North Norfolk District Council
Planning Policy Team

Telephone: 01263 516318
E-Mail: planningpolicy@north-norfolk.gov.uk
Write to: Jill Fisher, Planning Policy Manager,
North Norfolk District Council, Holt Road, Cromer, NR27 9EN
www.northnorfolk.org/ldf

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IN TRAN communication for all



Contents



1 Introduction

1.1 The Council is in the process of preparing its LDF and has submitted its **Core Strategy** for examination. This sets out the key elements of the planning framework for North Norfolk that will be used when considering individual planning proposals. It will cover the period from 2001 to 2021, but can be reviewed on a regular basis during that time if necessary.

1.2 When adopted, the Core Strategy will replace the North Norfolk Local Plan. The Local Plan is saved until September 2007, and thereafter a number of selected policies are saved for a further period until the Core Strategy is adopted.

1.3 In preparing the Core Strategy, the Council has considered its approach to the development of Town Centres. The Submission Core Strategy Development Plan Document includes new policies (SS5 and EC5) that aim to:

- Support the vitality and viability of town centres;
- Ensure that town centres meet the needs of residents and visitors in ways that minimise the need to travel; and,
- Ensure that developments protect or enhance the character and appearance of towns.

1.4 To deliver its objectives for town centres the Council is proposing a retail hierarchy which designates 'large' and 'small' town centres and the adoption of separate policy approaches for each type of centre. In support of the retail hierarchy specific catchment areas for towns are defined and the size of shops in Small Town Centres is limited to 750m^2 net retail floor space.

1.5 The main purpose of this paper is:

- To demonstrate that policies SS5 and EC5 as proposed in the Submission Core Strategy, <u>so far as they relate to the proposed hierarchy and shop size threshold</u>, are supported by evidence, are appropriate, and are in conformity with the requirements of Government advice and the East of England Plan[i] and therefore meet the tests of soundness .

1.6 A copy of the policies are attached as **Appendix A**

2 Background and context

2.1 The preparation of the Submission Core Strategy in respect of planning for town centres has been informed by the requirements of the Government's Planning Policy Statement on 'Planning for Town Centres' (PPS6), and by the findings of the North Norfolk District Retail and Commercial Leisure Study 2005, which was prepared by DTZ Pieda Consulting having regard to the provisions of PPS6 (subsequently referred to as the DTZ Study).

2.2 The DTZ Study was commissioned in July 2004, and approved by the Council's Cabinet for the purpose of informing the production of up-to-date retail and other relevant planning policies and proposals for inclusion in the North Norfolk Local Development Framework (LDF) in June 2005. It should be noted at the outset that the Study only covers the period up to 31 March 2016. Advice suggests that predicting retail needs beyond this date would lack certainty and would not provide a robust basis for the formulation of policy.

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i *The Regional Planning Policy document which provides the framework for locally prepared plans.*

2.3 The main objectives of the DTZ Study (ref. para 1.01) were to provide:

- an up to date assessment of the vitality and viability of the District's main centres;
- detailed centre and household surveys to help identify the catchments and market shares of the District's main centres, as well as people's perceptions of each centre as places to live, work, shop and visit for a variety of activities and uses;
- retail and leisure capacity forecasts for the main centres up to 2016;
- a review of the needs of the District's centres in the context of their identified roles in the retail hierarchy; and
- advise on the strategy for, and potential location of, new retail development in the District, taking account of the Council's objectives to promote sustainability'.

2.4 Retail and commercial leisure activity in North Norfolk is concentrated in the seven towns of Cromer (pop: 7,865), Holt (pop: 3,555), Fakenham (pop: 7,295), North Walsham (pop: 12,100), Sheringham (pop: 7,200), Stalham (pop: 3,015), and Wells-next-the-Sea (pop: 2,455) and the large village of Hoveton (pop: 1,775) [ii]. Outside these settlements, activity is mainly limited to small village convenience stores and a few 'farm shops'. Accordingly, the DTZ Study paid particular attention to the eight centres of Cromer, Holt, Hoveton, Fakenham, North Walsham, Sheringham, Stalham and Wells-next-the-Sea.

Planning Policy Statement 6

2.5 PPS6 covers town centres[iii] and the main town centre uses[iv]. Para 1.1 of PPS6 states that 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 focussing development in such centres and encouraging a wide range of services in a good environment, accessible to all'.

