



Development Management Plan (Regulation 18 stage)

**Local Centres
Review, Designation and Policy**

June 2016

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Local centres are valued community assets; they provide community retail and associated services (such as florists and hairdressers) and community resources (such as halls and health centres).
- 1.2 Reigate & Banstead Borough Council is currently preparing its Development Management Plan (DMP). This background paper will be used to inform the local centre policies.
- 1.3 The report draws together the findings of site assessments to define the purpose and characteristics of local centres. These characteristics are then used to identify potential new local centres and review the existing local centres as designated in the Borough Local Plan 2005.
- 1.4 The report then discusses the policy approaches that can be applied within local centres to ensure that they remain viable. This includes the consideration of the introduction of retail thresholds. Note that separate evidence papers have been prepared in relation to the policy approach to town centres and retail warehouse areas.

Policy Context

National Planning Policy Framework

- 1.5 The [National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\)](#) recognises the importance of providing local shops to satisfy the needs of local communities. Local planning authorities are required to plan positively for local shops to enhance the sustainability of communities and guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services.
- 1.6 Sustainable development sits at the heart of national policy. Local centres support the social dimension of sustainable development through ensuring local services are accessible and reflect the community's needs. Local centres play an important role in creating the aspired high quality built environment and strong, vibrant and healthy communities.

Core Strategy

- 1.7 Policy CS7 of the adopted [Core Strategy](#) recognises that local centres should provide for the day-to-day needs of residents and seeks to ensure that other services and facilities are available, accessible and conveniently located for residents.

- 1.8 The Core Strategy outlines the retail hierarchy of the Borough: Redhill as the primary town centre, the other town centres and then the local centres.

Borough Local Plan

- 1.9 The [Borough Local Plan](#) designates 18 local centres and outlines policies to support their vitality and viability:
- Policy Sh1: Seeks to improve shopping provision within local shopping areas and resist the loss of existing or proposed retail floorspace
 - Policy Sh10: Generally permits proposals for redevelopment, extension or changes of use to class A1 retail
 - Policy Sh11: Seeks to retain A1 retail floorspace in local shopping areas
 - Sh12: Generally resists proposals for changes of use to, or redevelopment of, sale of food & drink uses, including hot food takeaways

2. Defining Local Centres, Characteristics and Boundaries

- 2.1 The purpose of this assessment is to review the existing local centre designations within the 2005 Borough Local Plan (BLP) to ensure they remain fit for purpose; review the existing local centre boundaries to ensure they reflect current conditions; and identify potential new local centres.
- 2.2 Public consultation responses from the Issues and Options Consultation, member engagement and a review of the Borough Local Plan's Area for Small Business designation were used to inform the identification of potential new local centres:
- Brighton Road, Banstead
 - Brighton Road, Hooley
 - Holmesdale Road, Reigate
 - Horley Road, South Earlswood
 - Rectory Lane, Chipstead
 - Station Road, Horley
 - Tattenham Way, Burgh Heath
 - Timperley Gardens, Redhill
 - Woodmansterne Street, Woodmansterne
 - Victoria Road, Horley
- 2.3 Site assessments of the existing and proposed new local centres were carried out between May and September 2015.

Characteristics of Local Centres

- 2.4 Local centres offer complementary retail services to the borough's town centres. The overriding principle for their designation is that they should be areas which support greater accessibility to local shops and services and also provide a focus for community activities/facilities.
- 2.5 Drawing on national guidance, in particular paragraph 005 of the NPPG, the following criteria have been used to assess whether a parade/cluster of shops should be designated (or continue to be designated) as a local centre.

Number of Units

- 2.6 Six or more units are considered necessary to ensure that the area is an identifiable local centre and to ensure viability.

Diversity of Uses

- 2.7 The area should present a vibrant mix of uses including community uses. The majority of units should be of A1 retail. However, with changing retail habits and the blurring of retail and restaurant/ café/ leisure uses there should also be a good proportion of A3 units. Vacancies should be taken into consideration.

Pedestrian Flows

- 2.8 An observation of whether the shopping parade is visited by many or few people gives an indication of the popularity and frequency of visitation.

