Malvern Hills
Town Centres
& Retail Study

Malvern Hills District Council

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Prepared on behalf of

Malvern Hills District Council

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1.0 Introduction

Background

1.1 Malvern Hills District, Worcester City, and Wychavon District Councils instructed DPDS Regional Ltd to prepare a Town Centre and Retail Strategy to help inform policies of the emerging South Worcestershire Joint Core Strategy and the respective Local Development Frameworks (LDFs) for each administrative area. The output consists of three separate Town Centre and Retail Studies for each local authority and an Overall Retail Strategy document for the South Worcestershire Sub-Region. Work began in April 2007.

Objectives of the Malvern Hills Retail Study

1.2 The key objectives of the Study are as follows:

- To assess retail expenditure capacity for the District up to 2026;
- To undertake a household shopping survey to establish shopping patterns and to inform the healthchecks of the three town centres (Great Malvern, Upton upon Severn and Tenbury Wells) and the two district centres (Malvern Link and Barnards Green, both in Malvern);
- To provide an assessment of commercial leisure facilities available to the District's residents;
- To present a full appraisal of alternative sites for retail development in accordance with the requirements of the sequential approach set out in PPS6;
- To provide a town centres and retailing strategy for the District in the context of the wider sub-regional hierarchy.

Study Structure

1.3 The study is structured as follows:

Section 2 Provides a summary of the relevant planning policy background

Section 3 Contains a review of current and likely trends in the shopping industry at the national level which could influence the need and future demand for additional retail floorspace.

1.0 Introduction

Section 4	Provides an overview of shopping facilities within the District and in the wider region, and assesses the levels of vitality and viability in the three town centres and two district centres. Reference is made to the results of the household shopping survey, commissioned as part of this Study.
Section 5	Contains a quantitative assessment of convenience and comparison goods expenditure capacity using the results of the household survey as the basis for assessing existing shopping patterns.
Section 6	Includes a review of trends in the commercial leisure industry and examines the need for additional leisure development in the District.
Section 7	Presents the recommended strategy for retailing and leisure uses in the District.
Section 8	Provides a summary of the main findings and conclusions.

2.0 Policy Background

National Policy

2.1 *Planning Policy Statement 6: Planning for Town Centres* (PPS6) sets out the Government's national policies and principles relating to the future of town centres and the main uses relating to them. These policies should be taken into account by local planning authorities in the preparation of local development frameworks (LDFs). The LDF is a folder of local development documents prepared by local authorities that outline the spatial planning strategy for the local area.

2.2 The Government's key objective for town centres is to promote their vitality and viability by:

- Planning for the growth and development of existing centres; and
- Promoting and enhancing existing centres, by focusing development in such centres and encouraging a wide range of services in a good environment, accessible to all.

2.3 Through local development documents, local planning authorities should implement the Government's objectives by planning positively for town centres and, in particular, should:

- Develop a hierarchy and network of centres;
- Assess the need for further main town centre uses and ensure there is the capacity to accommodate them;
- Focus development in, and plan for the expansion of, existing centres as appropriate, and at the local level identify appropriate sites in development plan documents;
- Promote town centre management, creating partnerships to develop, improve and maintain the town centre, and manage the evening and night-time economy; and
- Regularly monitor and review the impact and effectiveness of their policies for promoting vital and viable town centres.

2.4 This study seeks to inform the formulation of policies which address these principles and objectives. In accordance with PPS6, the study will:

- Assess the need for new floorspace for retail uses, taking into account both quantitative and qualitative factors;
- Identify deficiencies in retail and commercial leisure provision, assess the capacity of existing centres to accommodate new development;
- Identify centres where development will be focused;
- Review the boundaries of the primary shopping area;

2.0 Policy Background

- Identify sites in accordance with the sequential approach placing first preference on sites within centres; and
- Inform criteria-based policies for assessing proposals for retail development, including development on sites not allocated in the development plan documents.

The Regional Spatial Strategy for the West Midlands (formerly RPG11)

2.5 The West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) defines Birmingham / Solihull, the Black Country, Coventry and Stoke-on-Trent as the Major Urban Areas (MUA) and these are the main focus for major development, particularly housing and economic growth, over the period to 2021. In addition, Worcester, the nearest centre to Malvern to be mentioned, is identified in the Strategy as one of 5 sub-regional foci for development beyond the MUAs. The others are Hereford, Rugby, Telford and Shrewsbury.

2.6 The strategy identifies a network of town and city centres (Policy PA11) which will be the focus for major retail development (over 10,000 sq m gross of comparison goods floorspace), and uses that attract large numbers of visitors. The network includes Worcester, Redditch and Kidderminster. The policy acknowledges that there are many other centres in the Region which meet local needs and development plans should identify and develop policies for these centres within their respective areas to meet local needs. The Strategy urges local authorities to be pro-active in encouraging appropriate development to maintain and enhance their function as town centres.

2.7 The RSS is currently under review following the recommendation for increased housing numbers in the Barker Review of Housing Land Supply. The retail strategy should be adaptable to allow for the increased retail capacity that would accompany any large-scale expansion of the city.

West Midlands Regional Centres Study

2.8 In March 2006, Roger Tym and Partners with King Sturge undertook a strategic assessment of retail, leisure and office facilities in the West Midlands Region on behalf of the Regional Assembly. The Study estimated that the residual comparison goods requirement in 2021 will be around 427,000 sq. m. net. across the region as a whole In terms of Worcester, the nearest centre to Malvern to be mentioned, the Study estimated that the requirement for City Centre comparison floorspace by 2021 will be between 14,000 and 34,000sq.m.net,

2.0 Policy Background

depending on the assumptions used regarding, *inter alia*, population and expenditure growth. Roger Tym and Partners are currently updating the Study which will project forward capacity assessments to 2026 and take into recent commitments and the most up-to-date forecasts of expenditure growth, internet shopping, floorspace efficiencies etc. The Study will inform RSS policies which are likely to set upper limits for additional retail development for centres in the Region.

Worcestershire Structure Plan

2.9 The Worcestershire Structure Plan was adopted by the County Council in 2001 and covers the period to 2011. Structure Plan policy focuses new retail development towards town centres but also recognises the importance of shops serving local day-to-day needs in rural settlements. The retail hierarchy within Worcestershire, as defined in the Structure Plan, is described in Section 4 of this study.

Malvern Hills District Local Plan

2.10 The Malvern Hills District Local Plan was adopted in July 2006 and, in line with the Structure Plan, covers the period to 2011. Policy EP9 directs new retail development to the town centres at Great Malvern, Tenbury Wells and Upton upon Severn, and the district centres of Barnards Green and Malvern Link. Town Centre boundaries are defined on the proposals maps along with primary and secondary shopping frontages as appropriate.

2.11 Policy EP17 allocates land at Edith Walk for mixed-use development including retail uses. Policy EP18 allocates land at Tenbury Cattle Market and Teme Street for mixed-use development which should support the vitality and viability of the town centre.

3.0 Retail and Leisure Trends

Introduction

3.1 The retail and leisure sectors are characterised by continuous change, activity and progress. Changes within these sectors over recent years have manifested themselves in new forms of development. These have resulted not only from innovations within the industries themselves but also from consumer demand, technological advances, and political intervention.

3.2 Within the last three decades, the UK has witnessed dramatic and continuing change in retail environments. The traditional town centre dominance of retailing has been challenged by innovative new retail formats in out-of-town locations and now commentators are considering the impact of internet shopping.

3.3 These changes in the retail sector occur rapidly and the planning system is often slow to respond, resulting in planning policy lagging behind the changes. Since the 1970s there have been four broad waves of retail change within Britain.

- ***First Wave*** – occurred in the late 1960s to early 1970s, where food retailers moved to ‘out-of-centre’ locations operating from free-standing superstores and hypermarkets.

- ***Second Wave*** – occurred in the late 1970s to mid-1980s, where key bulky goods operators (e.g. DIY, furniture, carpets, electrical goods and motor accessories) moved to out-of-centre locations either in free-standing premises or with other operators as part of ‘retail parks’. This wave was also associated with the first large-scale retail warehouses. There was rapid growth of retail warehouses in the 1980s which slowed down in the 1990s due to the prevailing economic climate and more stringent planning legislation.

- ***Third Wave*** – occurred from the mid-1980s to early 1990s with other retailers in the non-bulky comparison goods sectors (such as clothing, footwear and toys) moving to out-of-centre locations, many to retail parks. This was the time when the large operators such as Marks & Spencer moved out-of-centre. This wave was also characterised by the rise of Regional Shopping Centres located close to motorway networks and serving very wide catchment areas (e.g. Meadowhall in Sheffield).

- ***Fourth Wave*** – occurred in the 1990s with the rise of warehouse clubs and factory outlet centres specialising in discounted goods. Retail complexes also emerged in many airport terminals.

3.0 Retail and Leisure Trends

3.4 A fifth retail wave has emerged since the turn of the century associated with increased use of personal computers in the office and at home. Online retailing (or e-tailing) has experienced rapid growth over this period, although it is still in its early stages. Services such as banking, estate agencies and travel agencies have also been affected. At this stage, it is difficult to draw firm conclusions on the implications for traditional 'high street' retailing over the coming years. However, changes in expenditure distribution have not gone unnoticed by retailers. The development and growth of e-tailing is discussed further below.

Expenditure

3.5 A key factor in the changing retail sector has been the changes in general expenditure; the last 30 years have seen a rapid increase in average income (GDP per head). Nearly all households have telephones, fridges and TVs, cars and many have more than one car. Many of these goods are bought through shops and this has led to an increase in consumer retail expenditure. Other expenditure, for example foreign holidays, expenditure on the purchase and maintenance of cars, and savings and pension plans is not considered as retail expenditure, but trends affecting it can have considerable impact on town centres. Savings exerted considerable pressure on town centre floorspace through the demand from building societies, although this has now passed its peak with the amalgamation of societies, the rationalisation of their structure and e-banking. The growth of home ownership in the 1980s and the active housing market has increased demand for estate agents offices.

3.6 One of the big areas of expenditure growth has been in the leisure sector. Eating out and take away meals have become commonplace for many households, increasing the demand for restaurants, and take-aways and as well as forming one of the fastest growing sectors of food retailing. The growth in leisure spending has also encouraged investment by large companies, both in large-scale out-of-centre complexes (including multiplex cinemas, nightclubs and restaurants) and in the conversion of large town centre premises to public houses. More details of trends in the leisure sector are contained at Section 5. Government policy to encourage the evening economy of town centres has focused attention on the importance of leisure spending to town centres, although such uses should not undermine the predominant shopping function in the core shopping areas of larger town centres.

3.0 Retail and Leisure Trends

Retail Expenditure

3.7 Retail expenditure is in competition with other types of expenditure, and has not simply increased with average earnings. In the period 1960 – 2004/5 expenditure on food and drink (excl alcohol) has declined from 30% of household expenditure to 16%, and expenditure on clothing and footwear from 10% to 5%. By contrast housing costs have increased from 9% to 18%, and transport, motoring and fares from 12% to 16%. Other expenditure items include recreation and culture, restaurants and hotels, miscellaneous goods, household goods, communication, education, and health, (source: ONS Family Spending, 2004/5, table 4.2).

3.8 MapInfo (formerly the Data Consultancy and, before that, URPI) has tracked retail expenditure back to 1964. It has risen from £2,274 per head in 1980 to £4,486 per head in 2004 (at constant 2002 prices), an increase of 97% over 24 years (source: MapInfo Information Brief 05/02). The annual growth rate is around 3.0% per annum between 1983 and 2004, although the pattern of growth year on year has been uneven, reflecting the economic cycles.

Convenience Goods

3.9 The category of convenience goods covers food and drink, including alcoholic drinks, tobacco, newspapers, cleaning materials and matches bought through retail outlets. According to data from MapInfo, convenience goods expenditure has increased very slowly over the very long term (1964 to 2004) at an average annual rate of 0.1%. Expenditure on these goods was depressed in the 1990s following considerable growth in the late 1980s. However, the average annual growth in convenience goods expenditure between 1998 and 2004 is 0.8%. The local estimates of expenditure data used in this study are from Experian. Experian forecast that growth in per capita convenience goods expenditure will be around 0.7% per annum over the study period.

Comparison Goods

3.10 Comparison goods include clothing and footwear, do-it-yourself goods, household goods (such as furniture, carpets, soft furnishings and hardware) recreational goods (such as TVs, radios, video and DVD players, sports goods, toys, books and bicycles) and other goods like pharmaceuticals, toiletries and jewellery. Expenditure on these goods has grown faster than expenditure on convenience goods, at a rate of almost 5.2%p.a. over the same period 1983 to 2004, and 8.5%p.a. over the period 1998 to 2004 (Source: MapInfo). However, both

3.0 Retail and Leisure Trends

Experian and MapInfo forecast that these growth rates cannot be sustained. For the period covered by this study, a forecast growth rate of 3.8% per annum has been used in respect of per capita comparison goods expenditure (from Experian).

3.11 Expenditure growth on different types of comparison goods can vary quite markedly. Audio-visual equipment, for example, has grown by almost 15.7%p.a. in the last 6 years whereas expenditure on household goods has been 6.7%p.a. Growth in sales of electrical equipment is likely to continue as new technologies and innovative products continue to emerge.