2.6 In order to deliver the Government's objective of promoting vital and viable town centres, PPS6 (para 2.1) requires development to be focused in existing centres in order to strengthen and, where appropriate, regenerate them. Regional planning bodies and local planning authorities should:

- 'actively promote growth and manage change in town centres;
- define a network and a hierarchy of centres each performing an appropriate role to meet the needs of their catchments; and
- adopt a proactive, plan-led approach to planning for town centres, through regional and local planning'.

2.7 In promoting and enhancing existing centres, local planning authorities (LPAs) should consider the network of centres (i.e. the pattern of provision of different centres) and their relationship in the hierarchy. At the local level, authorities should plan how best to distribute any growth to

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ii *Population figures are mid-2004 estimates produced by Norfolk County Council.*

iii *The Government makes clear that references to town centre(s) or to centre(s) throughout PPS6 apply to all the types of centre described in Table 1 of Annex A of the policy statement, except where otherwise stated.*

iv *Para 1.8 of PPS6 sets out the main town centre uses to which the policy statement applies. These are 1)'retail (including warehouse clubs and factory outlet centres); 2) leisure, entertainment facilities, and the more intensive sport and recreation uses (including cinemas, restaurants, drive-through restaurants, bars and pubs, night-clubs, casinos, health and fitness centres, indoor bowling centres, and bingo halls); 3) offices, both commercial and those of public bodies; and 4) arts, culture and tourism (theatres, museums, galleries and concert halls, hotels and conference facilities)'. In addition, PPS6 identifies housing as an important element in most mixed-use, multi-storey developments.*



achieve the objectives of their spatial strategies; and in defining their objectives, they should consider whether there is a need to rebalance the network of centres to ensure that it is not overly dominated by the largest centres, that there is a more even distribution of town centre uses, and that people’s everyday needs are met at the local level.

2.8 PPS6 requires LPAs to adopt a positive and proactive approach to planning for the future of all types of centres within their areas. Having regard to the regional spatial strategy and reflecting their community strategy, LPAs ‘should, through the core strategy development plan document, set out a spatial vision and strategy for the network and hierarchy of centres, including local centres, within their area, setting out how the role of different centres will contribute to the overall spatial vision for their area’ (para 2.15).

2.9 LPAs are required to:

- assess the need for new floor space for retail, leisure and other main town centre uses, taking account of both quantitative and qualitative considerations;
- identify deficiencies in provision, assess the capacity of existing centres to accommodate new development, including, where appropriate, the scope for extending the primary shopping area and/or town centre, and identify centres in decline where change needs to be managed;
- identify the centres within their area where development will be focused, as well as the need for any new centres of local importance, and develop strategies for developing and strengthening centres within their area;
- define the extent of the town centre[v] and the primary shopping area,[vi] for the centres in their area on their Proposals Map;
- identify and allocate sites in accordance with the considerations set out in paras 2.28-2.51 of PPS6;
- review all existing allocations and reallocate sites which do not comply with PPS6;
- develop spatial policies and proposals to promote and secure investment in deprived areas by strengthening and/or identifying opportunities for growth of existing centres, and to seek to improve access to local facilities; and
- set out criteria-based policies, in accordance with PPS6, for assessing and locating new development proposals, including development on sites not allocated in development plan documents.

2.10 In addition to defining the extent of the primary shopping area for their centres, LPAs may distinguish between primary and secondary frontages[vii]. These frontages should be realistically

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v *PPS6 (see Annex A; Table 2: Types of Location) defines a Town Centre (i.e. types of centre identified in Table 1 of Annex A) as an ‘area, including the primary shopping area and areas of predominantly leisure, business and other main town centre uses within or adjacent to the primary shopping area’.*

vi *PPS6 (see Annex A; Table 2: Types of Location) defines a Primary Shopping Area as an ‘area where retail development is concentrated (generally comprising the primary and those secondary frontages which are contiguous and closely related to the primary shopping frontage)…..Smaller centres may not have areas of predominantly leisure, business and other main town centre uses adjacent to the primary shopping area, therefore the town centre may not extend beyond the primary shopping area’.*

vii *PPS6 (see Annex A; Table 2: Types of Location) states that ‘Primary frontages are likely to include a high proportion of retail uses’ and ‘Secondary frontages provide greater opportunities for a diversity of uses’.*

defined. Having regard to the need to encourage diversification of uses in town centres as whole, primary frontages should contain a high proportion of retail uses, while secondary frontages provide greater opportunities for flexibility and a diversity of uses.