Accessibility

- 2.9 This includes an assessment of the following:
- Presence of parking: as a measure of ease of access for those not living within walking distance
 - Presence of a pedestrian crossing: as a measure of safe and easy access for pedestrians
 - Presence of access and exit points (if off-road): as a measure of vehicular access

Perception of Safety

- 2.10 Perceived lack of safety can affect the willingness of people to visit an area. Indicators considered include evidence of vandalism, shops being broken into, poor lighting, intimidating spaces, and evidence of anti-social or violent behaviour.

Environmental Quality

- 2.11 The presence of landscaping, benches, pedestrianised area etc. enhances the appeal of a shopping area whilst litter and vandalism detracts from this. Noise and odours can also influence the attractiveness of the centre. An additional element is pedestrian friendliness which has been assessed by considering:
- Vehicular dominance
 - Number of parking bays provided
 - Pedestrian areas
 - Perception of safety

Future Growth Potential

- 2.12 The ability of a local centre to respond to the growing demands and changes in the community demonstrates its adaptability over time. This can be

assessed through an observation of land adjacent to the centre or exploring the potential for conversion of existing uses.

Mini destination

- 2.13 The presence of bins, post boxes, benches, cash points, recycling bins, community notice boards etc. demonstrates a wider function than shopping. It is evidence of a created focal point/ destination, providing services, convenience and a community function.

Assessment findings

- 2.14 Table 1 below summarises the findings of the assessment and characterisation process for each of the existing and potential local centres. A copy of the full assessment is included at Annex 1.

Table 1 Local Centre Assessment Summary

Existing Local Centres				
Name	Ward	Designate?	Boundary change	Reason
1. Brighton Road (Horley)	<i>Horley West and Horley Central</i>	Yes	Yes	This centre functions well: has sufficient units, a good mix of uses, is pedestrian and vehicular friendly and provides a focal point for shopping and community use.
2. Brighton Road (Salfords)	<i>Salfords & Sidlow</i>	Yes	Yes	Healthy, clean and tidy centre with a good mix of units. It performs a community function as a mini-destination.
3. Burgh Heath	<i>Kingswood with Burgh Heath</i>	Yes	Yes	It is a healthy and accessible centre, which provides a local function.
4. Drift Bridge	<i>Nork</i>	Yes	Yes	Continues to be a healthy centre with a good mix of units.
5. Lesbourne Road	<i>Reigate Central and Meadvale & St. Johns</i>	Yes	Yes	Continues to provide a local convenience function with a good number and mix of units. It is a pleasant, pedestrian friendly centre.
6. Linkfield Corner	<i>Redhill West and Reigate Central</i>	Yes	No	Contains the required amount of units, performs a community function and is pedestrian friendly.
7. Lower Kingswood	<i>Kingswood with Burgh Heath</i>	Yes	Yes	Contains sufficient units, majority in A1. Despite not performing much of a community function, it is a destination point for specialised services.
8. Merstham Village	<i>Merstham</i>	Yes	Yes	Retain this healthy Local Centre designation.
9. Nork Way	<i>Nork</i>	Yes	No	This centre is large and healthy with a good mix of units to support the local convenience and community function.
10. Nutfield Road	<i>Merstham</i>	Yes	Yes	This centre has adapted to the changing surrounding context and will potentially change again with the Portland Drive development. This centre continues to perform a local function.
11. Portland Drive	<i>Merstham</i>	Yes	Yes	This centre will change significantly with the regeneration plans underway. The provision of a supermarket will enhance the area and draw trade from further afield, which will be beneficial to the local centre and the local community. It is a healthy centre and will continue to be healthy