Social Trends

3.12 The growth in retail expenditure per head has given rise to a demand for additional retail floorspace. So has the modest but steady increase in the population – in England and Wales from about 49.6m in 1981 to 52.0m in 2001. However, how this pressure manifests itself as retail development is not consistent across the country and is determined largely by changes in social behaviour and the structure of the retailing sector itself.

3.13 Within regions, expenditure per capita will vary, as will growth or decline in the resident population. Within the regional context, however, the fortunes of individual town centres will depend on the population change within their catchment areas and their position within the retail hierarchy, rather than overall regional changes. Even in regions with declining population some towns will grow, while others decline. Often the impact of declining population will be greatest in district centres in larger conurbations.

3.14 The other social changes that are usually remarked upon in relation to retail patterns are the growth of car ownership and the substantial increase in the proportion of women working. The proportion of households with at least one car has increased from 52% in 1971, to 68% in 1991, and 73% in 2001. This has increased the likelihood of a car being available for shopping trips.

3.15 The use of cars rather than public transport has altered the whole pattern of accessibility in towns and cities, favouring peripheral sites where there is less congestion and car parking is more convenient. It has also reduced the time/distance disincentive to travelling for goods and services, resulting in fewer but larger shopping centres. Retailers can rely on people travelling to them, rather than having to provide branches at a local level to reach customers.

3.0 Retail and Leisure Trends

3.16 The very marked increase in the number of women working, particularly working full time, and bringing up families is generally seen as creating an income rich/time poor environment for shopping which favours convenience over price competitiveness and hence encourages one-stop shopping, and bulk shopping trips.

3.17 It is probably easy to overestimate the impact of these changes and there remain a substantial number of pensioner households and households without cars. Nevertheless, the pattern of relatively infrequent (usually weekly) bulk food shopping trips with additional top-up shopping in between, appears to be well established from the large number of household shopping surveys that have been carried out as part of retail impact studies. The growth of 'convenience stores', particularly at petrol filling stations, is another manifestation of this trend.

3.18 The pattern of non-food shopping trips is more complicated and assessed less frequently than convenience goods shopping patterns. The emergence of shopping as a leisure activity has been much trumpeted, and the close proximity of retail and leisure facilities in some regional shopping centres and large retail parks is evidence of this. These centres attract coach trips from far afield. Indeed, window-shopping has long been an established pastime, and daily food shopping is often used as an occasion for social interaction. Nevertheless, the relative success of attractive, historic shopping centres and centres containing purpose-built attractions suggest that shopping is often combined with more general leisure trips. Purchases may be impulse buys, but equally the decision to go to a particular centre may be based on a combination of its retail offer and other attractions.

E-Commerce

3.19 There has been considerable media attention devoted to internet shopping in recent times. 'High Street' sales were lower than expected over the Christmas 2005 and New Year period, whilst internet-based sales have been buoyant. However, contrary to some pessimistic forecasts, 'High Street' sales in Christmas 2006 were at their highest for three years. According to the ONS, growth was particularly high in respect of clothing and household goods in December 2006, but the highest growth rates were recorded in respect of 'non-store sales' including internet shopping. On this basis, it is still unclear the extent to which Internet shopping will replace traditional shopping.

3.20 In terms of convenience goods, the main foodstore operators have set up on-line shopping facilities. Tesco Direct, for example, has steadily increased its geographical coverage and has extended the range on offer through its online store to include books and household goods.

3.0 Retail and Leisure Trends

3.21 However, doubts remain about how popular the Internet will be with food shoppers. While it may suit the purchase of basic standardised groceries such as tins or frozen products, it is likely that there will always be a significant number of customers who will want to choose their own fresh products and to browse the product range in goods sectors, like delicatessens, where the product offer changes rapidly.

3.22 Within the comparison goods sector Internet shopping will broadly offer the same service as catalogue and teleshopping. It is likely to prove popular for goods like books and CDs, but even with these goods, the inability to inspect the goods or satisfactorily test the selection is seen as limiting. For fashion goods, catalogue shopping, mail order and teleshopping are slowly claiming a larger market share. Internet shopping adds to the efficiency of the process rather than overcoming its disadvantages – particularly in seeing and trying on clothes. Remote sales rely on home delivery, which is, as a result of the increasing numbers of women who work, becoming a disadvantage in itself.

3.23 The disadvantages of home delivery do not apply to the delivery of many services, and telephone and Internet services have already become significant in banking and insurance services. The same trends are important in travel bookings and, to some extent, estate agency. This has led to or is likely to lead to, continued branch closures, as is being experienced in the banking sector at present. It seems reasonable to conclude that the Internet and telephone services will have a significant impact on the amount of activity in High Streets in the coming years, but will not replace them as places for shopping, business and entertainment.

3.24 According to Forrester Research, 'net-influenced' sales represent three times as much revenue as actual online sales. In other words, many people prefer to research products and prices online but then go to the high street to actually buy the goods. Forrester Research estimate that net-influenced sales in the UK will be worth approximately £22bn (7%) in 2007. The Interactive Media in Retail Group (IMRG) who represent on-line retailers claim that internet sales are matched by net-influenced sales. IMRG suggest that for 2006, internet sales will have represented £30bn or 10% of all retail sales and a further £30bn of high street sales will be 'influenced' by people browsing on the internet.

3.25 In any event, shopping online is a factor, alongside other forms of non-store business. Experian consider that internet shopping is still in the 'take-off' phase of its market penetration but, once shopping patterns are established and settled, internet sales will eventually plateau at a reasonably constant market share of overall spending. Experian's estimate of retail

3.0 Retail and Leisure Trends

sales not taking place in stores in 2003 is 1.6% in respect of convenience goods and 5.4% in respect of comparison goods. The results of the household survey indicate that in the study area as a whole non-store convenience goods spending was 1.5% and for comparison goods it was 10.8%. The comparison goods figure is a higher than the Experian equivalent which is for 2003 but, given the forecast growth in such spending as a proportion of total spending, the higher figure is to be expected. In terms of different types of comparison goods, the survey revealed the following proportions of non-store spending:

Clothing / Shoes / Fashion:	5.3%
DIY Goods:	0.3%
Furniture / Floor Coverings:	3.5%
Small Electrical:	8.6%
Large Electrical:	8.4%
Other Non-Food Goods:	13.5%

3.26 Experian estimate that convenience goods expenditure which is not spent in stores will increase to around 6% by 2010 before levelling out in 2013 at around 6.5%. They estimate that comparison goods non-store spending will also continue to increase, levelling out at around 12.4% in 2013.

3.27 However, Experian have also produced forecasts of special forms of trading based on a ‘weaker-case scenario’ where internet shopping in particular does not grow at such a rapid rate over the next 5-8 years. As Experian explain in their Retail Planner Briefing Note (4.0, October 2006), there is a high degree of uncertainty in projecting the uptake of new technology and the rapid growth in internet sales could be a one-off result following the take up of broadband technology. If this is the case, internet growth would peak at a lower level and a little earlier than predicted. On this basis, Experian have produced what they describe as a “plausible low case” scenario for growth in non-store activity. In 2015, they estimate that non-store sales will be around 4% for convenience goods, and 8% for comparison goods.

3.28 In recent retail studies undertaken by DPDS, there appears to be strong growth in comparison sales over the internet particularly for non-bulky comparison goods. By comparison, there is much weaker growth in convenience sales. Therefore, having regard to Experian estimates and taking into account experience in other studies, the following proportions of non-store sales have been excluded from our forecasts of floorspace needs across the study area from 2012:

3.0 Retail and Leisure Trends

Convenience Goods:	4%
Comparison Goods (Bulky):	5%
Comparison Goods (Non-Bulky):	12%

Retail Industry Trends

3.29 The emergence of new forms of retailing in the late 1980s and 1990s are well known and the so-called four waves have previously been outlined in this section.

3.30 The number of superstores (foodstores with more than 25,000 sq.ft. sales floorspace) increased from 457 in 1986 to 1,102 in 1997, and their share of grocery spending increased from 29.9% in 1987 to 53.7% in 1996. This occurred at a time when the grocery spending per head increased very slowly. In contrast, the number of independent grocers fell from 116,000 in 1961 to 20,000 in 1997 (Figures quoted from the Environment, Transport and the Regional Affairs Committee Second Report Dec 1999). The Institute of Grocery Distributors Directory indicates that the number of superstores had risen further from 1,102 in 1997 to 1,280 in 2003.

3.31 The move towards car borne shopping and the advantages for peripheral, out-of-centre, sites for this are well known. The move started in convenience goods retailing where large stores could offer sufficient goods and facilities to attract customers without town centre facilities being available. Increasingly over recent years, these superstores have expanded into other in-store activities and services such as dry cleaning, coffee shops and the sale of financial services. It has now become commonplace for the larger foodstores to sell comparison goods like mobile phones and televisions/DVD players at discounted prices in addition to the clothing and fashion goods sold by some. The take-over of Asda by WalMart, specialists in mixed-goods retailing, has led to others following the trend to a greater degree.

3.32 The next development was the movement of electrical, furniture and floor covering retailers to out-of-centre locations. These have tended to cluster together in retail warehouse parks, because they can benefit from ‘incidental’ purchases by customers of neighbouring stores. Also, the proliferation of individual free-standing retail stores often results in customers having difficulty remembering which store is where. Good visibility from main vehicular routes remains a pre-requisite in identifying retail locations. For retailers, warehouse

3.0 Retail and Leisure Trends

units offer the possibility of stocking bulky goods and a wider range of normal goods than conventional units. Also, warehouses often allow retailers flexibility in terms of re-arranging the showroom area without contending with structural walls and pillars.

3.33 The advantages for retailers of out-of-centre locations are clearly not restricted to retailers of bulky goods; a number of clothing and footwear retailers (e.g. Next and Marks & Spencer) have shown willingness to trade from out-of-centre locations realising the benefits identified above. In looking for new sites, DIY operators also now prefer a retail warehouse location (or a site adjacent to a food superstore) above free-standing locations.

3.34 Factory Outlet Centres (FOC) developed rapidly in the 1990s. In the past it was common to find small shops attached to places of production/manufacture selling end-of-line, out-of-season, or slightly damaged products. Other routes for disposal of such goods have been through markets, and exports to eastern European countries. These alternatives are declining. There are now FOCs in most parts of the country, both purpose-built as out-of-centre shopping locations and in converted buildings. A FOC has recently been granted planning permission by the Secretary of State as part of the Gloucester Quays redevelopment. Although the industry may seek to operate what is effectively a two-tier pricing structure, there is clearly likely to be considerable substitution of goods between the two and limits on expenditure and usefulness means that some of the money spent on FOC goods, will not be spent in the high streets.

3.35 Warehouse clubs, like Costco, which sell a wide range of discounted goods to members from very large premises, have failed to spread widely in the UK. A court case established that, in terms of planning law, warehouse clubs were not shops. However, Government policy on retail development advises that in policy terms they should be treated as if they were retail businesses.

3.36 More recently, the largest supermarket retailers have been concentrating on acquiring smaller convenience stores. Tesco and Sainsburys have been active in the convenience sector over recent years and it is likely that Asda Wal-Mart will soon join them. Sales at Tesco convenience stores in particular are rising so fast that analysts expect sales at stores trading under the fascia Tesco Metro (in town centres) or Tesco Express (at local stores or petrol filling stations) will surpass sales at Spar, the UK's current leading operator in the convenience store sector. Tesco sales in this sector are already alongside Musgrave's (which own Londis and Budgens).

3.0 Retail and Leisure Trends

3.37 The Association of Convenience Stores has warned that the larger supermarket chains are using their considerable influence and purchasing power to force independent traders out of business. In November 2005, the Office of Fair Trading was ordered by the Courts to review its earlier decision that the supermarket's increasing dominance of the grocery market should not be referred to the Competition Commission for a full enquiry. The OFT is now carrying out the study focussing in part on the way retailers seek to influence competition through the planning system.

3.38 However, it should be noted that the convenience store sector is more diffuse than the larger food superstore market. Spar, the current leaders in the sector, has just 5.6% of sales, whilst Tesco and Musgrave have 5.4% each, and the Co-operative Group a further 5.2% (Source: Verdict Research). This is compared with Tesco's 30.5% market share of the grocery sector overall (Source: TNS market research).

Retail Concentration

3.39 The retail industry is becoming concentrated in fewer, larger firms with a greater share of the market. These concentration levels have been achieved partly through mergers, but many of the leading companies have also captured increased market share through organic growth. This is particularly so in the food sector, where the market share of the top five operators is 79%, and the top ten over 90%. Increased size can produce more favourable purchasing prices from suppliers and economies of scale arising from distribution logistics, and the spread of advertising costs. Advertising and branding is increasingly important, with retailers developing their own brand products and their own brand image. This brand strengthening allows many of them to trade more easily from freestanding out-of-centre locations.

