

6. Planning Policy

Introduction

- 6.1. This section of the report offers a direction for planning policy, whilst not offering precise policy wording at this stage which comes at the Submission Stage of the AAP. It identifies areas for intervention that will relate to specific policies and associated allocations, supporting the identified proposal. This will sit closely with the Allocations Development Plan Document which will identify that policy and allocations within the town centre area are covered by the AAP.
- 6.2. This section is structured around a number of key retail and town centre planning policy tools, setting out recommended policy direction. Clearly the policies that will form part of the AAP will also sit alongside policies in the Core Strategy, for example relating to Conservation and Transportation, and therefore it will also be important to consider the AAP as part of the wider LDF and not in isolation.

Town Centre Boundary

- 6.3. To support the future consolidation of the town centre and to help focus retail development back into its core, it is recommended to alter the boundary to exclude easterly parts of the town. The recommended boundary is shown below at figure 6.1. This boundary allows for the future development of the Invicta and Sandhurst Street sites. Areas excluded will therefore benefit, generally, from a more flexible policy framework that will allow a range of uses, although retail development beyond the boundary will be required to be supported by impact and needs assessments in accordance with national planning guidance (PPS6).

Primary Frontages / Shopping Areas

- 6.4. As a policy tool these should be retained, but a more flexible approach should be taken to the introduction of non-retail but nonetheless important town centre uses, such as cafés and bars. Areas that fall outside the primary retail frontages but within the town centre boundary would benefit from a more flexible approach to development with fewer restrictions on use, such as residential and office or leisure development.

Allocations

- 6.5. It is proposed that the key development sites are allocated for their proposed uses as set out in this report as follows:
- **Sandhurst Street / The Parade / Chestnut Road** – comprehensive retail, leisure, office and residential development scheme including appropriate levels of car parking. Community uses would also be permitted
 - **East Street car park** – possible development for a range of uses including a place of worship, community uses, library, retail and leisure. Proposals should ensure an appropriate level of car parking on this site

- **Invicta** – retail led mixed use scheme. Other appropriate uses would be community use, place of worship, offices or residential development
- **PAL International, Sandhurst Street** – residential development

6.6. Policies should also ensure the following:

- Development proposals that would prejudice the development of the sites in the proposed comprehensive manner should be refused
- Proposals should also include the appropriate level of car parking
- Where possible, S106 / S278 or other agreements are used to help to achieve the other objectives of this AAP – in particular improvements to the town centre public realm
- All development proposals should show the highest standards of design
- Traffic impact is fully assessed in all significant development proposals
- Pedestrian accessibility is fully taken into consideration

