

SWDP 10: Protection and Promotion of Centres and Local Shops

- A. Retail and leisure development that is appropriate in location and scale, having regard to the hierarchy of centres set out in Table 5 below, will be supported.**
- B. Any retail or leisure development proposal of over 1,000 square metres net that is located outside the defined centres listed in Table 5 below must be accompanied by a Retail Impact Assessment.**
- C. Planning permission for retail and leisure development outside the centres listed in Table 5 below will not be granted unless the applicant has demonstrated that:**
 - i. The sequential test set out in paragraph 24 of the Framework, or any subsequent amended test in national planning policy for the consideration of retail and leisure development, has been satisfied.**
 - ii. The scale of development is appropriate to the location.**

- iii. The development would have no significant adverse impact on the vitality and viability of a centre.
- iv. Access by all travel modes and particularly bus, cycle and walking is convenient and safe, taking into account any improvements provided by the development.

D. Within the Primary Shopping Frontages, as shown on the Policies Map, change of use from retail (use class A1) or the extension of existing non-A1 uses into adjoining A1 premises at ground floor level will not be permitted.

E. Within the Secondary Shopping Frontages, as shown on the Policies Map, change of use from retail (use class A1) to non-retail uses in classes A2, A3, A4, A5, D1, D2 will be permitted provided:

- i. The proposed use will not result in a continuous frontage of two or more non-A1 retail units (units are defined as a shop front width of about 6 metres; larger units will be assessed in terms of unit length).
- ii. A minimum of 50% of units in each defined Secondary Shopping Frontage are retained in A1 retail use⁽³¹⁾.
- iii. The proposed use will not result in the proportion of units in the street (or part of the street defined as a secondary shopping frontage) in A3, A4 and A5 use exceeding 30%.
- iv. A shop window will be retained at all times.
- v. The proposal would not preclude the full use of the premises, avoiding vacant floors over ground floor uses and providing a separate entrance for office, leisure or residential use of upper floors, where they are within the reasonable control of the applicant.
- vi. Ground floor residential uses do not form part of the proposal.

F. The following Shopping Centres are shown on the Policies Map:

Table 5 – Town, District, Local and Neighbourhood centres

City and Town Centres	District Centres	Local Centres:	Neighbourhood Centres:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worcester • Great Malvern 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barnards Green, Malvern 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Davies Road, Evesham 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hampton, Evesham

31 For the purposes of criterion E ii, where both sides of the same street are designated as Secondary Shopping Frontages, each side will be considered separately.

City and Town Centres	District Centres	Local Centres:	Neighbourhood Centres:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Droitwich Spa • Evesham • Pershore • Upton - upon - Severn • Tenbury Wells 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Malvern Link, Malvern • Broadway • St John's District Centre, Worcester 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fairfield, Evesham • Westlands, Droitwich Spa • Witton, Droitwich Spa • Fulbert Road, Pershore • Ankerage Green, Worcester • Barbourne, Worcester • Cranham Drive, Worcester • St Peters', Worcester • Worcester South urban extension (SWDP45/1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cheltenham Road, Evesham • Shrubbery Road, Drakes Broughton • Ambleside Drive, Worcester • Bath Road, Worcester • Brickfields, Worcester • Brindley Road, Worcester • Canada Way, Worcester • Derwent Close, Worcester • Dines Green, Worcester • Kilbury Drive, Worcester • London Road, Worcester • Monarch Drive, Worcester • Northwick, Worcester • Rainbow Hill, Worcester

City and Town Centres	District Centres	Local Centres:	Neighbourhood Centres:
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rose Avenue, Worcester • Ronkswood, Worcester • Worcester West urban extension (SWDP45/2) • Malvern North East urban extension (SWDP56) • Droitwich Spa urban extension (SWDP49/1)

G. Within the centres listed in Table 5 above, the conversion of retail floor space outside the Primary and Secondary Shopping Frontages to alternative uses not providing a retail or commercial service will not be permitted unless the equivalent replacement floorspace is provided as part of the development proposal.

H. Within the district and local centres listed in Table 5 above, in order to preserve the variety and vitality of local shopping opportunities, the change of use of premises outside the Primary and Secondary Shopping Frontages from A1 to A2, A3, A5, D1 or D2 uses will not be permitted:

- i. where it would result in two or more non-A1 retail units in a row; or**
- ii. where it would result in less than 50% of all units within the centre being in A1 use.**

I. The change of use of village, neighbourhood and corner shops to non-retailing uses will only be permitted if there is an alternative equivalent facility within safe walking distance⁽³²⁾ or evidence is presented that the premises are no longer viable⁽³³⁾ for any retail or community use.

32 Walking distance is generally considered to be 800m or less.

33 Where premises have been offered for lease and freehold sale, at realistic rents and prices, with a local property agent for at least 12 months without securing a new tenant, it will be accepted that it has been demonstrated that there is no alternative viable retailing use. Detailed marketing requirements are contained in Annex F.

- J. Planning permission for new village and neighbourhood shops will be granted provided they are of an appropriate scale and it can be demonstrated that they will not have a significant adverse impact on the vitality or viability of any local centre.**
- K. New or expanded farm shops, garden centres or petrol filling stations will be permitted provided:**
 - i. They would not have a significant adverse impact on the viability or vitality of any defined centre or other local shopping facilities.**
 - ii. In the case of farm shops, the proposal would make use of redundant or under-used buildings and the range of goods to be sold is restricted to foodstuffs, plants and rural craft products produced locally.**
 - iii. In the case of garden centres, the site is accessible by walking, cycling and public transport.**
- L. The creation of new, or extensions to existing, garden centres or farm shops in the open countryside and unrelated to a settlement will only be permitted if the proposed development is ancillary to, and on the site of, an existing horticultural business or existing farming operation.**

Reasoned Justification

1. Satisfying the shopping and leisure needs of south Worcestershire residents close to their home or workplace will contribute to sustainable development and growth by retaining expenditure locally. Local shops and other services must be enhanced and past trends that have eroded local facilities reversed if the SWDP's objectives of reducing the causes of climate change, minimising the need to travel and protecting the environment are to be achieved.
2. These key objectives will be achieved by focusing retail development on existing centres in order to strengthen and where necessary regenerate them. Wherever possible, growth should be accommodated by more efficient use of land and buildings within existing centres. This approach will help maintain the historic character of town centres and provides opportunities to minimise the consumption of non-renewable resources by reusing existing buildings and reducing the need to travel to out-of-centre retail parks.
3. The Framework requires local planning authorities to (amongst other things):
 - a. Define a network and hierarchy of centres that is resilient to anticipated future economic change.

- b. Define the extent of centres and primary and secondary shopping frontages.
 - c. Set locally proportionate thresholds for impact assessments and specific local impacts that should be addressed by impact assessments.
4. To support the sustainable development of town and local centres, it is important that full use is made of existing buildings. Residential, office or leisure uses on upper floors above retail premises increase footfall, provide passive surveillance and encourage investment that avoids the decline in the condition of premises.