3.40 These changes give national multiples considerable advantages, and their presence in town centres is an important measure of the success of town centres. Those towns which fail to attract such stores will loose market share. At the same time, the need for independent shops to give town centres 'character' is becoming recognised (to avoid the label of 'clone town'). People will want to shop in larger towns with greater choice and retailers can increasingly rely on people travelling to these shops by car, rather than having to provide shops locally. There is thus a tendency for larger towns to have strong retailer interest and to support new development, while smaller, traditional market towns decline.

3.0 Retail and Leisure Trends

Summary

3.41 The retail and leisure sectors are characterised by continuous change. Growth in retail expenditure fluctuates. In terms of comparison goods, after a period of relatively high growth in expenditure, more modest levels of growth are expected in the short to medium term. Expenditure growth in respect of convenience goods is historically lower than the equivalent for comparison goods and this is expected to continue.

3.42 Increasing car ownership has led to significant levels of retail and leisure floorspace being constructed in out-of-centre locations. To a degree, the extent of out-of-centre development has, in turn, led to increased dependence on the car.

3.43 E-commerce and shopping online is a factor alongside other forms of non-store activity. Analysts suggest that non-store shopping will continue to increase into the next decade which, inevitably, will divert some trade from 'high street' stores.

3.44 Retailing is becoming increasingly concentrated in fewer, larger firms. National multiples have significant advantages over independent traders but, whilst their presence in a town centre is generally acknowledged to be a sign of success, it is important to recognise that a strong independent sector gives a centre character and broadens it appeal.

4.0 Existing Shopping Facilities

Introduction

4.1 This section of the study provides an overview of the shopping facilities available to residents of, and visitors to, Malvern Hills District. In particular the section focuses on facilities in the town centres of Great Malvern, Upton-upon-Severn and Tenbury Wells, and the district centres of Malvern Link and Barnards Green. First, the regional and sub-regional shopping hierarchy is examined in order to understand each centre's position relative to competing centres. Second, there is a review of facilities in each centre and any out-of-centre provision including freestanding foodstores and non-food retail warehouses. The assessment of the shopping facilities in this section is based on DPDS fieldwork, information from Malvern Hills District Council, established data sources including Management Horizons, the Valuation Office, and Experian, and the results of the specially commissioned Household Telephone Survey.

The Household Telephone Survey

4.2 To gain a better understanding of shopping patterns in the area, a household telephone survey was commissioned from NEMS and conducted in May 2007. The survey area was defined in consultation with officers from the three commissioning local authorities, and having regard to the results of two household surveys carried out in 2000 and 2001 as part of a previous retail studies for Worcester City and Malvern Hills District Councils. It should be noted that the area to the east of Worcester had already been surveyed in 2006 as part of the Wychavon Retail Study, and the results of this survey were incorporated into this Study. The overall survey area reflects the likely area of influence of Worcester City Centre (in view of the brief to provide a Sub-Regional Study). However, the survey area extends far enough to encompass the likely catchment areas of the main town centres within Malvern Hills District.

4.3 The new household survey had a sample of 1,500 households. A plan showing the geographic extent of the survey area is contained in Appendix A. For the purposes of analysis the area was split onto 15 zones based on postcode geography. The area surveyed as part of the Wychavon Retail Study is also shown on the plan at Appendix A.

4.4 The questionnaire for the survey was designed to gain information on shopping patterns which would not only inform the assessment of retail expenditure capacity but also provide valuable information on the views of visitors to the main town centres in the Study Area. Reference is made to the results of the survey in this section. The full results are contained in Appendix B.

4.0 Existing Shopping Facilities

Regional Shopping Hierarchy

4.5 The *West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy, Technical Paper 5 – Quantitative Need in Retail and Leisure Sectors* identifies a retail hierarchy defined on the basis of comparison goods turnover. The Study focuses on the 26 centres with the highest comparison goods turnovers (of around £100m and above). Birmingham is at the top of the hierarchy, followed by Merry Hill Shopping Centre, Coventry, Hanley, Wolverhampton and Solihull. Worcester is 7th in the rankings. None of the centres in Malvern Hills District are mentioned in the Study's hierarchy.

Sub Regional Shopping Hierarchy

4.6 The Worcestershire Structure Plan under Policy D.31 identifies the following retail hierarchy within the County:

Figure 4.1: Policy D.31 Retail Hierarchy

Retail proposals in the following centres should be of a scale which is appropriately related to the roles of those centres and should retain and reinforce the following retail hierarchy:

Worcester City	Sub-Regional centre
Kidderminster	Major County centre
Redditch	Major County centre
Evesham	Minor County centre
Bromsgrove	Minor County centre
Malvern	District centre
Droitwich	District centre
Pershore	Minor District centre
Stourport	Minor District centre

Source: Worcestershire Structure Plan 1996 -2011, Adopted Plan June 2001

4.7 Figure 4.1 shows that Worcester is the highest placed shopping centre and defined as the 'Sub-Regional Centre'. The Structure Plan acknowledges that the sheer scale and variety of shopping facilities in Worcester contributes towards its sub-regional role, the retention and development of which is a key strategic objective. Malvern, the only centre in the District to appear in the hierarchy, is classed as 'District Centre'.

4.0 Existing Shopping Facilities

4.8 The Structure Plan hierarchy is based on the Management Horizons Europe (MHE) Shopping Index. In terms of retailing, MHE surveys shopping centres in the UK and ranks them according to their relative retail strength and the assessed level of vitality and viability. The factors influencing a centre's position in the hierarchy include the number of national multiple retailers present in the centre, the number of key attractors (such as John Lewis or Marks and Spencer), the total retail floorspace available, and the level of vacant floorspace.

4.9 Figure 4.2 below identifies the centres within the South Worcestershire Sub-Region, which appear in the national rankings, and the main competing centres in the wider sub-region. The previous rankings from 2000/2001 are included for reference.

Figure 4.2 The MHE shopping Index: South Worcestershire and the Surrounding Area

Centre	MHE Rank 2003-04	MHE Rank 2000-01
Birmingham	6	6
Bristol	23	18
Cheltenham	24	24
Bath	28	30
Worcester	**54**	**53**
Brierley Hill, Merry Hill	61	49
Hereford	77	90
Gloucester	89	65
Cribbs Causeway, Bristol	100	89
Kidderminster	156	169
Redditch	165	165
Stratford upon Avon	170	145
Evesham	**262**	**269**
Dudley	301	249
Bromsgrove	336	282
Tewkesbury	565	572
Stourport on Severn	773	775
Malvern	**800**	**699**
Droitwich Spa	**829**	**739**
Ledbury	1449	989

Source: Management Horizons Europe

4.0 Existing Shopping Facilities

4.10 Malvern is ranked 800th in the MHE rankings. It has fallen approximately 100 places in the rankings since 2000-01. In terms of other centres in the South Worcestershire Sub-Region, Worcester is ranked 54th, Evesham 262nd, and Droitwich Spa is 829th. Other centres in the South Worcestershire Sub-Region are not large enough to feature in the rankings.

4.11 The results of the household survey undertaken as part of this Study support the hierarchy structure, as Worcester has by far the highest market share of comparison goods expenditure generated within the South Worcestershire Sub-Region. However, towns and cities outside the Sub-Region also influence shopping patterns within it. In terms of Malvern Hills District, the household survey indicates that Cheltenham and Tewkesbury have an influence on convenience and comparison goods shopping patterns within the southern part of the District and Kidderminster attracts a notable amount of spending generated in the north-western part.

Shopping Facilities in Malvern Hills District

4.12 Having considered the regional and sub-regional shopping context, this section now turns to a detailed assessment of shopping provision within the District. The centres are addressed in turn, beginning with the three centres in Malvern, and assessed having due regard to the key indicators of vitality and viability set out in paragraph 4.4 of PPS6. An overview of any out-of-centre provision is also provided.

Visitor / User Perceptions

4.13 Respondents in the household survey were asked a series of questions about the retail centres they used. Visitors and users were asked to rate the centre in relation to a range of factors including range and choice of non-food shops, the quality of the environment, and accessibility by car. Respondents were given the option of rating centres as ‘very good’, ‘good’, ‘average’, ‘poor’, or ‘very poor’. For the purposes of analysis, these responses were given a score of 200, 100, 0, -100, and -200 respectively and an average score was then calculated. Therefore, a score above 0 means that the centre was rated above average and the higher the score, the higher the centre was rated. A score below 0 means that the centre was poorly rated. The average scores are referred to in the following assessments.

Great Malvern Town Centre

4.14 The fresh spring waters of Malvern are most likely to have encouraged the first settlement in the iron-age, but they were certainly responsible for the town’s main growth as a spa town in the nineteenth century, facilitated by the introduction of the railway. There are very few town

4.0 Existing Shopping Facilities

centres in the UK which can rival the views from Great Malvern Town Centre's elevated position. It is a very popular tourist destination with key attractions including St Ann's Well, Great Malvern Priory, the theatre and Priory Park, the Abbey gateway and the (Edward) Elgar Route.

The Primary Shopping Frontages, as defined in the adopted Local Plan, are located on Church Street, Belle Vue Terrace, Abbey Road and Church Walk. Secondary Frontages extend further out onto Graham Road, Grange Road and Worcester Road.

Retail Composition

4.15 Figures 4.3 and 4.4 below show the current composition of Great Malvern Town Centre and changes since 2001, the survey date used in the last retail study for District.

Figure 4.3: Retail Composition of Great Malvern Town Centre (Units)

	No. of units 2001	No. of units 2006
Convenience	13 (9%)	13 (9%)
Comparison	70 (49%)	68 (49%)
Services	44 (31%)	49 (36%)
Vacant	13 (9%)	6 (4%)
Miscellaneous	2 (1%)	1 (1%)
Total	142 (100%)	138 (100%)

Source: Experian/MVM Planning (2001), Experian (2006)

Figures may not add due to rounding

'Miscellaneous' category comprises post offices, employment agencies and information centres

Figure 4.4: Retail Composition of Great Malvern Town Centre (Floorspace)

	Floorspace 2001 sq m	Floorspace 2006 sq m	Change 2001- 2006
Convenience	5400 (23%)	5073 (25%)	-327
Comparison	9220 (40%)	8389 (42%)	-831
Services	5200 (23%)	5806 (29%)	+606
Vacant	2700 (12%)	483 (2%)	-2217
Miscellaneous	560 (2%)	251 (1%)	-309
Total	23080 (100%)	20002 (100%)	-3078

Source: Experian/MVM Planning (2001), Experian (2006)

Figures may not add due to rounding

'Miscellaneous' category comprises post offices, employment agencies and information centres

4.0 Existing Shopping Facilities

4.16 The overall number of units available in Great Malvern Town Centre has fallen slightly since 2001 and the overall amount of floorspace has fallen by around 3,000sq.m. to about 20,000 sq. m. gross. The amount of retail floorspace has declined by about 1158 sq m. Some of this has been taken up by service uses. There has been a large decline in vacant floorspace. It follows that a significant amount of floorspace has fallen out of commercial town centre use.

4.17 The number of convenience units has remained stable at 13 although the amount of floorspace has decreased by around 300sq.m.gross. However, 25% of the town centre's floorspace is dedicated to convenience goods, well over the national average of 17%. The Experian analysis suggests that Great Malvern Town Centre is relatively well provided for in terms of convenience goods provision.

4.18 The number of comparison shops in the town centre has fallen slightly from 70 to 68 between 2001 and 2006, and comparison goods floorspace has fallen by around 800sq.m. to around 8,400 sq. m. However, the sector remains dominant occupying 49% of units and 42% of the town centre's floorspace.

4.19 The service sector has grown over the period 2001 to 2006. 5 additional units have been created taking the number of service units to 49.

4.20 The number of vacancies has fallen from 13 to 6. Falling vacancy rates is a trend across town centres in the UK over this period. Notwithstanding this, the current vacancy rate of 4% is below the national average of 11%, and an indicator of strong demand for units in the centre.

The Comparison Goods Sector

4.21 National multiple comparison goods retailers in the town centre include Boots, Clarks, Clintons Cards, Dorothy Perkins, Superdrug, The Works bookshop, WH Smith, and Woolworths.

4.22 Complementing the national multiples is a number of independent retailers of comparison goods. The town centre has a reputation for its furniture and antique shops and art galleries. Brays is a traditional-type department store and a long standing feature on Worcester Road, although it is somewhat detached from the 'prime-pitch' retailing and national multiples further south. The offer from the other independent comparison goods retailers includes stores specialising in the following:

4.0 Existing Shopping Facilities

Clothing	Textiles
Gifts	Chemist goods
Second hand goods	Haberdashery
Flowers	Jewellery
Stationery	Interior decoration
Glasses and contact lenses	Bridal wear
Books	Printing and copying
School uniform	Sports goods
Crafts	Vehicle parts

4.23 According to the household survey, 40% of spending on clothes and footwear generated by Malvern residents (those in Zone 11) is spent in Worcester City Centre, whilst less than 25% of that expenditure is retained within Malvern's centres (14% in Great Malvern Town Centre and 10% in Malvern Link District Centre) and a further 14% is spent at Townsend Way Retail Park. The expenditure leakage figures are similar in respect of other non-bulky non-food goods (41% to Worcester, 28% to Great Malvern Town Centre, 7% to Malvern Link District Centre, and 3% to Townsend Way Retail Park). This demonstrates that the draw of Worcester as a major shopping destination. The household survey indicates that 32% of Great Malvern residents visit the Town Centre at least once a week for non-food shopping, but another 32% never visit the centre for this reason.