				through the regeneration works.
12. Shelters Way	<i>Tadworth & Walton</i>	Yes	No	Functions well as a local centre. Continue to designate as a local centre.
13. Station Approach, Chipstead	<i>Chipstead, Hooley & Woodmansterne</i>	Yes	Yes	The centre functions well and facilitates a sense of community. It is recommended that this centre continue to be designated as a local centre.
14. Tadworth	<i>Tadworth & Walton</i>	Yes	Yes	The centre functions well and facilitates a sense of community. It is recommended that this centre continue to be designated as a local centre.
15. Tattenham Corner	<i>Tattenhams</i>	Yes	Yes	The centre functions well and facilitates a sense of community. It is recommended that this centre continue to be designated as a local centre.
16. Walton on the Hill	<i>Tadworth & Walton</i>	Yes	Yes	The centre has a sense of community and is placed in a serene setting near a pond, which makes it very attractive. It has a good mix of units supportive of its function.
17. Waterhouse Lane	<i>Kingswood with Burgh Heath</i>	Yes	No	The centre functions well and facilitates a sense of community. It is recommended that this centre continue to be designated as a local centre.
18. Woodhatch	<i>Meadvale & St. Johns and South Park & Woodhatch</i>	Yes	No	This centre continues to provide a convenience and community function.
Potential New Local Centres				
Name	Ward	Designate?	Reason	
19. Brighton Road, Banstead	<i>Nork and Tattenhams and Banstead Village</i>	No		Whilst the large area leaves potential for expansion there is little sense of cohesion in the whole area and few pedestrians were seen. This area provides a specialised function and does not require protection from a designation.
20. Brighton Road, Hooley	<i>Chipstead, Hooley & Woodmansterne</i>	No		The majority of shops in this small parade do not provide a local convenience function. These units have a specialist offer, which would not be frequented on a daily or weekly basis. This small parade was quite lively at the time of survey but to specific shops whilst others remained closed, which is odd for a midday visit. The shopping parade is centred on being in proximity of the garage and therefore benefits from the passing trade when people stop to buy fuel.
21. Holmesdale, Reigate	<i>Reigate Central</i>	Yes		Overall, this area functions as a local centre. It is busy and has the potential for improvement and growth.
22. Horley Road, South	<i>Earlswood & Whitebushes</i>	No		Both sides of the street function independently. There was little

Earlswood			sense of cohesion and few pedestrians seen in the area. There are very few community uses or public services.
23. Rectory Lane, Chipstead	<i>Chipstead, Hooley & Woodmansterne</i>	Yes	A small well kept parade offering a limited number of units that provide a local convenience. The community function can be improved and supported by more convenience uses.
24. Station Road, Horley	<i>Horley Central and Horley East</i>	Yes	Despite its location close to the town centre, the uses within this parade provide a function for locals and people travelling from further away. It lacks the convenience provision but functions independently of the town centre. It is worthy of a Local Centre designation.
25. Tattenham Way	<i>Tattenhams</i>	Yes	It is a smaller centre but performs a community function and provides services and conveniences for the local community.
26. Timperley Gardens	<i>Redhill West</i>	No	Limited number of units and mix of uses. It also has a limited potential for expansion. This area is better suited for protection by a small centres and isolated shops policy.
27. Woodmansterne Street, Woodmansterne	<i>Chipstead, Hooley & Woodmansterne</i>	Yes	This is a visually attractive centre providing a local convenience and community function.
28. Victoria Road, Horley	<i>Horley Central</i>	No	This centre has a limited A1 use provision and does not have a good mix of units. It does not appear to provide a local convenience function and seems to be dependent on passing trade rather than the local community.

Existing Local Centres

- 2.15 Based on the assessments above, all existing local centres are proposed to be carried forward and designated through the DMP. Boundary amendments are proposed for many due to changes of use resulting in units no longer providing an active frontage/ contributing to the vibrancy and vitality of the local centre.
- 2.16 There remains some uncertainty with regards to the appropriateness of the Lower Kingswood local centre designation; there are a number of specialist units and the centre has a comparatively limited convenience/ community role. However, the centre is the only shopping area serving the Lower Kingswood area and therefore has the potential to play a key role in providing access to local facilities and services. On balance, it is felt that the designation should be carried forward to enable this role to be recognised and potentially enhanced moving forward.

Proposed Local Centres

- 2.17 It is proposed that the following new local centres are designated:
- Holmesdale Road, Reigate
 - Rectory Lane, Chipstead
 - Station Road, Horley
 - Tattenham Way, Tattenhams
 - Woodmansterne Street, Woodmansterne
- 2.18 The assessments identified these areas to have a strong community focus with provision of 'mini destinations'; a good mix of retail and community uses; a pleasant environment; and function as a cohesive community destination.