Regional Spatial Strategy for the East of England

2.11 The Secretary of State's Proposed Changes to the Draft Revision to the Regional Spatial Strategy for the East of England and Statement of Reasons was published in December 2006. Part 2 of the document sets out the modified text which incorporates the Proposed Changes.

2.12 ***Policy SS6: City and Town Centres*** states: 'Thriving, vibrant and attractive city and town centres are fundamental to the sustainable development of the East of England and should continue to be the focus for investment, environmental enhancement and regeneration.

2.13 Local development documents should:

- define the role (or redefine it where necessary) of each city or town centre and include a strategy to manage change, promote a healthy mix of uses, build upon positive elements of its distinctive character, and support the development and consolidation of the local cultural heritage;
- ensure that land is allocated or can be made available to meet the full range of the city or town centre's identified needs; and…..'

2.14 ***Policy E5: Regional Structure of Town Centres*** identifies the cities and towns of strategic importance for retail and other town centre purposes. For those centres not identified as being of regional strategic importance, which is the case for all of North Norfolk's centres, the policy requires local development documents to 'identify a network of more local town centres, district centres, neighbourhood centres and village centres'.

3 Assessment of retail capacity

a) convenience goods

3.1 The DTZ Study was carried out at a time when North Norfolk District Council was in the process of determining several planning applications for new foodstores and extension to existing supermarkets (see Volume 1 of the Study). Furthermore, there were unimplemented planning consents for two other foodstore proposals (extension to Morrisons at Fakenham and erection of a Budgens foodstore at Sheringham). Some of the Study's deliberations were therefore concerned with assessing which of these proposed developments could be supported by the Study's assessment of the need for new convenience shopping floor space based on the projected available spend in 2016. In view of the recommendation set out in para 4.70 of Volume 1 of the DTZ Study, the Council accepts that *Scenario 2* (relating to alternative options for predicting capacity for additional convenience goods floor space[viii]) 'provides the most robust capacity forecasts and, therefore, the preferred planning and development option for North Norfolk District'.

3.2 Since the Study was completed in May 2005, a new Tesco store (comprising 1,520m^2 net sales

viii *See paras 4.06-4.08 of Volume 1 of the DTZ Study* convenience floor space) has been completed in Fakenham town centre, and permission has been granted for the extension to the Morrisons foodstore in Cromer (not yet implemented) and an application for a Budgens foodstore at Wells next the Sea has been withdrawn.

3.3 In view of these changes to the convenience retail situation in North Norfolk, it is considered that Table 7.5 in the DTZ Study (which deals with net convenience goods residual spend forecasts for the period 2004 to 2016) can be amended to take account of a DTZ estimated turnover of £18.2m for the Fakenham Tesco and an estimated reduction in the turnover of £0.3m for the Cromer Morrisons (ref. para 4.10 and Table 4.10 of Volume 1). Accordingly, the revised table should read as follows:

Revised net convenience goods residual spend forecasts. *Excludes turnover potential of any new commitments*

Year	2008	2011	2016
Scenario 2 (£ million)	**- 12.0**	**- 7.7**	**- 0.1**

3.4 As shown in the table there is theoretically insufficient spend in the District to support total permitted and completed convenience floor space as of February 2007. These figures do not take account of the planning permission for a Budgens store in Sheringham as North Norfolk District Council has control over implementation through land ownership and to-date has indicated an unwillingness to sell the site (ref para 4.23 of Volume 1). The forecast net increase in turnover of this store if it were to be built, and the existing Budgens store close, is **£3.1m** (ref. Table 4.10 of Volume 1). The forecast turnover of the proposed Tesco foodstore in Sheringham (comprising 1200m^2 net sales convenience floor space and 300m^2 net sales comparison floor space, which, as of February 2007, does not benefit from planning permission) is **£14.4m** (ref. Table 4.10 of Volume 1).