The Convenience Goods Sector

4.24 According to the household survey, 59% of Malvern residents visit Great Malvern Town Centre at least once a week for food shopping (compared to just 32% for non-food shopping). Waitrose and Somerfield supermarkets anchor the retail offer in the Town Centre. Waitrose attracts 24% of convenience goods spending generated by Malvern residents (Zone 11) and Somerfield 8%. By way of comparison, the Morrisons store at Townsend Way Retail Park attracts 31% of Malvern residents' spending, and comparing the two supermarkets Morrisons is the more popular for main food shopping whilst Waitrose is the more popular for top-up shopping trips. Waitrose also has a significant influence on shopping patterns in Zones 10 and 13 (the area surrounding Malvern), attracting 21% and 29% of spending from these zones respectively. Indeed, Waitrose is more popular than the Morrisons store with residents living in Malvern's rural hinterland.

4.25 Waitrose and Somerfield in the Town Centre are complemented by a three health food shops, a newsagent and an off licence, confectioners, two butchers, a greengrocer, a delicatessen and a baker.

4.0 Existing Shopping Facilities

The Service Sector

4.26 The service sector in Great Malvern is geared to meeting the needs of both tourists and local residents. There are 15 cafes, restaurants, or fast-food outlets, and 11 estate agents. Services generally aimed at local residents include 8 hairdressers, 4 estate agents and beauty salons, and a dry cleaner. The centre has several banks and building societies including Lloyds TSB, NatWest, Barclays, HSBC, Nationwide, and Halifax. In addition, Great Malvern has a tourist information centre and a post office. 31% of Malvern residents use Great Malvern Town centre at least once a week for its services but 35% never use the centre for services.

4.27 According to Experian Goad, as a proportion of the total number of units, Great Malvern Town Centre has a slightly higher than average service sector representation, having regard to other town centres in the UK. Within that sector, the proportion of banks, financial services, estate agents and auctioneers is particularly high compared to the UK average, whereas the proportion of cafes, restaurants and fast food outlets is low.

Vacant Units

4.28 Figures 4.3 and 4.4 sets out the information on the number of vacant units and floorspace in Great Malvern. As previously noted, the number of vacancies has decreased markedly since 2001, as has the amount of vacant floorspace. The vacancy rate is currently 4%, significantly below the national average of 11%.

4.29 In terms of distribution, according to the Goad plan produced by Experian in 2006, three of the six vacant units were located on Belle Vue Terrace, and one was at the top of Church Street, all within the Primary Shopping Frontages. However, since the 2006 survey, two of these units have been refurbished and re-let, and it is understood that the chain-restaurant Ask are close to opening a new restaurant on Belle Vue Terrace which will account for the other two vacancies. The two other vacancies are located in St Anns Road which experiences very low pedestrian flows due to its peripheral location.

Other Uses in the Town Centre

4.28 As previously mentioned, in addition to the retail and service uses, Great Malvern town centre attracts significant numbers of tourists and much of the retail offer is geared towards such visitors.

4.29 However, the centre attracts visitors for other reasons too. Other uses in the town centre include the Council Offices, churches, hotels, solicitors, accountants and other offices, and residential uses above and between shops. Great Malvern also has significant cultural attractions, although this is addressed in more detail in Section 6 of this Study.

4.0 Existing Shopping Facilities

Environmental Quality

4.30 One of the most attractive assets of Great Malvern town centre is its environment. As previously mentioned, its setting on the Malvern hillside and the views afforded across to the Cotswolds in the east are very attractive features. A significant number of the town centre's buildings date from the Victorian era, with fine examples of Victorian facades on the eastern side of Graham Road, the western side of Worcester Road and Belle Vue Terrace is also very attractive. Some rather unsympathetic infill development detracts from the appearance of the shopping frontage in places (e.g. Boots, 33-35 Church Street) but on the whole the built environment in the town centre is very attractive.

4.31 Public open space provision in and around the town centre is plentiful, varied and of a particularly high quality. The public gardens below Belle Vue Terrace provide an interesting feature and allow pedestrians to descend into Abbey Road and Church Street without walking adjacent to the traffic. To the south of the town centre is Priory Park, and a short (steep) walk to the west provides access to the Malvern Hills. High quality street furniture, and a variety of pavement treatments add to the sense of place within the town centre.

4.32 The proximity of traffic and the associated noise and congestion are a problem in Great Malvern town centre, particularly at the western end of Church Street and its junctions with Worcester Road/Belle Vue Terrace and Abbey Road. This is detrimental to the visitor's experience and overall enjoyment of the town centre.

Footfall

4.33 On the basis of surveys undertaken for this Study, the highest levels of footfall in the town centre are typically recorded at the southern end of Church Street (approximately 585 pedestrians per hour). At the northern end of Church Street, close to the junction with Abbey Road, footfall levels were around 375 pedestrians per hour. In the more peripheral area of Worcester Road, footfall was between 100-150 pedestrians per hour.

Commercial Yields

4.34 The yields expressed in Figure 4.5 below are 'all risk yields' calculated by dividing the annual rent, as though it had been received as a single sum at the year end, by the capital value or sale price of the property. The 'all risk yield' is a simple benchmark which the property market uses to assess the comparative attractiveness of different shopping centres. It is the ratio of rental income to capital value and is expressed in terms of the open market rent of a property as a percentage of the capital value.

4.0 Existing Shopping Facilities

4.35 As a measure of retail viability, yields are a valuable indictor, but one that needs to be used with care. The level of yield on its own is of less value than in comparison with other yields at different points in time and in different locations. Yields measured consistently over time can give an indication of the direction in which a particular town centre is moving, although yields also reflect the state of the economy in general and the attraction of the property market compared to other forms of investment.

4.36 This trend can be compared with national levels of yields and with those towns of similar size and type, or with neighbouring and competing towns. A comparative analysis of this type, conducted on a regular basis, can give an indication of how the viability of retailing in a town centre is changing.

Figure 4.5: Commercial Yields (%), 2000-2007

Centre	**2000**	**2001**	**2002**	**2003**	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**	**2007**
Worcester	4.75	4.75	4.75	4.75	4.75	4.75	4.75	4.75
Birmingham Central	5	5	5	4.75	5	5	5	4.75
Cheltenham	6	6	6	6	6	6	5	5
Stratford-upon-Avon	5.25	5.25	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.25	5.25
Hereford	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.25
Redditch	5.25	5.25	5.25	5.25	5.25	5.25	5.25	5.25
Gloucester	6.75	6.75	7	7	7	7	7	6
Kidderminster	8	8	7.75	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.5	6
Bromsgrove	8	8	8	8	8	8	7	6
Evesham	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.5
Great Malvern	**9.5**	**8.5**	**7.5**	**7.5**	**7.5**	**7.5**	**7.5**	**7.5**
Ross on Wye	8.5	8	8	8	8	8	7.5	7.5
Droitwich	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.5
Tewkesbury	8	8	8	8.5	8.5	8.5	8.5	8
Stourbridge	9	9	9	9	9	9	8	8
Stourport	9.5	9.5	9.25	9.25	9.25	9.25	8.5	8
Halesowen	8.5	8.5	8	8.25	8.25	8.25	8.25	8.25
Stroud	9	9.5	9.5	9.5	9.5	9.5	9.5	8.5
Ludlow	11	11	>=10	>=10	>=10	9	9	9
Ledbury	9.25	9	9	9	9	9	9	9

Source: Valuation Office (first valuation of the year)

4.0 Existing Shopping Facilities

4.37 Figure 4.5 above illustrates that Great Malvern's yield has remained constant over the past 5 years at 7.5% following a marked improvement between 2000 and 2002. In terms of other competing centres which are influential in the South Worcestershire Sub-Region, Worcester has a very low yield of 4.75% which demonstrates the attractiveness of the City in terms of investment. Hereford has a yield of 5.25% (recently improved), Kidderminster 6% (and improving), Bromsgrove 6% (and improving), Evesham and Droitwich both steady at 7.5%, the same as Great Malvern, and Tewkesbury 8% (remaining fairly static).

Retailer Requirements

4.38 A list of requirements for retail and leisure premises in Malvern, as shown on the Focus database, is contained at Appendix C. The database shows 11 requirements comprising 4 from comparison goods operators, 1 from a convenience store, and 6 from the service sector. 6 of the requirements are for prime shopping frontage property and a further 2 would accept appropriate secondary frontage property.

4.39 The largest requirement is from Machine Mart which is seeking premises of up to 15,000sq. ft (approximately 1,500sq.m.). Farmfoods and Laura Ashley are premises of up to 8,000sq. ft (800sq.m.)

4.40 In summary, interest in Malvern from operators is modest and mainly from the service sector, particularly bars, cafes and restaurants. This appears to support the notion that Great Malvern has become (or is becoming) a niche centre, gearing its offer more and more towards the needs of visitors, and generally serving only the basic needs of local residents. It may also indicate that national multiple retailers consider that other locations, particularly Worcester, serve Malvern residents.

Accessibility

4.41 It is estimated that there more than 620 car parking spaces in Great Malvern town centre. These are provided through a mix of private and public car parks and on-street parking. Council employee car parks are also made available at the weekends. There following large car parks serve the centre (the number of spaces are approximate and based on information from Experian Goad and Malvern Hills District Council):

Waitrose	300 spaces
Priory Road (outside town centre boundary)	190 spaces
Victoria Park	70 spaces

4.0 Existing Shopping Facilities

Grange Road	40 spaces
St Ann's Road	30 spaces
Church Walk	30 spaces

4.42 There are several frequent local bus services to and from Great Malvern town centre to Worcester, Ledbury, Upton and outlying villages. Two daily National Express services visit the town: Great Malvern to London, and Aberdare to Bradford. The train station is just less than 1km to the east, where there are services to London and Birmingham (via Worcester).

4.43 Pedestrian movement around the centre is hampered firstly by the terrain and secondly by the busy roads dissecting the town centre. This is not helped by pedestrian crossing points relating poorly to desire lines. There are very few pedestrianised areas within the town centre.

Visitor Views

4.44 As previously mentioned, the household telephone survey asked respondents their views on the centres they visited. Respondents were asked to rate various aspects of Great Malvern town centre and the results are shown in Figure 4.6 below.

Figure 4.6: Visitor Perceptions of Great Malvern Town Centre

Factor	Score
Range and choice of non-food shops	-22
Choice and quality of supermarkets	89
Choice and quality of service facilities	102
Range and choice of leisure / entertainment facilities	58
Accessibility by public transport	26
Accessibility by car	80
Adequacy of parking arrangements	-3
Quality of the environment	110
Ease of pedestrian movement around the centre	59
The level of personal security and safety	101

Notes: Respondents were given the option of rating centres as 'very good', 'good', 'average', 'poor', or 'very poor'. For the purposes of analysis, these responses were given a score of 200, 100, 0, -100, and -200 respectively and an average score was then calculated.

4.0 Existing Shopping Facilities

4.45 Respondents of the household survey were also asked to indicate aspects which they disliked about Great Malvern town centre. The most commonly mentioned factors are summarised in Figure 4.7 below together with the percentage of respondents mentioning the factor:

Figure 4.7: Main Dislikes of Great Malvern Town Centre

"Not enough shops"	33.4%
"Lack of / cost of parking"	8%
"Unattractive environment"	8%
"Poor quality shops"	6%
"Traffic problems"	5%
"Lack of personal safety / rowdiness"	4%

4.46 Also recorded as part of the survey, were respondents' views on potential measures to encourage them to visit the town centre more often. Figure 4.8 below provides a summary of the main responses:

Figure 4.8: Measures to Encourage Visits to Great Malvern Town Centre

"Broader range of shops"	42.6%
"More parking"	11.9%
"Better or more niche / specialist shops"	7.2%
"Less expensive parking"	4.0%
"Better or more leisure facilities"	3.8%

4.47 Figures 4.6, 4.7 and 4.8 suggest the following:

- The town centre received positive scores across all aspects mentioned in the survey bar two: the range and choice of non-food shops and adequacy of parking arrangements.
- The range of shops in Malvern was by far the 'main dislike' mentioned and a broader range of shops is the factor most likely to encourage more visits.
- The factors receiving high ratings were the choice of service facilities, the town centre environment, and the level of personal security and safety;
- Also receiving high ratings were the choice of supermarkets and accessibility by car.

Summary of Great Malvern Town Centre

4.48 Great Malvern is 800th in the UK shopping centre rankings. In terms of competing large centres, Birmingham, Cheltenham, Bristol, Worcester, Gloucester, Merry Hill, Hereford and Cribbs Causeway are all in the top 100 centres and, all combined, provide a significant draw for residents of Malvern and the surrounding area.

4.0 Existing Shopping Facilities

4.49 The town centre has 138 outlets available and over 20,000sq.m. of floorspace. The retail offer is generally geared towards meeting the basic local needs of residents and/or the needs of visitors and tourists. The household survey indicates that residents consider the range and choice of shops in the centre to be poor, compared to other aspects of the centre.

