



Newark & Sherwood District Council

**Matter 7:
Retail and Town Centres**

October 2024

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Issue 1 – Whether the Plan will Contribute to the Vitality and Viability of Town, District and Local Centres

Q7.1 Is the retail hierarchy and network of centres informed by up-to-date evidence?

A: Yes, the Retail Hierarchy and its network of centres has been defined through Core Policy 8 in the [Amended Core Strategy](#) (ACS). The process of defining the hierarchy was informed by the Retail & Town Centre Study ([R1](#) and [R2](#)), and its current composition was found sound through the Examination of the ACS. Through the ACS, Fernwood Village Centre was introduced as a Local Centre- and as a result there is now the need to provide accompanying policy content (Policy NUA/LC/3 and Policy DM11) within the Amended Allocations & Development Management DPD, and extents on the Policies Map, in order to support its implementation. There are also consequential amendments to account for the downgrading of Rainworth from a District Centre in the original Core Strategy to a Local Centre under Core Policy 8 in the ACS.

The vitality and viability of Centres is monitored on an annual basis and the most up-to-date Retail Monitoring Report ([Retail Monitoring Report 2024](#) and accompanying [Use Class Maps](#)) demonstrates the status of those Centres within the hierarchy to remain appropriate, having regard to their role, scale, composition and offer.

Q7.2 Are the boundaries of Newark Town Centre, the District Centres and the Local Centres on the Policies Maps justified by the evidence in the Town Centre and Retail Study (2016) (Evidence Base R1)?

A: Yes, the boundaries were justified by the evidence in the Town Centre and Retail Study (2016, [R1](#) & [R2](#)) and have since been monitored on an annual basis to ensure they continue to reflect an appropriate composition and distribution of Main Town Centre Uses. No meaningful amendments have been proposed to centre boundaries, beyond minor rationalisations to provide more accurate and implementable designations.

In addition to the above, the Primary and Secondary Shopping Frontages in Newark Town Centre, and the Primary Shopping Frontage in Southwell and Ollerton District Centres are proposed for deletion. This is a result of the implications from the introduction of the E Use Class, and the need to support greater flexibility within Town Centres to maintain vitality and viability. The Primary Shopping Area for Newark Town Centre is also proposed to be extended to incorporate the Asda supermarket – implementing the recommendation of the Town Centre & Retail Study – given the important contribution to the overall quality and choice of the Town Centres food offer, its market share across the District and the generation of significant linked trips and expenditure to the benefit of other shops and businesses in the Town Centre.

Q7.3 What is the relationship between the Plan and the Newark on Trent Town Investment Plan (2020) (Evidence Base R3)?

A: Newark made a successful bid to the previous Government's Towns Fund Initiative. The initiative carries the overarching aim of driving the sustainable economic regeneration of Towns to deliver long-term economic and productivity growth. As part of this process the Newark Towns Fund Board was set up, which comprises more than

40 private and public businesses and bodies. The Board developed a range of plans intended to transform the Town's economic growth prospects, with a focus on improved transport, heritage, skills, and culture. These plans ultimately formed the Newark 'Town Investment Plan,' with key projects including;

- Delivery of the Air and Space Institute;
- Expansion of the YMCA Newark & Sherwood Community and Activity Village;
- Development of a Smart Innovation, Supply Chain and Logistics Enterprise Zone,
- The Castle Gate House Project,
- Redevelopment of the key 32 Stodman Street site within Newark Town Centre;
- Support for 'Newark Cultural Heart;'
- Transformation of Newark into a '20 minute Town'; and
- Delivery of the Southern Link Road

These specific projects form part of the wider strategy at the centre of the Town Investment Plan ('TIP'), which places an emphasis on skills and education, connectivity, Town Centre regeneration and the supporting of an increase in residential accommodation in the Town Centre. There are also additional opportunities and development sites identified through the Plan, which would further assist in delivering on this agenda. The TIP was submitted to Government by the Council and resulted in the award of £25m funding to contribute towards its delivery.

Accordingly, the TIP represents an ambitious and potentially transformative programme for the Town and its Town Centre – and will be the catalyst for a range of important future investment decisions from stakeholders, both public and private, in seeking to deliver its objectives. It carries an agenda which has a clear relationship to the Development Plan, given the nature of the issues it has identified and the projects presented in response. The Development Plan provides a strategic framework for land use and development, while the TIP focuses on specific investment priorities and projects to enhance the town's economic vitality and viability. Therefore, it is important that the Development Plan and TIP are integrated with one another and that there is a spatial planning platform in place to assist in delivering the TIP and provide confidence and certainty to stakeholders.