3.5 Therefore, in view of the situation as of February 2007, there is considered to be no ***quantitative*** need for additional convenience floor space in North Norfolk in the period up to 2016.

b) comparison goods

3.6 In view of the recommendation set out in para 4.70 of Volume 1 of the DTZ Study, the Council accepts that *Scenarios 1 and 1 (a)* (relating to alternative options for predicting capacity for additional comparison goods floor space[ix]) 'provide the most robust capacity forecasts'. They indicate the potential for new net comparison floor space ranging from a 'low' of approximately 8,100m^2 (Scenario 1a) to a 'high' of approximately 19,000 m^2 (Scenario 1). After further consideration of this matter the Council has decided to plan on the basis of Scenario 1 (i.e. 13,300 -19,900m^2, dependent on assumptions about average sales density; ref Table 7.3 of Volume 1).

3.7 The DTZ Study does not provide a detailed breakdown of the capacity forecasts on a centre-by-centre basis. However, it does provide floor space forecasts for three broad geographic areas of the District, each of which contains one of North Norfolk's three designated Large Town Centres (the first of which is based on Fakenham and Wells-next-the-Sea; the second based on Cromer, Holt and Sheringham; and the third based on Hoveton, North Walsham and Stalham). The forecast proportionate distribution of this additional floor space (indicated by Tables 4.17, 4.18 and 7.4 of Volume 1) are as follows:

ix *See paras 4.06-4.08 of Volume 1 of the DTZ Study*



- Fakenham / Wells-next-the-Sea: **31%**
- Cromer / Holt / Sheringham: **44%**
- Hoveton / North Walsham / Stalham: **25%.**

3.8 Applying these proportions to the total floor space range of 13,300 -19,900m^2 provides the following approximate target distribution:

- Fakenham / Wells-next-the-Sea: **4,000 – 6,200m^2**
- Cromer / Holt / Sheringham: **5,900 – 8,800m^2**
- Hoveton / North Walsham / Stalham: **3,400 – 5,000m^2**

3.9 Since the Study was completed in May 2005, a new Homebase store (comprising 3,531m^2 net sales area, including a 'garden centre' of 744m^2 net sales area) has received planning permission and, as a result of the permitted extension of the Morrisons foodstore in Cromer, provision has been made for a further 456m^2 net sales area of comparison floor space (ref. para 4.49 of Volume 1). The Council has also recognised that, in its assessment of retail capacity, the DTZ Study took no account of the garden centre (of 929m^2 net sales area) associated with the Focus DIY store at North Walsham. Therefore, Core Strategy policy SS5 takes account of these subsequent developments.

4 Retail network and heirarchy of centres

4.1 In preparing this strategy, regard has been had to the definitions of different types of centre set out in PPS6, namely that town centres will usually be the second level of centres after city centres in a local authority's area. In rural areas they are likely to be market towns and other centres of similar size and role which function as important service centres, providing a range of facilities and services for an extensive rural catchment area. As a result of this definition and for the purposes of the Core Strategy only, Hoveton is recognised as having a town centre for ease of presentation, notwithstanding the fact that it is a **village** and not a town.

4.2 There is forecast growth of retailing in the District, particularly in the comparison goods sector. The retail sector is the largest employer in the district and the Council wishes to accommodate growth in town centres in the most spatially advantageous way and ensure that the distinctive character and role of the districts town centres, as identified in the Core Strategy Visions, is protected. The proposed hierarchy is therefore based on identified roles for the towns and their centres, identified needs, their character and the capacity of town centres to accommodate new development. A summary of these features for each town is provided in **Appendix B**.

4.3 To achieve this the Council considers that any '*major'* new retail and commercial development, ie development which is designed to, or is likely to, serve more than a locally derived need should be concentrated in the District's large town centres – namely Fakenham, Cromer, and North Walsham. These centres are the natural foci for residents and visitors to purchase convenience and mainstream comparison goods. The Council regards them as centres that have the necessary scale and character of existing facilities and catchment populations to support the forecast capacity for new comparison goods retailing across the District in the most sustainable manner. The Core Strategy therefore promotes growth in these three town centres in the Visions and Strategic Town policies and it is the intention to identify appropriate development sites within these town centres in the Site Specific Proposals document to accommodate most of the forecast growth. In particular these centres :



- are located within the largest towns in the district in terms of resident populations;
- are the largest town centres in terms of the number of shops, total amount of retail floor space, and broadest range of other services thus encouraging joint trips;
- are geographically well placed to meet needs with each serving its own catchment area. All residents of North Norfolk live within a 20 minute drive time of one or another of these town centres;
- have comparatively better public transport provision and road infrastructure and are consequently more accessible; and
- have the physical capacity to accommodate new development in an acceptable way with opportunities within the town centre boundaries for development.

