Appendix 1

Greater Nottingham Retail Study

For
Nottingham City Council
Nottinghamshire County Council
Broxtowe Borough Council
Gedling Borough Council
Rushcliffe Borough Council

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Job No. 133957
January 2008

1. Summary of Principal Findings and Conclusions

1 This Retail Study was commissioned by the five Local Authorities to advise on the need for new retail development in the sub-region, and how it could be accommodated in a commercially realistic way. It was also intended to identify the hierarchy of centres in the Districts; and provide information on the vitality and viability of each town centre, applying the criteria in PPS6. The Study will form part of the evidence base for each new Local Development Framework.

National trends in retailing and retail development

2 As the context for retail planning and development, a review of national trends in retailing and retail development was undertaken. The principal implications of these trends for Greater Nottingham are as follows:

(a) To achieve new retail development in the smaller centres, it will be necessary to encourage non-traditional forms of development. These will either need to be mixed use schemes, probably including substantial residential elements so as to increase value and subsidise the ground floor retail accommodation, or be low cost developments such as simple free-standing stores.

(b) Despite PPS6 and the sequential approach, there will be continued pressure for more out-of-centre development of retail warehouses; and pressure to relax bulky goods conditions on existing retail warehouses in the study area. It will be important to resist such pressure. If the quick and easy option of allowing more such out-of-centre shopping is taken, in particular for non bulky comparison goods, the slower and more difficult town centre options will not be possible or will be deferred.

(c) There will also be continued pressure from the principal food retailers to develop more space for comparison goods sales, particularly in existing out-of-centre superstores, or in larger superstores to replace old stores, mainly on out-of-centre sites. Again if acceded to, this will reduce the opportunity to develop more comparison goods floorspace in the town and district centres. Instead, food retailers should be pressed to open non-food only stores in the town centres, perhaps to help anchor new town centre developments.

(d) Secondary shopping in the study area will need more support, if it is to withstand the increasing competitive pressures from major retailers. This includes retailing in small town and district centres as a whole. Recommendations by the National Retail Planning Forum should be applied wherever possible, to improve the prosperity of secondary shopping, and help retain its important function of providing specialist goods and services and contributing to retail diversity in each town centre.

(e) Existing retailers in the smaller centres should be encouraged and assisted to establish their own transactional websites, linked together to form a town centre webring accessed via a portal site for each centre. This will help them to tap into a much large potential market than their local geographical catchment area alone.

National planning policies for town centres

3 The principal implication of national planning policies for town centres set out in PPS6 is that further major retail development in the study area beyond the current commitments will have to be fully justified in terms of need, impact and the sequential approach. It will be necessary to consider whether part or all of it could be developed in smaller centres, so as to spread the benefits of growth more evenly, and reduce the need to travel for shopping. In the smaller centres, any opportunities for new town centre development should be brought forward for new retail and other uses, as soon as a need is identified – subject of course to retailer demand and financial viability. Town centre development is slow, expensive and difficult, whereas out-of-centre development is relatively quick, cheap and easy. However, government policy now no longer supports the easy option; and the Local Authorities will be expected to be pro-active in identifying and assembling sites for development where this is financially viable. The challenge will be to resist pressure from existing out-of-centre stores and retail parks to extend and develop, which could jeopardise the successful delivery of any such town centre schemes. The application of the sequential test will be a strong tool to do this.

The hierarchy of retail centres

4 In terms of the sub-regional hierarchy of centres, Nottingham City Centre is and should be designated as a Major Regional Centre (it is currently ranked 5th in the UK according to Experian and 6th according to Venuescore). Based

on current retail sales and Venuescore rankings, we consider that Long Eaton, Arnold, Sutton in Ashfield, Ilkeston and Beeston should be designated as Major District Centres. Bulwell, Hyson Green, Eastwood, Kimberley, Stapleford, Carlton Square, West Bridgford, Hucknall, Kirkby in Ashfield, Sherwood and Clifton should be designated as District Centres. For some centres this is in recognition of their existing scale and status, and for others to provide a policy basis for growth and development to meet identified needs. The remaining centres in Greater Nottingham, comprising Mapperley Plains, Netherfield, Bingham, Sandiacre and Borrowash are significantly smaller, and we consider should be designated as Local Centres for hierarchical purposes.