4.50 Great Malvern has a commercial yield of 7.5%, and is on a par with two other centres in the South Worcester Sub-Region, Evesham and Droitwich. The number of vacant units is low and declining, and the proportion of vacant units is significantly below the national average for town centres. Retailer demand for a presence in the town is only modest, with the majority of interest from the retail service sector.

4.51 The town centre has a historic and attractive environment, and it attracts visitors for many other reasons besides shopping. The Centre is reasonably accessible by public transport and car. Pedestrian movement around the compact centre is hampered by the gradients and traffic.

4.52 Aside from the range and choice of non-food shops, surveys suggests residents are generally are content with the town centre, its environment and what it has to offer.

4.53 Overall, Great Malvern displays reasonably high levels of vitality and viability having regard to the relevant indicators as set out in PPS6.

Malvern Link District Centre

4.54 Malvern Link District Centre is located almost 2km north east of Great Malvern town centre. The centre takes a linear form with the shops and services situated mainly along Worcester Road. Its retail composition is shown in Figure 4.9.

Figure 4.9: Retail Composition of Malvern Link District Centre

	No. of units 2001	No. of units 2007
Convenience	6 (11%)	7 (12%)
Comparison	28 (50%)	20 (35%)
Services	19 (34%)	22 (39%)
Vacant	3 (5%)	7 (12%)
Miscellaneous	0 (0%)	1 (2%)
Total	56 (100%)	57 (100%)

Source: White Young Green Planning (2001), DPDS (2007)
Figures may not add due to rounding
‘Miscellaneous’ category comprises post offices, employment agencies and information centres

4.0 Existing Shopping Facilities

4.55 The total number of units within the district centre has increased slightly since the last retail study in 2001, from 56 to 57. However, the compositional change is quite striking in terms of the loss of comparison shops. Comparison goods shopping was, in 2001, the dominant sector with 28 units, half of the total. Now the sector occupies just 20 units, around a third of the total. The comparison offer consists of stores specialising in the following:

Bedroom furniture
Cycling equipment
Bridal shop
Crafts
Army surplus equipment
Glasses and contact lenses
Chemist goods
Graphics and printing
Stationery
Gifts
Charity and second hand goods
Furniture
Flowers
Cards
Haberdashery
Carpets
Clothing

4.56 The service sector, in common with many centres across the UK, has grown. There are now 22 service units (39% of the total). Services include hairdressers, beauty salons, cafes, restaurants, take away food outlets, and three banks.

4.57 Malvern Link District Centre has a Co-op supermarket at the north-western end of the centre. The six other convenience stores are a butcher, 2 greengrocers, bakers, a newsagent and an off licence.

4.58 There are seven vacancies in the centre, more than double the number in 2001. These are reasonably dispersed around the centre.

4.59 Other uses in and around Malvern Link District Centre include a post office, health centre, petrol filling station, tennis courts and a bowling green, a church and a primary school. Close to the centre but outside, there is a Focus DIY store, a Countrywide store and a recently constructed Lidl store with about 900 sq m net retail floorspace. This follows the recommendation of the 2001 Retail Study that there was a qualitative need in the area for a discount food store. The results of the household survey suggest that this has not established itself firmly in the retail hierarchy of the area, is under-trading and has not reversed the decline of Malvern Link centre.

4.0 Existing Shopping Facilities

4.60 There is on-street car parking, and a surface level car park on Pickersleigh Avenue. Buses go through the centre on route to, *inter alia*, Great Malvern and Worcester. The train station at Malvern Link is just a few hundred metres to the south west of the district centre and is on the Malvern to Worcester line.

4.61 As part of the household telephone survey, Malvern residents were asked their views on Malvern Link District Centre. The results are shown in Figure 4.10 and summarised below.

Figure 4.10: Visitor Perceptions of the Malvern Link District Centre

Factor	Score
Range and choice of non-food shops	-2
Choice and quality of supermarkets	65
Choice and quality of service facilities	19
Range and choice of leisure / entertainment facilities	-76
Accessibility by public transport	46
Accessibility by car	90
Adequacy of parking arrangements	28
Quality of the environment	79
Ease of pedestrian movement around the centre	79
The level of personal security and safety	86

Notes: Respondents were given the option of rating centres as ‘very good’, ‘good’, ‘average’, ‘poor’, or ‘very poor’. For the purposes of analysis, these responses were given a score of 200, 100, 0, -100, and -200 respectively and an average score was then calculated.

4.62 Malvern Link is held in high regard by residents in terms of the environmental quality, the ease of pedestrian movement around the centre, personal security, and accessibility by car. The range and choice of entertainment facilities is heavily criticised.

4.63 In summary, Malvern Link predominantly serves local shopping needs, although it has a number of large shops which are likely to attract residents from across the town. The centre displays modest levels of vitality and viability, and there are worrying signs of decline, for instance in the increasing number of vacancies and the sharp decline in the comparison sector, possibly reflecting the attractiveness of competing destinations.

4.0 Existing Shopping Facilities

Barnards Green District Centre

4.64 Barnards Green District Centre is located just over 1km east of Great Malvern town centre. The shops and services are situated on either side of Barnards Green Road. The composition of the centre is shown in Figure 4.11 below.

Figure 4.11: Retail Composition of Barnards Green District Centre

	No. of units 2001	No. of units 2007
Convenience	10 (26%)	9 (22%)
Comparison	17 (44%)	16 (39%)
Services	12 (31%)	14 (34%)
Vacant	0 (0%)	1 (2%)
Miscellaneous	0 (0%)	1 (2%)
Total	39 (100%)	41 (100%)

Source: White Young Green (2001), DPDS (2007)
Figures may not add due to rounding
'Miscellaneous' category comprises post offices, employment agencies and information centres

4.65 There are 41 retail and service units in Barnards Green District Centre and the composition of the centre has changed little in the last 6 years. Somerfield is the largest convenience store in the centre, and this store is complemented by a One Stop convenience store, two off licences, two bakers, a delicatessen, a fishmonger, and a greengrocer. The comparison goods sector comprises 16 shops selling items including home ware, pet accessories, jewellery, glasses and contact lenses, toys, flowers, gifts, aquatic goods, chemist goods, second hand (charity) items, and a video rental shop.

4.66 The role of the service sector has increased in the centre since 2001. Services include hairdressers, dry cleaners, a travel agent, take away food outlets, and two banks. The centre also has a post office, solicitors, a dentist, legal and financial advisors, and a computer services business. There was just one vacant unit at the time of the survey.

4.67 Local residents gave the following views on Barnards Green District Centre through the household telephone survey.

4.0 Existing Shopping Facilities

Figure 4.12: Visitor Perceptions of the Barnards Green District Centre

Factor	Score
Range and choice of non-food shops	20
Choice and quality of supermarkets	-32
Choice and quality of service facilities	41
Range and choice of leisure / entertainment facilities	-137
Accessibility by public transport	40
Accessibility by car	59
Adequacy of parking arrangements	-33
Quality of the environment	84
Ease of pedestrian movement around the centre	84
The level of personal security and safety	90

Notes: Respondents were given the option of rating centres as 'very good', 'good', 'average', 'poor', or 'very poor'. For the purposes of analysis, these responses were given a score of 200, 100, 0, -100, and -200 respectively and an average score was then calculated.

4.68 Highly rated aspects of the centre, according to residents, are environmental quality, ease of pedestrian movement, and personal security. Residents were less than satisfied with the choice and quality of supermarkets and adequacy of parking arrangements (parking is mainly on-street, although there is a surface level car park on Geraldine Road). Residents clearly did not rate the choice of leisure and entertainment facilities highly, but local centres do not generally meet such needs and the residents would look towards Great Malvern and Worcester for their leisure activities.

4.69 Overall, Barnards Green District Centre is a reasonably vital and viable centre generally serving the basic day-to-day needs of small resident catchment area in the eastern part of Malvern.

Upton upon Severn Town Centre

4.70 Historically, Upton was formerly a port and the only crossing on the River Severn for some distance. Its relationship with the river is still strong and the town has a popular marina containing pleasure craft. The Primary and Secondary Shopping Frontages, as defined in the Local Plan, are situated on the High Street, The Cross, and Old Street.

4.71 The retail composition of the centre is shown in Figure 4.13 overleaf.

4.0 Existing Shopping Facilities

Figure 4.13: Retail Composition of Upton upon Severn Town Centre

	No. of units 1997	No. of units 2002	No. of units 2007
Convenience	12 (18%)	11 (17%)	10 (15%)
Comparison	31 (48%)	31 (47%)	30 (45%)
Services	20 (31%)	21 (32%)	23 (35%)
Vacant	2 (3%)	3 (4%)	1 (2%)
Miscellaneous	n/a	n/a	2 (3%)
Total	65 (100%)	66 (100%)	66 (100%)

Source: Malvern Hills District Council (1997 & 2002), DPDS (2007)
Figures may not add due to rounding
'Miscellaneous' category comprises post offices, employment agencies and information centres

4.72 Upton upon Severn's retail composition has remained reasonably stable over the period 1997-2007. There are ten convenience stores, the largest of which is the Co-op supermarket on Old Street, which has a small car park at the rear of the store. Other convenience stores are a Spar store, a greengrocer, a newsagent, butcher, health food shop, bakers, delicatessen, confectioners and an off licence. 58% of local residents use the town centre for food shopping at least once a week but stores in Upton retain just 13% of expenditure generated in the local area (Zone 14 of the household survey). 34% is spent in stores in Tewkesbury, 17% in Malvern, and 15% in Worcester.

4.73 The comparison goods offer is geared towards local residents (e.g. ironmongers, hardware, optician, motor parts) and tourists (there are five gift shops). Whilst there is a reasonable range of stores selling comparison goods for a town of Upton's size, the majority of locally generated non-food expenditure is spent in Worcester, Cheltenham or Tewkesbury. 39% of local residents visit the town centre for non-food shopping at least once a week. There are 23 service units comprising hairdressers, numerous cafes, restaurants and takeaway food outlets, a dry cleaner, estate agents, and two of the national banks.

4.74 There is just one vacant street level property and this is located in a peripheral location on Court Street.

4.0 Existing Shopping Facilities

Figure 4.14: Visitor Perceptions of Upton upon Severn Town Centre

Factor	Score
Range and choice of non-food shops	57
Choice and quality of supermarkets	34
Choice and quality of service facilities	65
Range and choice of leisure / entertainment facilities	7
Accessibility by public transport	-32
Accessibility by car	84
Adequacy of parking arrangements	16
Quality of the environment	104
Ease of pedestrian movement around the centre	71
The level of personal security and safety	69

Notes: Respondents were given the option of rating centres as 'very good', 'good', 'average', 'poor', or 'very poor'. For the purposes of analysis, these responses were given a score of 200, 100, 0, -100, and -200 respectively and an average score was then calculated.

4.75 Figure 4.14 summarises the views of local residents in the household telephone survey. Generally, the centre is perceived positively, particularly in respect of environmental quality. Residents have neutral feelings regarding leisure and entertainment facilities. Accessibility by public transport is perceived negatively, most likely because of the lack of, or infrequent, services from the rural hinterland.

Figure 4.15: Main Dislikes of Upton Town Centre

"Traffic problems"	9.3%
"Lack of personal safety / rowdiness"	6.7%
"Lack of / cost of parking"	5.3%
"Too busy"	4.0%

4.76 Figure 4.15 above summarises residents' main dislikes of Upton upon Severn town centre. Traffic problems were the most frequently quoted, followed by rowdiness, most likely referring to disturbance from the bars and public houses in and around the centre.

4.77 Also recorded as part of the survey, were respondents' views on potential measures to encourage them to visit town centres more often. Figure 4.16 below provides a summary of the main responses:

4.0 Existing Shopping Facilities

Figure 4.16: Measures to Encourage Visits to Upton Town Centre

"More parking"	8.0%
"Less expensive parking"	6.7%
"Improve / Cheaper Public Transport"	4.0%
"Broader range of shops"	4.0%

4.78 The results suggest that providing more parking and lowering the cost of parking would encourage more residents to use the town centre. The main car parks (Old Street and Hanley Road) are not particularly conveniently located for the shops and services.

4.79 In summary, Upton upon Severn town centre displays reasonably high levels of vitality and viability having regard to the relevant indicators. It is an attractive centre, popular with tourists, with a range of shops predominantly serving local day-to-day needs. Additional areas of public open space would improve the shopping environment.

Tenbury Wells Town Centre

4.80 Tenbury lies in the northern part of the District and borders Shropshire to the north and Herefordshire to the south and west. It is relatively remote from major shopping centres when compared to Malvern and Upton upon Severn. The 'Wells' part of the name Tenbury Wells was added to promote the mineral water wells that were discovered and used from the mid 19th century onwards.

4.81 The town centre of Tenbury is situated on the southern side of the River Teme and is built on its floodplain. The majority of the shops and services in the town centre are found on Teme Street, Market Street, Market Square and Cross Street.