4.4 In contrast to this the smaller town centres of Hoveton, Holt, Sheringham, Stalham and Wells:

- serve smaller resident populations and catchment areas;
- are less accessible;
- have physically constrained town centres and lack significant opportunities for town centre developments; and
- are characterised by smaller shop sizes, have developed niche markets with a strong representation of independent local retailers, and have strong tourism roles.

4.5 The proposed hierarchy is expressed in three geographical areas centred on the three principal towns[x]

4.6 In the western part of North Norfolk:

- **LARGE TOWN CENTRE: Fakenham**
- **SMALLTOWN CENTRE: Wells-next-the-Sea**
- **SERVICE VILLAGES: Little Snoring and Little Walsingham**

4.7 In the central part of North Norfolk:

- **LARGE TOWN CENTRE: Cromer**
- **SMALLTOWN CENTRES: Holt and Sheringham**
- **SERVICE VILLAGES: Aldborough, Blakeney, Briston/Melton Constable, Corpusty/Saxthorpe, Overstrand, Roughton, Southrepps and Weybourne**

4.8 In the eastern part of the District:

- **LARGE TOWN CENTRE: North Walsham**
- **SMALL TOWN CENTRES: Hoveton and Stalham**
- **SERVICE VILLAGES: Bacton, Mundesley, Catfield, Happisburgh, Horning and Ludham**

5 Shop size thresholds

5.1 In proposing this hierarchy the Council intends that the types and sizes of development in each centre will be proportionate to the size and role of each centre and will maintain its position in the proposed hierarchy. To provide clarity around the role of the hierarchy it is necessary to define

x *It should be noted that the apportionment of the settlements to the three areas of North Norfolk is based on their general location. It does assume that all residents of a particular area will restrict their shopping and other town-centre-related trips to the named settlements within that area.*

what types of development will be treated as 'major' and consequently should be located in one of the larger towns and which developments will be regarded as meeting locally identified needs and therefore may be appropriate in one of the smaller centres. The Council is therefore proposing:

- to limit the size of shops in small towns (no larger than $750m^2$). Only where it can be demonstrated that there is a locally derived need for a larger shop would the Core Strategy allow for a larger shop to be built.
- to defined locally derived need as the need arising within a catchment area based on drive times, for each of the town centres.

Shop Size Threshold

5.2 In establishing an acceptable size for shops in the smaller town centres the Council is mindful that any size specified should be justified by evidence. However the Council also considers that any size is difficult to justify in absolute terms. Nevertheless to provide certainty there is a need to specify a figure to provide clear guidelines. The Council does not wish to be unduly restrictive and recognises that larger format stores are a requirement of many national retailers and can make an important contribution to the vitality and viability of town centres.

5.3 At present there are few large shops outside of Cromer, Fakenham and North Walsham. Only the existing supermarkets at Stalham and department stores at Holt and Hoveton exceed this size in the districts small town centres. The proposed threshold of 750 m^2 would be the largest shop in Wells, Holt and Sheringham. The average size of shop units in the smaller centres is substantially below this figure, for example, at Sheringham it is approximately $90m^2$ and $100m^2$ at Holt[xi]. The proposed threshold is the size of a small supermarket (the Budgens supermarket at Holt is approx 730 m^2 (net sales area)). The Council considers that this size of shop should be sufficient to meet most needs, and importantly would result in buildings of a size which are less likely to dominate the appearance of the smaller towns.

5.4 Small shops in historical town centres are a significant contributor to the character of North Norfolk's settlements and are a feature which the Council wishes to protect. This character underpins the tourism role of the district which is a major contributor to the local economy. Due to the historical nature of the town centres the Council considers that the opportunities for development, particularly larger scale development are very limited in the Small Town Centres.