The TIP is also contributing towards the development of a Masterplan and related Design Code for Newark Town Centre, with public consultation expected to take place early in the new year. The Masterplan seeks to integrate various emerging Council Strategies around the Town Centre and guide its actions moving forwards. To integrate this agenda into the Development Plan new content has been incorporated within Policy NUA/TC/1 (Newark Town Centre) and Policy DM11 (Retail and Main Town Centre Uses), in addition to the entirely new Policy DM13 (Regeneration Programmes and Schemes).

Q7.4 Will the assessment of the impact of edge of town and out-of-centre retail proposals on Town, District and Local Centres be effective in maintaining the vitality and viability of those centres?

A: Yes, it will. The proposed amendments add further detail into the considerations that will be taken into account. This requires assessments of impact to evaluate potential effects on footfall, trade diversion and the overall economic health of existing centres, ensuring that new developments do not undermine their vitality and viability. The considerations detailed through the policy represent well established means of assessing impact, and reflect the provisions outlined at Paragraph 94 in the NPPF.

Q7.5 What is meant by 'small scale' in relation to rural diversification schemes?

A: These are schemes which are modest in size and impact, of a scale appropriate to meet local needs of rural communities but falling short of being destinations in their own right to a larger catchment (without this being subject to application of relevant policy tests). It is, however, not considered appropriate to set a specific threshold as it is important there remains the ability to take account of site-specific circumstances and individual business models in determining what is 'small scale.'

The intention of the wording is to improve rural sustainability and/or support appropriate diversification. This seeks to provide a locally specific way, appropriate to Newark & Sherwood, of implementing Paragraph 93 in the NPPF. This requires that the Sequential Test should not be applied to small-scale rural offices or other small scale rural development. The content around supporting a prosperous rural economy at Paragraphs 88 and 89 of the NPPF is also noted by the Council. The focus on the sustainable growth and expansion of rural businesses, support for diversification and crucially the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, including local shops is important here.

Q7.6 Overall, does the Plan set out a positively prepared, justified, and effective mechanism to support the economy and the vitality and viability of the Town District and Local Centres? Are any main modifications necessary for soundness?

A: Yes. The proposed content within the AADMDPD sets out a positive framework, building on that already put in place through the Amended Core Strategy, to support a network of vital and viable centres throughout the District. The Plan is consistent with national planning policy and allows for it to be applied in a way which is appropriate within a local context. Importantly it will allow for Centres to be capable of being adaptive to dynamic change. The Plan is founded on a robust evidence base, has responded to the opportunities presented by national funding streams, and seeks to take account of and assist with the implementation of emerging local strategies around Town Centres. Through this a positively prepared approach has been provided for giving confidence and certainty to stakeholders and allowing for the commitment of public and private investment to take place. No main modifications are considered necessary to ensure soundness.

Q7.7 What evidence supports the requirement for a sequential test relating to Edge and Out of Centre Locations for retail?

A: The requirement for a sequential test relating to edge and out-of-centre locations for retail is required by national policy, with the approach set out through the amendments to Policy DM11 (Retail and Main Town Centre Uses) being consistent with Paragraphs 91 and 92 of the NPPF. This policy emphasises the need to prioritise town centre locations for retail development to enhance their vitality and viability, ensuring that edge and out of centre proposals are only considered sequentially when no suitable town centre sites are available.

Q7.8 What evidence supports the requirement for a sequential test relating to Non-Retail Main Town Centre Uses?

A: Through Paragraphs 91 and 92 of the NPPF, national policy integrates all Main Town Centre Uses into the Sequential Test. The requirement carried by Policy DM11 is therefore consistent with national policy. National policy emphasises the need to prioritise town centre locations for such developments.

Q7.9 Overall, does the Plan set out a positively prepared, justified, and effective pathway for the economy and for the vitality and viability of the Town, District Centres, Local Centres and Rural Areas? Are any main modifications necessary for soundness?

A: It is considered that the Plan has set out a positively prepared, justified, and effective pathway for the economy and vitality and viability of the District's network of Centres and its rural areas. The approach provided is consistent with national policy and guidance and has responded to the recommendations of the Retail & Town Centre Study ([R1](#) and [R2](#)), as well as the latest evidence provided through the annual monitoring process. Through this approach, a justified and effective means of applying national policy within the District's local context has been established by the Council, which seeks to maintain the continued vitality and viability of its centres. This has sought to integrate a broader range of emerging Town Centre strategies central to supporting the health of Newark Town Centre (defined as the Regional Centre/Town Centre through Core Policy 8 in the Amended Core Strategy) into the Development Plan to assist with their implementation. This is crucial to the ability to attract inward public and private investment into the Centre and realise opportunities to adapt to the dynamic change Town Centres are facing.