

Policy TLC1

Resilient Town and Local Centres

This policy seeks to support our defined town and local centres to ensure they remain at the heart of our local communities, as a key location for retail, leisure, employment and a wide range of other services and facilities. Town centre boundaries and primary shopping areas are defined on the policies map for each town centre.

1. The unique characteristics of each of the town centres should be promoted to allow them to thrive and form a network of complementary centres, which provide for the needs of the District. Development proposals will be expected to demonstrate how they have taken into account place-making proposals for the relevant centres, as set out in the subsequent policies in this chapter and relevant Neighbourhood Plans.
2. Town centres remain the focus for retail, leisure and other main town centre uses, bringing people together in accessible locations to meet their needs. The Council supports a 'town centres first' approach, to ensure main town centre uses are conveniently clustered together within defined town centre boundaries, and retail provision is maintained within the primary shopping areas. New development for main town centre uses should be located within defined town centre boundaries, and loss of main town centres uses within the primary shopping areas will be resisted where possible.
3. Main town centre uses proposed outside of the defined town centre boundaries, will be subject to the sequential test, to ensure all sequentially preferable locations are assessed in terms of their suitability and availability. An impact assessment will be required for any retail and leisure development with a floorspace of 500 sqm gross or above outside of defined town centre boundaries.
4. Town centre proposals which include a proportion of residential floorspace will be supported, to provide customer footfall within the town centre, provided that the residential element is not at ground floor level within the primary shopping area, other than that which falls under permitted development.
5. Local centres provide for the day-to-day needs of the communities which they serve. The Council will resist the loss of shops and services from defined local centres where they are serving a local need, particularly where they are considered 'key' sustainable services in the Settlement Hierarchy, unless it is thoroughly demonstrated that the use is no longer suitable, in accordance with Policy EMP3.
6. Where strategic sites are proposed (100 units and above), it is expected that new small-scale convenience retail will be included within the site, to promote sustainable services which can be easily accessed on foot or cycle.
7. Town centre development, particularly where it includes work within the public realm, will be expected to meet the following criteria, where appropriate:
 - a. Development should be of the highest quality sustainable design to tackle the challenge of climate change, in accordance with Policy CC2
 - b. Development should be accessible, promoting walking/cycling and public transport use, with adequate parking, EV and cycling infrastructure and car clubs
 - c. Development should promote health and well-being, including community space/green space