5.5 The Council is mindful that in exceptional circumstances there may be a need for larger shops but wishes to ensure that the size of any shop is justified by the needs within the town and its immediate surroundings. Hence there is a need to define catchment areas which can be used as a basis for determining if a need exists for any proposed development.

Defining Catchment Areas

5.6 The Core Strategy aims to minimise the use of cars by ensuring that a full range of services, including shops, are available to the greatest number of people close to their homes. Where an applicant for planning permission is required to identify a need for a proposal they will be expected to demonstrate that such a need exists within the catchment of the town. For small centres this is defined as a ten minute drive time whilst for the three larger towns a twenty minute drive time is defined. Clearly some customers will choose to travel greater distances for particular types of shopping.

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xi *Based on floor space figure from geofutures 2002.*

5.7 As stated above all residents in the District live within a 20 minute drive time of one of the Large Town Centres, Similarly, all residents live within a 10 minute drive time of either one of the Large or Small Town Centres.

5.8 By limiting shop sizes and defining catchment areas in the way proposed the intention is that retail proposals will be proportionate to the needs of the catchment and the role of the settlement in the retail hierarchy. The approach would allow for all residents in the District to meet there day to day shopping needs in their local town without long car journeys.

6 Conclusion

6.1 The DTZ Study concludes that there is no identified quantitative need for further convenience goods retailing in the district before 2016. However, growth is expected in the comparison goods sector and qualitative improvements in all types of shopping are desirable in most of the districts towns if they are to maintain and improve market share, reduce travelling and improve levels of self containment. The Councils' approach to the quantity and distribution of new retail development is a pro-active, plan led approach based on locally distinctive policies which look to shape places as identified in the Councils visions for its towns. The inclusion of a clear retail hierarchy, floor space thresholds and defined catchment areas remove uncertainty, and will allow for the growth of town centres in a sustainable way, ensuring that day to day shopping needs are addressed locally. The adoption of a local needs based assessment provides for a degree of flexibility allowing for the erection of larger shops only where it can be justified and is proportionate to needs.

6.2 The policies are consistent with PPS6 which states that the aim should be '*to locate the appropriate type and scale of development in the right type of centre to ensure it fits in to that centre and compliments its role and function .*' They are in conformity with the East of England Plan as they seek to support town centres, protect character, define the role of different types of centre and manage growth in a proactive way by identifying retail opportunity sites.



1 Appendices

Appendix A - Policy extracts from Submission Core Strategy

SS5

Economy Strategy

At least **4,000** additional jobs will be provided between 2001 and 2021 in line with the indicative targets set out in the East of England Plan. Job growth will be achieved via policies for tourism, retail and the rural economy as well as provision of employment land. A range of sites and premises will be made available for employment development, through designation of existing employment sites in all Principal Settlements, Secondary Settlements and some Service Villages and the allocation of new sites in order to increase the choice of sites available and to address the self-containment of settlements in terms of homes / jobs balance.

In **Employment Areas,** as designated on the Proposals Map, only employment generating development proposals in Use Class B1, B2 and B8 will be permitted. Other commercial uses [xii] may be permitted provided that there is no sequentially preferable site available. Allocations for new employment land or as part of mixed-use schemes, will be made in Fakenham, Holt and Stalham. One or more employment allocations will be identified for employment uses that cannot be accommodated on other identified employment land owing to environmental or operational requirements. (e.g. noise etc).

The distribution of employment land will be as follows:

Area	Existing Designations in hectares (of which vacant)[xiii]	Approach and approximate change in supply	Total
Eastern Area	**103.5 ha**	**-11.5 ha**	**91 ha**
North Walsham	80 (20)	reduce supply by 15ha	65
Stalham	1.5 (0)	increase supply by 3.5ha to increase choice and self-containment	5
Hoveton	10 (3)	no change	10
Catfield	12 (1)	no change	12
Central Area	**47 ha**	**+3 ha**	**50 ha**
Cromer	20 (1)	no change	20
Holt	10 (3)	increase supply by 5ha to increase choice and rang	15
Melton Constable	8.5 (0.5)	no change	8.5

xii *eg. petrol filling stations, car/vehicle hire, the selling and display of motor vehicles, builders yards, retail warehousing and hotels*
xiii *Figures accurate at April 2007*