Capacity for new retail floorspace

Convenience goods

5 Overall, we conclude that there will be capacity for one new food superstore in the Borough of Gedling together with enhancement of existing centres. If existing centres can't be enhanced to absorb the extra convenience spending then there might be a case for an additional food superstore. The pattern of settlements, centres and out-of-centre stores suggests that a new district centre could potentially be developed in the general area between Mapperley Plains and Carlton Square. This area appears to be somewhat under-served at present by main food stores. Such a new district centre would need to be anchored by a new food superstore (which would also be likely to contain some comparison goods floorspace) in order to be competitive. It would therefore be desirable to focus much of the capacity forecast for Gedling to achieve this aim.

6 We also conclude that there will be capacity for a new food superstore in Rushcliffe, in the event that there is substantial housing growth on the south-east side of the city. We consider that the existing hierarchy of provision should be critically examined, to see whether the forecast capacity for new convenience goods floorspace could be accommodated by enhancing existing centres. If this is not possible, a new district centre may be required, again anchored by a new food/non-food superstore.

7 We consider that there is also a locational need for a substantial new food store to serve the western estates of Nottingham, and reduce the need for the residents of this area to travel further afield for their convenience goods shopping.

Comparison goods

8 Overall, we conclude that the committed Broadmarsh Centre extension will be fully supported by available expenditure by the time it will be likely to open, and is therefore justified in terms of forecast growth in expenditure. We also conclude that there will probably eventually be a need to identify and allocate a site or sites in Nottingham City Centre for further major comparison goods retail development, to be developed towards the end of the forecasting period (ie around 2021, unless further validation demonstrates a need earlier in the study period). However, this should be checked and validated after completion of the

Broadmarsh Centre extension. We therefore see no need to develop such a site or sites in the immediate future, unless there is no realistic prospect of the Broadmarsh redevelopment occurring, as this could compromise and put at risk that much needed new scheme.

9 Similarly, we see no need to identify and allocate any sites for new non-central comparison goods retail development at this early stage (except as a component of new superstores as discussed above) in Nottingham or Broxtowe; since capacity will not be likely to arise until well into the forecasting period, and would need to be checked and validated at that time.

10 In Gedling, the focus should be on accommodating within or on the edge of the town centres, in accordance with the sequential approach the capacity which has been forecast as noncentral. In particular, a site or sites should be sought in or on the edge of Arnold Town Centre, and Carlton Square; or as part of a possible new district centre in the Borough.

11 In the remaining town centres, we are only able to forecast significant capacity for new comparison goods floorspace in the medium term in Bulwell, Beeston, Eastwood. Stapleford and Arnold. However, because of low rental values and the long term trend towards centralisation of retailing and new retail development into large centres, we think it likely that such new retail development will only be practicable in the larger of these centres, in particular Beeston and Arnold town centres. In the smaller centres, any new retail development will be likely to take the form of small scale incremental developments or changes of use, or as components of new food stores. There will therefore be no pressing need to identify and allocate sites for new developments in the smaller centres, despite theoretical forecast capacity.

Implications of current shopping patterns

12 Shopping for chemists'medical and beauty products is very localised throughout the study area. This shows that these goods are very important to the attractiveness of the smaller centres. It indicates that development proposals which would result in decentralisation of such sales, for example to out-of-centre superstores, should be resisted. Any large new food store, unless developed as the 'anchor'to a new district centre, should therefore be prevented by condition from including a pharmacy within the development.

13 The study area is particularly well provided for in terms of access to traditional 'bulky goods' stores (furniture & floorcoverings, household appliances, audio-visual equipment, and hardware, DIY goods & garden products, particularly the latter). Much of these sales are in non-central retail warehouses (although Nottingham City Centre is reasonably strong in these categories, apart from the hardware/DIY goods category); indicating that there is no conspicuous need for more bulky goods retail warehouses in the study area.