Figure 4.17: Retail Composition of Tenbury Wells Town Centre

	No. of units 1999	No. of units 2003	No. of units 2007
Convenience	13 (17%)	8 (10%)	11 (14%)
Comparison	38 (51%)	35 (45%)	34 (43%)
Services	22 (29%)	25 (32%)	27 (34%)
Vacant	2 (3%)	10 (12%)	5 (6%)
Miscellaneous	n/a	n/a	2 (3%)
Total	75 (100%)	78 (100%)	79 (100%)

Source: Malvern Hills District Council (1999 & 2003), DPDS (2007)
Figures may not add due to rounding
'Miscellaneous' category comprises post offices, employment agencies and information centres

4.0 Existing Shopping Facilities

4.82 Figure 4.17 shows the retail composition of Tenbury Wells town centre, and changes in composition since 1999. There are 11 shops selling convenience goods. Bowkett supermarket on Market Square is the largest convenience store, complemented in the town centre by a Spar shop, a delicatessen, butchers, two greengrocers, a health food store, bakers, a fishmonger, a newsagent, and a confectioner. The historical data shows that there are 3 more convenience stores in the town centre than there were in 2003. 49% of convenience goods expenditure generated locally (Zone 4) is spent in stores in Tenbury Wells town centre. Other towns attracting convenience goods expenditure from the area are Ludlow (15%), Leominster (12%) and Kidderminster (11%). 84% of local residents use Tenbury Wells town centre at least once a week for food shopping.

4.83 There are 34 shops selling comparison goods and they offer a relatively broad range of items including:

Clothes and shoes	Electrical goods
Carpets	Chemist goods
Home ware	Party goods
Cycles and accessories	Cards and stationery
Fabrics	Books
Plants and flowers	Jewellery
Hardware	Art
Charity and second hand goods	Gifts
Plants and flowers	Photo processing
Haberdashery	Video rental
Pet shop	Bridal wear
Glasses and contact lenses	

4.84 Whilst there is considerable non-food expenditure 'leakage' from the local area (Zone 4) to destinations such as Worcester and Kidderminster, Tenbury Wells retains the following proportions of expenditure for various types of goods:

Clothing, footwear and fashion	15%
DIY goods	30%
Furniture and floor coverings	28%
Large electrical goods	50%
Small electrical goods	53%
Other non-food goods	21%

4.0 Existing Shopping Facilities

4.85 These relatively high levels of expenditure retention reflect the broad range of provision within the town centre and the distance to larger centres. 58% of local residents use the town centre at least once a week for non-food shopping.

4.86 Figures 4.18, 4.19 and 4.20 below summarise household survey respondents' views on the town centre.

Figure 4.18: Visitor Perceptions of the Tenbury Wells Town Centre

Factor	Score
Range and choice of non-food shops	42
Choice and quality of supermarkets	45
Choice and quality of service facilities	65
Range and choice of leisure / entertainment facilities	9
Accessibility by public transport	-34
Accessibility by car	62
Adequacy of parking arrangements	7
Quality of the environment	109
Ease of pedestrian movement around the centre	91
The level of personal security and safety	100

Notes: Respondents were given the option of rating centres as 'very good', 'good', 'average', 'poor', or 'very poor'. For the purposes of analysis, these responses were given a score of 200, 100, 0, -100, and -200 respectively and an average score was then calculated.

Figure 4.19: Main Dislikes of Tenbury Wells Town Centre

"Unattractive environment"	5.3%
"Too busy"	4.0%
"Lack of / cost of parking"	2.7%

Figure 4.20: Measures to Encourage Visits to Tenbury Wells Town Centre

"Broader range of shops"	15.9%
"More cafes / restaurants"	4.0%
"Better or more niche / specialist shops"	4.0%

4.87 Tenbury Wells town centre is held in high regard in respect of its environmental quality, the level of personal safety, and the ease of pedestrian movement around the centre. The range and choice of supermarkets, non-food stores, and services is also viewed positively, although

4.0 Existing Shopping Facilities

a broader range of shops would, the survey suggests, attract higher visitation rates to the town centre. The only negative aspect is the centre's accessibility by public transport (although there are regular bus services to Worcester, Ludlow and Bewdley).

4.88 Overall, Tenbury Wells is an attractive and popular centre with a reasonably broad range of shops serving local residents. The centre displays high levels of vitality and viability having regard to the various indicators. Like Upton-upon-Severn, the shopping environment would benefit from additional areas of public open space in the primary shopping area. The opportunity for retail and other town centre development at an appropriate scale for the centre exists on the Cattlemarket Site.

Out-of-Centre Retail Provision in Malvern Hills

4.89 The majority of out-of-centre retail provision in Malvern Hills District is located at the Townsend Way Retail Park to the north-east of Malvern. The current tenant mix is as follows:

Townsend Way Retail Park

Morrisons	Argos Extra
Next	Burtons/Dorothy Perkins/Evans
Brantano	Matalan
Instore	Boots
Halfords	McDonalds
New Look	Marks & Spencer (under construction)

4.90 It is not possible to make accurate assessments of the impact the Retail Park has had on existing town and district centres in Malvern. However, it is likely that the development, or more pertinently the gradual change in its character from a bulky goods shopping destination to a clothing and fashion shopping destination, has diverted at least some of the potential interest and investment away from Great Malvern town centre.

4.91 Located close to, but not within, Malvern Link District Centre are the Focus DIY store and the Lidl supermarket, and the Countrywide store is on Worcester Road, near to Townsend Way Retail Park.

5.0 The Need for Additional Retail Floorspace

Introduction

5.1 This section assesses the need for additional floorspace in the District having regard to the following:

- The quantitative analysis contained at Appendix D, based on the results of the household telephone survey; and
- The qualitative assessment of retail provision in the District, described in the previous section.

5.2 This approach is in accordance with guidance in PPS6 on assessing the need for retail development.

Key Assumptions

5.3 The capacity exercise for convenience and comparison goods is based on the current market shares of town and district centres in Malvern Hills. In other words, it is assumed that the current market share of stores in Malvern's three centres, Tenbury Wells and Upton upon Severn is maintained and held as a constant. This approach makes no allowances for an increase in market share arising from improvements in the retail offer thus increasing its attractiveness. At the same time, no allowance is made for a reduction in market share, possibly arising from improvements in provision in competing centres which may divert existing trade away from Malvern's centres.

5.4 This 'neutral' assessment assumes that the five Malvern centres will remain in their current position in the retail hierarchy, and will continue to improve their retail offer relative to other centres in the hierarchy, and in response to changes in retail trends and customer demands.

5.5 The capacity exercises take into account the following:

- Estimated base year and forecast expenditure for convenience and comparison expenditure (goods based)
- Forecast increases in the proportion of expenditure dedicated to special forms of trading (including internet sales) based on figures from Experian taking into account past trends and economic forecasts;
- Forecast increases in the sales efficiencies of existing floorspace based on figures from Experian;

5.0 The Need for Additional Retail Floorspace

- Estimated levels of overtrading or undertrading in large convenience stores in Malvern (see Table 16); and
- Any retail floorspace commitments in the District which will, at least in part, absorb surplus expenditure capacity.

5.6 Where surplus expenditure is identified (i.e. the difference between the total available expenditure and the expenditure absorbed by existing and committed floorspace), it is converted to a floorspace figure using an appropriate sales density.

Convenience Goods

5.7 Tables 18, 19 and 20 of Appendix D provide projections of convenience goods expenditure and the estimated turnover of stores in the three towns over the period to 2026. The additional net sales floorspace requirements are shown in the table below.

	2007	2012	2017	2026
Malvern	270	278	445	722
Tenbury Wells	0	1	18	46
Upton upon Severn	0	0	8	20

Figures are approximate and indicate net sales floorspace

5.8 As previously mentioned in Section 3 of this study, per capita convenience good expenditure growth is much lower than the equivalent comparison goods figure. For the period to 2026, an estimated growth rate of 0.7% per annum has been used.

5.9 Other assumptions used in Tables 18, 19 and 20 are as follows:

- The current market share is held as a constant;
- Floorspace efficiencies of existing stores will increase by 0.75% per annum (as recommended by Experian);
- Internet and other non-store sales will increase to 4% from 2012 onwards (also based on information from Experian).

5.10 On the above basis, Table 18, shows that there will be very modest levels of expenditure capacity to support additional floorspace in Malvern over the study period, and Tables 19 and 20 indicate that there will be very minimal capacity in Tenbury Wells and Upton upon Severn. The figures for each town do not warrant making specific allocations for a new food store in any town based on a quantitative need.

5.0 The Need for Additional Retail Floorspace

5.11 Turning to qualitative factors, Malvern has a range and choice of supermarkets. Tenbury and Upton have smaller supermarkets and a range of complementary convenience stores. Whilst the range and choice of convenience goods provision in these two towns is not comparable to Malvern, and there are significant levels of expenditure leakage to higher order centres, this does not warrant specific food store allocations in either town for two main reasons. Firstly, the populations of Upton and Tenbury and their respective catchment areas are relatively low and a large food superstore is unlikely to be commercially viable, but would be likely to have a significant impact on the existing centres. The nature of that impact would depend on whether the stores were in or outside the centre. Secondly, the household survey suggests that residents are generally satisfied with the range of supermarkets in the town centres.

5.12 On the basis of the above, it is considered that there is no overriding need for a new food store in the District having regard to both quantitative and qualitative factors. However, in line with the strategy for maintaining the vitality and viability of existing centres, where opportunities exist within centres, retailers should be encouraged to improve convenience goods facilities, including new development.

Comparison Goods

5.13 Tables 22, 23 and 24 set out the assessment of expenditure capacity in respect of comparison goods for Malvern Hills District. The assessment assumes an increase of 3.8% per annum in per capita expenditure, as recommended by Experian. The following assumptions are also used:

- The current market share is held as a constant;
- Floorspace efficiencies of existing stores will increase by 2.25% per annum (the mid point of the range recommended by Experian);
- Special Forms of Trading in respect of non-bulky goods will increase to 12% by 2012, based on estimates of the increase in internet shopping (from Experian) and DPDS experience in this Study and elsewhere.
- Special Forms of Trading in respect of bulky goods will increase to 5% by 2012 (see Section 3)

5.14 For the purposes of analysis, expenditure capacity in respect of comparison goods has been split into bulky and non-bulky categories. Assumed sales densities for new floorspace in Malvern Hills reflect the different sales efficiencies of operators within these two sub-categories. However, PPS6 advocates assessing need within the broad categories of convenience and

5.0 The Need for Additional Retail Floorspace

comparison goods. Therefore, in identifying overall floorspace capacity, the figures referred to below combine the quantitative assessments of need for bulky and non-bulky goods floorspace.

5.15 On this basis, Tables 22, 23 and 24 set out the capacity calculations in respect of Malvern, Tenbury Wells and Upton upon Severn respectively. These are summarised in terms of net sales floorspace in sq m in the table below:

	2012	2017	2026
Malvern	2250	4670	11340
Tenbury Wells	190	390	950
Upton upon Severn	110	220	540

Figures are approximate and indicate net sales floorspace

Qualitative Factors

5.16 The vitality and viability of Great Malvern, Upton upon Severn and Tenbury Wells town centres would benefit from additional comparison goods floorspace which would attract new retailers and help retain non-food expenditure.

5.17 Respondents to the household survey indicated that generally they were satisfied with the range and choice of non-food stores in Upton upon Severn and Tenbury Wells. However, in Great Malvern, residents consider the range and choice of non-food stores as less than satisfactory and an increased range would encourage people to visit more often.

5.18 The Focus database suggests that in Great Malvern there is only modest interest from operators typically trading from 'High Street' locations. Much of this interest is from café, restaurant or bar operators.

5.19 Overall, there would be qualitative benefits in improving the non-food retail offer in all three town centres.

Summary

5.20 There is no overriding need for a new food store in the District over the period to 2026 having regard to both quantitative and qualitative factors, Improvements to food store provision within centres should be encouraged in line with a strategy to enhance the vitality and viability of those centres.

5.0 The Need for Additional Retail Floorspace

5.21 There is a need for additional comparison goods floorspace in the District, particularly in Malvern. The forecasts of floorspace requirements in Upton upon Severn and Tenbury Wells do not warrant specific allocations but new retail development as part of mixed-use sites in those centres should be encouraged.

5.22 The broad estimate of requirements for non-food floorspace in Malvern over the plan period is as follows:

2012	2,250sq.m net sales
2017	4,670sq.m net sales
2026	11,340sq.m net sales

5.23 These figures should not be used with precision. They suggest that, in accordance with guidance in PPS6, the local planning authority should identify suitable sites to accommodate additional retail floorspace in Malvern. Possible sites to meet this requirement are discussed in Section 7.

5.24 Whilst this Study addresses retail 'needs' over the period to 2026, it is important to place a strong caveat on long term forecasts of floorspace requirements. As with all forecasts, their reliability diminishes over time. As previously mentioned, retailing is a dynamic industry. Experian and MapInfo, recognised as experts within the industry, only provide forecasts of expenditure growth in the next decade. PPS6 also urges caution over long-term forecasts and recommends frequent updates of retail needs assessments based on the most up-to-date information.

5.25 It is difficult to imagine how most large town and city centres in the UK can accommodate the floorspace requirements which are being forecast for 15-20 years ahead based on current assumptions of expenditure growth, non-store sales, and sales efficiencies.