Area	Existing Designations in hectares (of which vacant)[xiii]	Approach and approximate change in supply	Total
Sheringham	8 (2)	reduce supply by 2 ha	6
Western Area	**55 ha**	**+7 ha**	**62 ha**
Fakenham	52 (7)	increase supply by 7ha to increase choice and home/jobs balance as part of urban expansion	59
Wells-next- the-Sea	3 (0.5)	no change	3
TOTAL	**205.5 ha**	**-1.5 ha**	**204 ha**

The **tourist** industry will be supported by retaining a mix of accommodation and encouraging new accommodation and attractions which help diversify the offer and extend the season. Proposals should demonstrate that they will not have a significant detrimental effect on the environment, and cycling, walking and heritage tourism will be encouraged by promoting and enhancing long distance walking and cycling routes and heritage trails.

The **rural economy** and **farm diversification** will be supported including extensions to existing businesses of an appropriate scale and re-use of existing buildings, including appropriate re-use of the operational land at redundant defence establishments.

The role of **town centres** as a focus for a broad range of shopping, commercial and other uses will be supported. Residential proposals will be permitted where they do not result in the loss of shops located within a defined Primary Shopping Area. Proposals should also have regard to the integration of public transport in town centres and seek to provide pedestrian friendly environments. A **retail hierarchy** guides decisions on the scale of new retail and leisure development that will be permitted. The retail hierarchy is;

- Large town centres: Cromer, Fakenham and North Walsham
- Small town centres: Holt, Hoveton, Sheringham, Stalham and Wells-next-the-Sea

Proposals for large scale developments will be located in Large Town Centres with schemes in the Smaller Town Centres limited to those that meet local needs and support their roles as visitor and tourist destinations.

Primary Shopping Areas and **Primary Frontages** are defined in order to concentrate retail development in central areas of towns. Retail opportunity sites will be identified in the Site Specific Proposals document to allow for between 13,300 - 19,900m^2 additional comparison goods retailing and leisure floor space. This floor space will be distributed in the large town centres in these approximate amounts: Fakenham 4,000 to 6,000m^2, Cromer 2,000 to 5,000m^2 and North Walsham 2,500 - 5,000m^2

xiii Figures accurate at April 2007



EC5

Retail Proposals

Size of retail unit	Net sales area of 750m^2 or greater.	Net sales area of 500 – 749m^2	Net sales area of less than 500m^2
Acceptable location	Within a defined Primary Shopping Area of a Large Town Centre	Defined Primary Shopping Area of a Large or Small Town Centre	Within the development boundary on the best sequentially available site.

Commercial Leisure Proposals

Size of leisure unit	Gross floor area of 750m^2 or greater	Gross floor area of 500 – 749m^2	Gross floor area of less than 500m^2
Acceptable location	Within a Large Town Centre	Within a Large or Small Town Centre.	Within the development boundary on the best sequentially available site.[xiv]

For proposals that do not comply with the above it is demonstrated that:

- a need exists within the catchment area for the scale and type of development proposed; and
- no sequentially preferable site is available, suitable and viable (starting with town centre, edge of centre sites, then out-of-centre locations), and
- the proposed development would not, individually or cumulatively, have a significant adverse impact on the vitality and viability of existing town centres;
- and the proposed development would be accessible by a choice of means of transport, including public transport, walking, cycling and the car.

Within Primary Shopping Frontages as defined on the Proposals Map, proposals that would result in more than 30% of the defined frontage being used for non A1 uses (as defined in the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987, as amended) will not be permitted.

Proposals that would have an adverse impact on the operation of an established market will not be permitted unless appropriate replacement provision is made as part of the proposal.

