 sqm represents 2.9% of that total.
- 6.30 Taking this into account, we recommend thresholds of:
- 2,000 sqm gross in the area around Banbury town centre, taking into account its relatively large size but allowing for its potential vulnerability in the light of the recent resolution to grant permission at the Prodrive site;

6.0 Conclusions and recommendations

- 1,000 sqm gross in the area around Bicester town centre, reflecting its potential vulnerability to large developments because of its size;
 - 350 sqm gross in all other areas, reflecting the potential vulnerability of large developments on Kidlington and other village centres, because of their size.
- 6.31 The Council would still be able to seek an impact assessment where a proposal fell below the threshold for each area if it was concerned it might result in ‘the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services’ and ‘particularly where this would reduce the community’s ability to meet its day-to-day needs’ (paragraph 70 of the NPPF).

Policies for change of use in defined frontages

- 6.32 As we note above, the sequential approach directs new retail development to the defined Primary Shopping Area (PSA) in the first instance, with the PSA formed of primary shopping frontages and those secondary shopping frontages which are adjoining and closely related to the primary shopping frontage.
- 6.33 It follows, therefore, that the loss of retail uses in primary shopping frontages and, to a lesser extent, secondary shopping frontages should generally be resisted. To date, the Council has had a policy which restricts the change of use of units so that there is no net loss of A1/A3 floorspace in the defined shopping area of Banbury town centre and the primary shopping frontage of Bicester town centre under any circumstances.
- 6.34 Supporting text to the policies suggests that the aim is to prevent the proliferation of banks, building societies and other non-retail uses at ground floor level in the primary shopping frontages. It is not clear from the policy why the Council regards A3-A5 uses as being preferable to banks and building societies, but we are advised by officers that it is because banks and building societies do not typically provide an active frontage, whereas A3-A5 are more likely to do so.
- 6.35 We recommend that the Council includes a policy which resists the loss of A1 uses in the PSAs, but we do not recommend a policy which only allows changes of use based where the number of A1 units or length of the A1 frontage remains above a specified threshold. Instead, we recommend a more qualitative, criteria-based approach¹⁶ which takes account of issues such as:
- The size of the unit;
 - The location of unit;
 - Whether the change of uses would result in a concentration of non-retail frontage; and
 - The length of time the property has been marketed.

OTHER ISSUES

Contribution to economic growth of the district

- 6.36 We have been asked to provide advice on the contribution of retail and other town centre uses to the economic growth of the district. Certainly new retail floorspace and other town centre uses can offer new job opportunities. A guide prepared for the Homes and

¹⁶ See, for example, the approach taken by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, set out in its Primary Shopping Area Thresholds Advice Note. Available: http://www2.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/PDF/PP_PSA_AdviceNote1.pdf Access date: 12 August 2012

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Communities Agency¹⁷ suggests that the employment densities (employees per given area) set out in Table 6.1 might be expected.

Table 6.1
Employment densities of selected town centre uses

USE	EMPLOYMENT DENSITY
A1 high street floorspace	One employee per 19 sqm NIA
A1 food superstore	One employee per 17 sqm NIA
A1 other superstores/retail warehouses	One employee per 90 sqm NIA
A2 financial and professional services (including any back office area)	One employee per 16 sqm NIA
A3 restaurants and cafes	One employee per 10-30 sqm NIA
C1 budget hotel	One employee per three bedrooms , plus casual staff
C1 general hotel (three star):	One employee per two bedrooms
C1 high end hotel (four/five star):	One employee per 1.25 bedrooms
D1 cultural attractions	One employee per 36 sqm GIA
D2 cinemas	One employee per 90-120 sqm GIA
D2 amusement and entertainment centres	One employee per 40-100 sqm GIA
D2 sports centres and private clubs	One employee per 30-100 sqm GIA

Source: *Employment Densities Guide (2nd edition), 2010*

- 6.37 The Council should, however, be aware that new floorspace can divert trade from one operator to another, which may result in some job losses at the existing operator. The above table will not, therefore, necessarily represent net additional new jobs.
- 6.38 Other economic benefits may arise from the addition of a new retailer or leisure operator to a centre, as it may offer spin-off benefits. If, for example, a new retailer encourages shoppers to visit one town centre when they might otherwise have visited another, there is potential for that shopper to use other shops and facilities in that centre.

¹⁷ See <http://www.homesandcommunities.co.uk/employment-densities-guide-2nd-ed> Access date: 18 July 2012

APPENDICES