5.26 Even if retail interest were strong and significant levels of investment were forthcoming, a major expansion of large centres in the UK every 5 to 10 years to meet the forecast floorspace requirements is likely to have serious implications. For example, new developments may shift the balance of centres, resulting in lower levels of vitality in the older parts of the centre. Instead of attracting new retailers, existing retailers may simply move to newer premises.

5.27 Therefore, it is recommended that in identifying sites or opportunities for new retail development in Malvern, caution should be taken over the 2026 forecast and the 2017 forecast should be seen as a broad guide to the likely requirement.

6.0 Leisure Facilities

Introduction

6.1 This section of the study examines commercial leisure facilities in the three main towns in Malvern Hills District. Sub-sectors such as health and fitness, cinemas and bingo halls are addressed in turn below, trends in the industry. Facilities available to residents within the District are assessed and the section concludes by assessing the potential for additional facilities.

The Arts

6.2 According to the Arts Council's Review 2006, arts and culture in the UK have never been in a better situation. In the last 60 years much focus has been given to developing and improving the practice of arts, investing in and supporting artists and organisations. However, more recently the focus has turned to audiences, widening the appeal and increasing the levels of participation in arts and culture.

6.3 Malvern Theatres are located on Grange Road in the southern part of Great Malvern town centre. The Malvern Theatres are recognised as being one of the leading country's regional venues comprising two 800-seat theatres; one a traditional Victorian proscenium arch theatre; the other a modern versatile theatre and home to a 400-seat cinema. The centre includes a large foyer, a restaurant, two bars, meeting rooms, theatrical space and hospitality suites, which are available for receptions, dinners, lectures or conferences. The centre is home to a wide variety of events including comedy, ballet, cinema, bands, pantomime and education workshops and events.

6.4 There is no theatre in Tenbury Wells. However, the Regal has a facility for live performances. The nearest formal theatres are:

- Malvern Theatres, Grange Road, Malvern
- Norbury Theatre, Friar Street, Droitwich Spa
- Rose Theatre, Chester Road North, Kidderminster

6.5 Upton-upon-Severn does not have a formal theatre but the Memorial Hall occasionally stages plays by an amateur theatre group. The nearest formal theatres are The Swan Theatre and Huntingdon Hall in Worcester, the Malvern Theatres and the Rose Theatre in Tewkesbury.

6.0 Leisure Facilities

6.6 The household survey suggests that a comparatively high percentage (66%) of Malvern residents have used the Malvern Theatres in the last 12 months, whilst 25% of Upton residents have attended a concert or play there.

6.7 Turning to cinemas, during the 1990's the domestic cinema industry underwent considerable expansion. Significant growth in cinema audiences (reacting to more popular output from Hollywood film studios) led to the development of large multiplex cinemas, often as part of multi-activity leisure developments in out-of-centre locations, but sometimes as anchors for mixed-use development in or on the edge of town centres.

6.8 Mintel estimate that growth in expenditure in cinemas in the UK increased by 12 % over the period 1997-2002 (from £674m to £758m) but the industry's future is difficult to forecast due to a number of factors including:

- The industry relies to a great extent on the quality and popularity of movies being produced;
- Improvements in the quality, cost, availability, and accessibility of home entertainment including audio/visual equipment (plasma screens, LCD, High Definition, Nicam Stereo etc), film downloads, pay-per-view channels, and digital television reduces the appeal of cinemas;
- The industry itself is also entering a period of change with the sale of Warner Village, Odeon and UGC.

6.9 The West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy's " Regional Centres Study" (Technical Paper 3) suggests that there are parts of the region which have been 'over screened' in the past, threatening the viability of smaller single or double-screened cinemas. Even the 9-screen UGC cinema in the Arcadian Centre, Birmingham and UCI's 8-screen cinema in Solihull closed.

6.10 As previously mentioned Malvern Theatres has a 400-seat cinema. The Films Only cinema on Teme Street in Tenbury Wells is a part time cinema run by a consortium. It has one screen offering viewings to around 250 people. There are no cinemas in Upton-upon-Severn, with the nearest cinemas being the Odeon and The Vue cinemas in Worcester and Malvern Theatres. Films are also shown at the Rose Theatre in Tewkesbury.

6.11 The household survey shows that 46% of Malvern residents have used the cinema in Malvern in the last 12 months and 40% of Tenbury residents have used the cinema there. These are comparatively high attendance rates.

6.0 Leisure Facilities

Serviced Accommodation

6.12 Travelling for business and holidays is said to reflect macroeconomic conditions, and so the last few years since the 11th September attacks in 2001 have seen a gradual increase in visitor numbers and travellers across the UK, and particularly in London.

6.13 Budget operators including Travelodge, Premier Lodge, and Premier Travel Inn have been key drivers in hotel growth in recent years. At the other end of the market, major hotel chains are also beginning to offer 'apartment hotels' in major towns and cities which offer luxury suites to extended-stay guests.

6.14 Malvern Hills District has a range of hotels and guest houses, including large country hotels with conference facilities (e.g. the Mount Pleasant Hotel, centre of Malvern), a selection of pubs with bed & breakfast accommodation, and numerous small guest houses, many of which are centrally located in Malvern, Tenbury Wells and Upton-upon-Severn.

Sports, Health & Fitness

6.15 The health and fitness sector grew rapidly in the 1990's and benefited from a wider trend towards attaining a healthier lifestyle. According to Mintel, by 2001, there were 2,631 private health and fitness clubs in the UK and expenditure exceeded £1.6bn, an increase in 95% in 5 years. However, more recently there has been a period of consolidation in the industry although, in 2005, there were still over 2,000 private clubs with over 6 million UK members (Source: The Leisure Database Company).

6.16 Many health and fitness clubs offer a broad range of facilities and activities under one roof. As the market appears to be reaching saturation point, brand identity will be of great importance in terms of commercial survival. Locations close to major employment uses will also be of value to health and fitness operator looking to generate business.

6.17 Malvern Hills District Council has commissioned a thorough audit of sports and leisure facilities in the District (Open Spaces, Sports and Recreation Study Assessment Report Dec 2007). We will only comment of facilities in the context of their contribution to town centre vitality and viability. The Malvern Splash leisure complex is a public sector facility located on Priory Road. The complex has a 25m leisure pool with a wave machine, flume and beach area, fitness and health suite run by Banana Fitness with a large gymnasium, dance studio and consultation room. The complex also has a sauna / steam room and a café and crèche.

6.0 Leisure Facilities

6.18 In Malvern there are other leisure facilities including Out to Grass Mountain Board Centre on Bromyard Road

6.19 In terms of other public sports facilities, Malvern has Barnards Green Cricket Club on North End Lane, Malvern Rugby Football Club on Spring Lane, the Bowling Club on Victoria Park Road and Malvern Football Club on Langland Avenue. The Worcestershire Golf Club is located to the north of Malvern Wells.

6.20 In Tenbury, there is the Tenbury and District Swimming Pool (25m) with a fitness suite. The nearest other leisure centres are some distance away, including the following:

- Wyre Forest Glades Leisure Centre, Kidderminster
- Malvern Splash

6.21 Other fitness clubs and facilities include Sutton Park Golf Course on Mill Lane and Tenbury Sports Club on Worcester Road. The town lacks the broad range of facilities found in Kidderminster or even in Stourport-on-Severn.

6.22 There is no leisure centre in Upton-upon-Severn and no health or fitness clubs. Apart from facilities in Malvern, the closest leisure centres are found in the following locations:

- Sport Martley Leisure Centre, Worcester
- St Johns Sports Centre, Worcester
- Nunnery Wood Sports Complex, Worcester
- Perdiswell Leisure Centre, Worcester

6.23 The closest swimming pool can be found at Worcester Swimming Pool and Fitness Centre on Sansome Walk or Worcester Citizens Swimming Pool on Weir Lane. The nearest golf course and cricket club can be found in Worcester, whilst other sports clubs such as football and rugby can be found in Malvern, Pershore and Worcester.

Ten Pin Bowling

6.24 Two technological advancements have boosted the success of tenpin bowling in the UK. The first was the introduction of automates 'pinspotters' in the 1960's which led to the development of around 160 bowling centres in the UK. However, around two-thirds of these had closed within 5 years, according to research by Sport England. The second change in technology

6.0 Leisure Facilities

was the introduction of electronic automated scoring in the 1980's, making the game much simpler and more attractive to the public. Operators including Hollywood Bowl and Bowlplex were the major driving force behind bowling centre development.

6.25 Research by Mintel suggests that the continued popularity of tenpin bowling is attributed to its broad appeal, attracting both younger consumers along with the older age grouped within the family. The increase in levels of personal disposable income and growth in the number of consumers in the younger and family age groups have helped the market grow. Operators have benefits from positioning their venues as multi-leisure entertainment sites focused around a tenpin bowling offer.

6.26 Despite participation falling slightly since the mid 1990's, expenditure grows largely as a result of propensity of existing customers to spend more on ancillary services such as food, drink, video games and slot machines. Operators have also been proactive, offering discounts to students, children, families and large groups.

6.27 There is one ten pin bowling alley within the Malvern District: Strikes tenpin bowling on Spring Lane North in Malvern. There are no tenpin bowling alleys in Tenbury Wells or Upton-upon-Severn. The closest tenpin alleys other than those in Malvern are in Worcester.

Bingo

6.28 Trends in bingo since 1980 have seen a decrease in the number of licensed premises from 1,700 to about 970 in 1994 and around 700 in 2004. However, there has been a substantial increase in turnover.

6.29 Legislative changes in 2002 allowed higher prizes in the larger clubs which has led to a marked trend towards consolidation, with the development of new style clubs in large units on out of centre retail or leisure parks, mirroring the trend associated with the growth of multiplex cinemas. The new purpose built clubs have a greater seating capacity, many with between 1,000 and 2,000 seats, and some over 3,000. Some bingo halls have simply converted retail warehouse units to suit their needs for large space with the benefit of plentiful adjacent parking (particularly in the evening out of normal shopping hours).

6.30 Operators are promoting a more up-market image with bar and catering facilities and sometimes stage acts as past of the entertainment package. In terms of demographics, there have been increases in the number of male visitors and younger people since the 1990's. Over 3 million people in Britain now pay bingo with over 90 million admissions per year (source: DTZ).

6.0 Leisure Facilities

6.31 Whilst the industry had been experiencing something of a renaissance in the late 1990s and early 2000s, recent trends have been adverse with the closure of smaller, independent clubs. The tax regime is regarded by the industry as the main cause but the smoking ban and the growth of on-line bingo are likely to increase any difficulties.

6.32 We understand that there are no dedicated bingo halls within Malvern District. The closest bingo halls are in Worcester and Redditch.

Casinos

6.33 There has been much debate regarding casinos in recent years. Following the Gambling Act 2005, an independent Casino Advisory Panel on behalf of the Government selected locations for one 'regional casino' (in East Manchester), eight larger casinos (minimum customer area 1,500sq.m), and eight smaller casinos (min. 750sq.m) across the UK. The nearest local authority area to Malvern Hills District which has been permitted a large casino is Solihull.

Summary

6.34 PPS 6 (paragraph 2.23) advises Council's to prepare policies to help manage the evening and night time economy. Policies should encourage a range of uses which appeal to a wide range of age and social groups and should ensure *"that provision is made where appropriate for a range of leisure, cultural and tourism activities such as cinemas, theatres, restaurants, public houses, bars, night clubs and cafes".*

6.35 It is considered that the District as a whole is strong on arts and 'traditional' cultural facilities and also has a reasonable range of more contemporary commercial leisure facilities relative to the size of towns within it. Section 4 of this Study has also identified a broad range of bars and restaurants in Malvern, but the range and choice of leisure and entertainment facilities in Tenbury and Upton is not rated highly by residents.

6.36 The District has a choice of serviced accommodation for visitors in keeping with its role as a tourist destination.

6.37 In summary, there are some deficiencies in commercial leisure provision across the District and it is recommended that new uses should be encouraged, appropriate in scale to the roles of Malvern, Upton upon Severn and Tenbury Wells, as part of mixed-use development sites within, or close to, the town centres.

7.0 Recommended Strategy

Introduction

7.1 This section provides a recommended retail and leisure strategy for Malvern Hills District. Where appropriate, it includes an assessment of potential areas which could accommodate additional retail and leisure development. Previous sections of this report have identified a need for additional comparison goods retail floorspace in Malvern over the period to 2026. In Tenbury Wells and Upton upon Severn, there is a need for very modest levels of additional retail development.

7.2 Potential areas to accommodate additional development have been identified and assessed following discussions with officers at Malvern Hills District Council, on the basis of our own surveys, and having regard to existing retail or mixed use allocations in the adopted Local Plan. The areas of opportunity have been assessed having regard to their availability, suitability and viability for retail and other town centre uses in accordance with the sequential approach as set out in PPS6.

Areas for New Development

7.3 In the context of a forecast rise in population and expenditure growth within the catchment area, there is a need for additional comparison goods floorspace in the Malvern over the period to 2026. Forecasts suggest that over 5,000sq.m.net will be required over the next 10 years. This level of additional provision will help maintain Malvern's current market share of expenditure in the sub-region in the face of strong and increasing competition from other towns and cities including Worcester, Hereford and Cheltenham. Improvements in the range and choice of comparison goods provision are likely to be required to bolster the vitality and viability of the town centre and encourage local residents to visit more often.