14 The market shares of catchment area expenditure in the study area as a whole for clothing & footwear and the 'all other comparison goods'category are significantly lower than for the 'bulky goods'categories. Most of the shopping for

the former categories of goods is undertaken in the town centres, rather than in the retail warehouses. There is therefore a need to achieve new town centre developments selling these categories of goods, so as to reduce leakage of expenditure on them to other centres. The Broadmarsh Centre extension will go some way towards achieving this in Nottingham City Centre. At the same time, relaxation of bulky goods conditions on the out-of-centre retail parks should be resisted, as this would result in decentralisation of sales of such goods, thus making it more difficult to achieve such new town centre development in accordance with the objectives of PPS6.

The vitality and viability of Nottingham City Centre

15 Nottingham city centre is performing well in terms of the PPS6 indicators of viability and vitality. This is exemplified by its retention of 5th place in the 2007 Experian Retail Rankings and 6th place in the Venuescore rankings (and the fact that Experian predict it will remain in 5th place by 2017 despite major development programmes in many of the other large cities and competing centres). It is likely, however, that Leeds, Liverpool, Newcastle and Cardiff will all be competitively seeking a top 5 position and, with their own major retail developments in the pipeline, successful delivery of the Broadmarsh centre extension will be vital to Nottingham's retailing future.

16 The city's reputation for fashion retailing is well deserved, with a balanced mix of the expected national multiples, high fashion and independent boutiques. The reputation is evident in both the retailers who wish to be represented in the city, and the catchment area from which people come to shop. Retailers such as Paul Smith, who have both their traditional store in Byard Lane and their flagship store on Low Pavement, highlight the desire not only to trade from within the city centre, but to be seen as a major part of it.

17 As with all busy city centres, Nottingham suffers from congestion at peak times, a higher than average crime rate and associated anti-social behaviour. To an extent shoppers will expect both increased congestion and an increased exposure to crime within city centres; however, this is not and should not be a desirable situation. For Nottingham to remain an attractive destination for shoppers to visit and businesses to locate, it must actively seek to reduce road traffic, crime and the perception of crime. Nottingham has an excellent bus and tram service linking the city centre with all major residential areas. However, in order for people to leave their cars at home it must be able to make journey times comparable with that of personal transport, while remaining competitively priced.

18 The shopping environment throughout the city centre is of a high quality, with the Old Market Square providing a civic hub and gathering place and the streets being clean and mostly free from graffiti. Benches, hanging baskets, trees and on-street uplighters provide attractive features throughout the city centre and improve the appearance and enjoyment of the retail provision.

19 There is however a potential qualitative deficiency in respect of city centre food retailing, which could be further exacerbated by the continuing rise in city centre

living. The absence of a permanent market and the lack of a 24 hour shopping opportunity means that a potential market remains untapped. The City Council should give consideration to these deficiencies in dealing with future food retailing proposals in the city centre.

Vitality and viability of the smaller centres

20 The smaller centres in the study area are of varying vitality and viability. The best performing centres in terms of the PPS6 indicators are Bulwell, Beeston, Eastwood, Kimberley, Arnold, Bingham andWest Bridgford. These are generally providing a good service to their local areas, within the limits of their size and retail offer. Clifton, Hyson Green, Sherwood, Stapleford, Carlton Square, Mapperley Plains and Netherfield are generally performing less well. These centres suffer to varying degrees from higher vacancy, lack of attractive retailers, poorer quality environments or other problems.

Potential retail development opportunities

21 There are a number of potential opportunities for new retail development in Nottingham City Centre. The most important is the Broadmarsh Centre, which already has planning permission for a major extension and remodelling to provide substantial additional retail floorspace and new leisure uses. We consider that no other major retail developments should be supported in the city centre until this development has been completed, its actual effects on shopping patterns measured, and the need for further retail floorspace validated at that time. In the longer term, there may be a case for one or more further substantial retail developments in the city centre, for example by way of extension of the Victoria Centre or elsewhere.

22 We have principally limited our assessment of potential sites to those centres where we have identified quantitative or qualitative needs for new retail development. Sites with some potential for new retail development exist in or on the edge of Bulwell, Clifton, Beeston, Eastwood, Stapleford, Arnold and West Bridgford centres. Each has limitations; but subject to more detailed evaluation, these will need to be identified in development plans, with appropriate supporting policies, with the aim of bringing forward new town centre developments in accordance with PPS6.