3. Local Policy Approach

Context

- 3.1 Local centres offer a choice of convenience goods and services to nearby residents, reducing the need to travel and providing a focus for the community.
- 3.2 The Core Strategy (Policy CS7) recognises the role local centres play in providing for local needs and their complementary role to town centres. It also sets out that they should be the focus of investment in accessible local services.
- 3.3 The Retail Needs Assessment 2016 noted that changing retail habits (i.e. the increasing dominance of the Big Four in the 'c-store' (small format basket stores) market) has the potential to impact upon the role of local centres. It is therefore important that – where appropriate – these areas have flexibility to respond by introducing complementary retail and related services to maintain vitality and viability. Community and leisure uses are also important to support and maintain a cohesive local community.

Approach

Managing the mix of uses in local centres

- 3.4 Retailing habits are changing; there is an increased requirement for local centres to offer more than convenience retail. Neighbourhood services (such as banks or post offices), leisure, community and food and drink uses are seen to be important. These uses add to the vitality and vibrancy of the local centres, create more of a destination, provide places to meet and encourage dwell time.
- 3.5 Given the flexibility offered by permitted development rights, it is increasingly important to ensure other losses away from A1, A2, A3, D1 and D2 uses are fully justified and well managed. It is therefore suggested that local planning policy should resist changes of use resulting in the loss of these uses unless marketing evidence shows the unit to no longer be viable for retail and/ or community use and the proposed use makes a positive contribution to the vitality and viability and not be harmful to the overall balance of services within the local centres.
- 3.6 Across the local centres, since 2010 the proportion of A3 uses has increased from 7% to 9%. Policy Sh12 of the 2005 Borough Local Plan however restricts changes of use to food & drink uses. It is therefore suggested that this policy

restriction should not be carried forward. Changes of use to A3 will be have the potential to add to the vibrancy of the local centre. Conversely changes of use to A5 uses should not be encouraged through policy as they do not provide an active daytime frontage nor increased dwell time.

Smaller centres and isolated shops

- 3.7 As set out above, the designation of local centres has focussed on parades/clusters of 6 or more shops/facilities. However, it is recognised that there are many smaller centres and isolated shops within the borough which can equally be valuable to nearby residents. These areas are also increasingly vulnerable to changes in shopping habits.
- 3.8 It is therefore suggested that – in such smaller centres, and in the case of isolated shops, changes of use will be permitted where the proposed use:
- Would contribute to the vitality and vibrancy of the area
 - Would contribute to the value of local services
 - Is a community facility which would materially benefit local residents
 - Or where the unit has been vacant and marketed for at least 6 months and it can be demonstrated that the unit is no longer viable for retail or community uses

4. Recommendations

Local Centre Designations

- 4.1 It is proposed that all existing local centres are designated as local centres in the DMP.
- 4.2 Boundary changes are proposed for the following local centres:
- Brighton Road, Horley
 - Brighton Road, Salfords
 - Burgh Heath
 - Chipstead Station Approach
 - Drift Bridge
 - Lesbourne Road, Reigate
 - Linkfield Corner, Redhill
 - Lower Kingswood
 - Merstham Village
 - Nork Way
 - Nutfield Road, Merstham
 - Portland Drive, Merstham
 - Shelvers Way, Tadworth
 - Tadworth
 - Tattenham Corner
 - Walton on the Hill
 - Waterhouse Lane, Kingswood
 - Woodhatch
- 4.3 The following areas have been proposed as new local centres:
- Holmesdale Road, Reigate
 - Rectory Lane, Chipstead
 - Station Road, Horley
 - Tattenham Way, Burgh Heath
 - Woodmansterne Street, Woodmansterne

Policy approach

Local centres

- 4.4 Instead of introducing a threshold for A1, A3, D1 and D2 uses, it is proposed that policy within the DMP should resist changes of use resulting in the loss of A1, A3, D1 and D2 uses unless marketing evidence shows the unit to no longer be viable for retail and/ or community use and the proposed use makes

a positive contribution to vitality and viability and not be harmful to the overall balance of services within the local centre.

Smaller centres and isolated shops

- 4.5 The vulnerability of smaller centres and isolated shops is noted. It is therefore proposed that changes of use will be permitted where the proposed use:
- Would contribute to the vitality and vibrancy of the area
 - Would contribute to the value of local services
 - Is a community facility which would materially benefit local residents
 - Or where the unit has been vacant and marketed for at least 6 months and it can be demonstrated that the unit is no longer viable for retail or community uses.