7.4 As the primary centre within the Malvern retail hierarchy, Great Malvern town centre should be the focus for new retail development to meet the needs of residents in Malvern and its wider catchment area. New retail development within Barnards Green and Malvern Link District Centres should be encouraged through planning policies but any new development should be in keeping with the role of those centres, serving the needs of small, local catchment areas.

7.5 The need for additional comparison goods floorspace should ideally be met through one or two large sites rather than a large number of small sites which could only accommodate one or two shops. Concentrating new retail development in one or two areas will help to achieve the 'critical mass' of retail floorspace necessary to attract investment. New retail development

7.0 Recommended Strategy

should either be within or well-related to the existing Primary Shopping Area of Great Malvern to ensure that it functions as part of the existing centre rather than a free-standing destination with no benefit to the town centre.

7.6 In this context, the current allocated site at Edith Walk should remain a priority in terms of attracting a redevelopment which provides further retail floorspace and achieves environmental improvements in this area. *Prima facie*, this is a difficult site to develop as the site is in multiple ownership, there is constrained vehicular and pedestrian access, and the site is on a steep gradient. Therefore, it is recommended that the local planning authority take a strong lead in bringing this site forward for development. Steps could include preparing a development and design brief, establishing an agreement with landowners in principle, and considering the use of compulsory purchase powers.

7.7 It is very unlikely that the site at Edith Walk could physically accommodate the amount of retail floorspace required over the next ten years (c. 4,670 sq. m. net sales).

7.8 Therefore, in addition to the existing allocation, it is recommended that the local planning authority examines the possibility of redeveloping the Postal Sorting Office at the top (western) end of Church Street. Providing an alternative site can be found for the existing uses (and the Post Office is retained as part of the redevelopment) then this site represents an excellent opportunity to provide additional retail floorspace and improvements to the public realm in the busiest part of the town centre.

7.9 As previously mentioned, there is a need for only very modest levels of retail development in Tenbury Wells and Upton upon Severn. The forecasts of floorspace requirements in these towns do not warrant specific allocations but new retail development as part of mixed-use sites in those centres should be encouraged.

Enhancing the Role of Great Malvern Town Centre as a Shopping Destination

7.10 As discussed in previous sections, Great Malvern is a popular tourist destination and is a strong cultural centre. However, its role as a shopping centre serving the town's residents appears to be diminishing in the face of competition from other centres. It may be beneficial to explore ways in which the town centre's successful cultural and tourism sectors could be used to promote the retail sector. Already, cafes and restaurants are opening in the town centre, but through using appropriate marketing techniques, visitors (and retailers) may be encouraged to investigate the shopping offer.

7.0 Recommended Strategy

General Strategy for Town Centres

Car Parking

7.11 According to the household telephone survey, some of the most negatively perceived aspects of all three town centres are the availability and cost of car parking. This is a common complaint in most surveys of this nature but it is important that Great Malvern, Tenbury Wells and Upton upon Severn remain competitive relative to other town centres by providing sufficient parking and ensuring that the cost of parking does not become comparatively expensive. Parking regimes in competing centres should be monitored and due consideration should be given to existing and future parking arrangements.

Markets

7.12 Street markets predominantly selling discount goods have generally struggled in recent years across the UK as specialist discount stores in the 'High Street' have grown. Stores including Primark, QS, Peacocks, and Bon Marche offer similar goods at discount prices, and customers are turning to these stores because their fixed status and nationwide coverage gives them the edge over market traders in terms of customers' perceptions of quality and reliability.

7.13 The household telephone survey asked residents if they had visited their local market in the past 2 months. Upton upon Severn does not have a market but residents there were asked about Tewkesbury Market instead. The results are shown below:

Malvern Friday Market	5%	(Zone 11 residents)
Tenbury Round Market	49%	(Zone 4 residents)
Tewkesbury Market	18%	(Zone 14 residents)

7.14 The results indicate that Tenbury Round Market is relatively popular with local residents, and that Malvern's Friday Market appears to struggle to attract local residents. The proportion of Upton upon Severn residents who travel to Tewkesbury Market would appear to suggest that there may be scope for opening a market in the Upton upon Severn town centre.

Town Centre Boundary, Primary Shopping Area and Shopping Frontages

7.15 According to PPS6 (see Table 2, Annexe A), the Primary Shopping Area is the defined area *"where retail development is concentrated (generally comprising the primary and those secondary frontages which are contiguous and closely related to the primary shopping*

7.0 Recommended Strategy

frontage). The extent of the Primary Shopping Area should be defined on the proposals map." Primary Shopping Frontages are "*likely to include a high proportion of retail uses"* and *"Secondary Frontages provide greater opportunities for a diversity of uses."*

7.16 The definition of the Primary Shopping Frontage and the Primary Shopping Area is of great importance. Planning policies can be formulated to prevent the dilution of the main retail function of Primary Shopping Frontages. Also, importantly, the Primary Shopping Area constitutes 'the centre' for retail development. A site which lies within the town centre boundary, but outside the Primary Shopping Area, falls outside 'the centre' for the purposes of retail planning policy. Therefore, the extent of the Primary Shopping Area has a significant bearing on deciding where to allocate sites for further retail development, and in the determination of planning applications for retail development.

7.17 Having regard to the definitions contained in PPS6, the designations of Primary and Secondary Shopping Frontages currently defined in the Local Plan have been reviewed.

7.18 In Tenbury Wells, it is recommended that the boundary of the Town Centre and Secondary Shopping Frontage is extended to include the shops and services around Market Square and the shops on the western side of Cross Street (up to No.12). These units contribute significantly towards the vitality and viability of the centre, are relatively contiguous with existing shopping frontages, and should be designated.

7.19 In Upton upon Severn, Nos. 1 and 2 Court Street, currently occupied by a charity shop and a sweet shop (respectively) should be designated as Secondary Shopping Frontage. Given that at the time of survey there was just one vacancy in the town centre (No.11 Court Street), suggesting that demand is high and available premises scarce, these units should be afforded protection under policy.

7.20 The definitions of other centres in Malvern Hills District appear to be appropriate.

Out-of-Centre Retailing

7.21 The areas previously identified in Great Malvern town centre can accommodate the identified need for additional retail development, particularly taking into account the replacement of a DIY store with Marks and Spencer. There is no need to allocate additional sites for retail development outside of centres for either convenience or comparison goods sales and development plan policies should direct all retail development in the first instance towards the

7.0 Recommended Strategy

three town centres, and also to the two district centres in Malvern where appropriate in scale to the role of that centre and the catchment area it serves. Even if the sites identified did not come forward quickly or there is a lack of investment interest in them, we would question the need the release further out-of-centre sites. It appears to us that the adverse impact on Great Malvern town centre is likely to be greater than the consequences arising from a failure to provide additional floorspace.

7.22 The retail park at Malvern Link is sizeable compared with the town centre. In order to maintain the vitality and viability of centres and to encourage investment in the areas of opportunity in Great Malvern town centre, applications to extend, or vary conditions which would change the character of the existing development (for example by lifting restrictions on the type of goods to be sold or by sub-dividing units) in a way that increased the retail park's relative competitiveness should only be approved in exceptional circumstances and where a precedent would not be set.

8.0 Summary and Conclusions

Existing Shopping Facilities in Malvern Hills

8.1 Great Malvern is 800th in the UK shopping centre rankings. In terms of competing large centres, Birmingham, Cheltenham, Bristol, Worcester, Gloucester, Merry Hill, Hereford and Cribbs Causeway are all in the top 100 centres and, all combined, provide a significant draw for residents of Malvern and the surrounding area.

8.2 The town centre has 138 outlets available and over 20,000sq.m. of floorspace. The retail offer is generally geared towards meeting the basic local needs of residents and/or the needs of visitors and tourists. The household survey indicates that residents consider the range and choice of shops in the centre to be poor, compared to other aspects of the centre.

8.3 Great Malvern has a commercial yield of 7.5%, and is on a par with two other centres in the South Worcestershire Sub-Region, Evesham and Droitwich. The number of vacant units is low and declining, and the proportion of vacant units is significantly below the national average for town centres. Retailer demand for a presence in the town is only modest, with the majority of interest from the retail service sector.

8.4 The town centre has a historic and attractive environment, and it attracts visitors for many other reasons besides shopping. The Centre is reasonably accessible by public transport and the car. Pedestrian movement around the compact centre is hampered by the gradients and traffic movement.

8.5 Aside from the range and choice of non-food shops, the survey suggests residents are generally are content with the town centre, its environment and what it has to offer.

8.6 Overall, Great Malvern displays reasonably high levels of vitality and viability having regard to its size and function and the relevant indicators as set out in PPS6.

8.7 Malvern has two district centres predominantly serving local needs. Barnards Green is a compact centre displaying reasonable levels of vitality and viability. Malvern Link, on the other hand, is vulnerable. There are worrying signs of decline in terms of the increasing number of vacancies and the sharply decreasing comparison goods sector.

8.0 Summary and Conclusions

8.8 Tenbury Wells town centre has a reasonably broad range of shops and retains surprisingly high levels of expenditure generated locally, at least partly due to its relative remoteness from major centres. The town centre is held in high regard by local residents in respect of its environmental quality, the level of personal safety, and the ease of pedestrian movement around the centre. The range and choice of supermarkets, non-food stores, and services is also viewed positively, although a broader range of shops would be likely to attract higher visitation rates to the town centre. The only negative aspect is the centre's accessibility by public transport.

8.9 Overall, Tenbury Wells is an attractive and popular centre with a reasonably broad range of shops serving local residents. The centre displays high levels of vitality and viability having regard to its size and function and the PPS6 indicators, but it would be vulnerable to out-of-centre developments.

8.10 Upton upon Severn town centre displays reasonably high levels of vitality and viability having regard to the relevant indicators. It is an attractive centre, popular with tourists, with a range of shops predominantly serving local day-to-day needs. There is a considerable level of expenditure leakage to other towns and cities particularly Tewkesbury, Worcester and Cheltenham.

8.11 The majority of out-of-centre retail provision in Malvern Hills District is located at the Townsend Way Retail Park to the north-east of Malvern. The retail park has over recent years changed in character somewhat as most of the retail units there now sell non-bulky items including clothing and other fashion goods.

The Need for Additional Retail Facilities

8.12 There is no overriding need for a new food store in the District over the period to 2026 having regard to both quantitative and qualitative factors, with the exception of improvements to food store provision within centres, which should be encouraged in line with a strategy to enhance the vitality and viability of those centres.

8.13 There is a need for additional comparison goods floorspace in the District, particularly in Malvern. The forecasts of floorspace requirements in Upton upon Severn and Tenbury Wells do not warrant specific allocations but new retail development as part of mixed-use sites in those centres should be encouraged.

8.0 Summary and Conclusions

8.14 The broad estimate of requirements for non-food retail floorspace in Malvern over the plan period is as follows:

2012	2,250sq.m net sales
2017	4,670sq.m net sales
2026	11,440sq.m net sales.

8.15 However, caution should be exercised over long term forecasts due to the dynamic nature of retailing and the degree of uncertainty associated with economic forecasting.

Leisure Facilities

8.16 It is considered that the District as a whole is strong on arts and 'traditional' cultural facilities but also has a reasonable range of more contemporary commercial leisure facilities relative to the size of towns within it. Section 4 of this Study has also identified a broad range of bars and restaurants in Malvern, but the range and choice of leisure and entertainment facilities in Tenbury and Upton is not rated highly by residents.

8.17 The District has a choice of serviced accommodation for visitors in keeping with its role as a tourist destination.

8.18 In summary, there are some deficiencies in commercial leisure provision across the District and it is recommended that new uses should be encouraged, appropriate in scale to the roles of Malvern, Upton upon Severn and Tenbury Wells, as part of mixed-use development sites within, or close to, the town centres.

Opportunity Sites

8.19 The current allocated site at Edith Walk should remain a priority in terms of attracting a redevelopment which provides further retail floorspace and achieves environmental improvements in this area. It is recommended that the local planning authority take a strong lead in bringing this site forward for development. Steps could include preparing a development and design brief, establishing an agreement with landowners in principle, and considering the use of compulsory purchase powers.

8.0 Summary and Conclusions

8.20 It is very unlikely that the site at Edith Walk could physically accommodate the amount of floorspace required over the next ten years (c. 4670 sq m net sales). Therefore, in addition to the existing allocation, it is recommended that the local planning authority examines the possibility of redeveloping the Postal Sorting Office at the top (western) end of Church Street.

Out-of-Centre Retailing

8.21 There is no need to allocate additional sites for either convenience or comparison goods retail development outside of centres. Policies in the development plan should direct all retail development in the first instance towards the three town centres, and also to the two district centres in Malvern where appropriate in scale to the role of that centre and the catchment area it serves.

8.22 In terms of existing out-of-centre retail floorspace, applications to extend or vary conditions which would change the character of the existing development, for example by lifting restrictions on the type of goods to be sold or by sub-dividing units, should only be approved in exceptional circumstances.