Proposals for retail development in the Countryside will not be permitted unless they comply with other Development Plan policies. In Service Villages proposals for shops up to 250m^2 will be permitted provided the proposed development would not, individually or cumulatively, have a significant adverse impact on the vitality and viability of existing town centres.

xiv *As defined in PPS6 giving priority to town centre, followed by edge of centre, then out of centre sites.*



Appendix B - Role and function of towns

Cromer

- Total retail floor space 16,830m^2
- Average unit size 106m^2

Cromer	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Comparison	89	90	94	91	92	93	95	94	95
Convenience	20	19	20	20	19	23	19	20	18
Miscellaneous		20	19	19	26	28	28	24	25
Service	46	70	75	71	74	78	78	80	85
Vacant	31	20	15	21	13	11	11	13	14
Total		**219**	**223**	**222**	**224**	**233**	**231**	**231**	**237**

1.1 Cromer is one of North Norfolk's largest centres and functions as an important shopping and service destination for its local residents as well as being a major tourist and visitor location. Fundamental to the centre's overall vitality and viability is maintaining and strengthening its important day-to-day and higher order retail offer, alongside its seasonal tourist and visitor attractions. Cromer also has a number of larger out-of-centre stores, selling convenience and comparison goods[xv], along Holt Road, and there is planning permission for further development in this locality. [xvi] These stores mainly serve car-borne shoppers and there is no evidence to suggest that they generate strong linked trips to support the town centre's retail offer.

1.2 The town centre, all of which is situated in the Cromer Conservation Area, has benefited from a recent conservation-led environmental enhancement scheme which has helped to improve its attractiveness to visitors. However, whilst the Council wishes to resist the growth of out-of-centre facilities in favour of town centre/edge of centre locations, it is aware that this may prove difficult to achieve without damaging the centre's conservation assets. Moreover, in the absence of any obvious redevelopment opportunities in the town centre, it will probably be difficult to deliver any significant new facilities over the medium term due to complex issues of land assembly, as evidenced by the comments on the Cromer opportunity sites identified in the DTZ Study.

1.3 Therefore, although there is a need to improve the size and quality of Cromer's retail offer through the provision of larger units, it is recognised that there are significant physical and planning constraints to the development of new facilities in the town centre. In the light of this situation, there is a need for a thorough assessment of the town centre's potential for the provision of new units through redevelopment and for creating larger units through the amalgamation of smaller shops and other properties.

1.4 The DTZ Study identified Cromer as 'the largest and one of the most popular tourist destinations

xv *PPS6 defines convenience retailing as the 'provision of everyday essential items, including food, drinks, newspapers / magazines and confectionary'; and comparison retailing as 'the provision of items not obtained on a frequent basis. These include clothing, footwear, household and recreational goods.'*

xvi *Erection of DIY store (2,787m^2 sales area) and garden centre (745m^2 sales area)at former coal depot, Holt Road, Cromer granted planning permission on 16 October 2006.*



in the District' and this role should be enhanced. Particular areas that need to be addressed in order to assist the achievement of this aim are mitigating the impact of through traffic in the primary shopping area and promoting the evening economy through improvements to the quality of the restaurant offer.

Fakenham

- Total retail floor space 14,340m^2
- Average unit size 148m^2

Fakenham	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Comparison		66	64	60	63	64	64	67	67
Convenience		18	16	16	15	14	12	10	9
Miscellaneous		10	10	12	13	14	12	11	7
Service		51	53	54	54	54	58	60	65
Vacant		12	15	17	14	14	10	8	10
Total		**157**	**158**	**159**	**159**	**160**	**156**	**156**	**158**

1.5 Fakenham is one of the principal town centres in North Norfolk serving a wide catchment area and also attracting tourists and other visitors from further afield. However, there is a 'gap' in its higher-order comparison goods offer resulting in a high proportion of its local catchment population travelling to larger neighbouring centres outside the District. The failure to provide for an element of retail growth identified in the assessment of retail floor space capacity will inevitably have implications for the town centre's existing shops, since an increasing proportion of shopping expenditure will 'leak' to larger centres and stores outside the District. To avoid addressing this issue through new out-of-centre retail developments, a proactive approach must be taken in respect of identifying sites for new retail and mixed-use development in the town centre. Evidence of the opportunities for accommodating such development has been provided by the unsuccessful Wildmoor planning application and the DTZ Study.

1.6 Although Fakenham's role and retail offer should primarily be focussed on meeting the needs of its local population, there is also a significant opportunity to increase its tourist and visitor potential through a variety of initiatives (e.g. improving the linkages between the racecourse - which generates a significant number of trips to the area - and the town centre).

Holt

- Total retail floor space 14,950m^2
- Average unit size 102m^2



Holt	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Comparison		99	104	107	108	108	111	110	113
Convenience		17	18	18	17	17	17	15	20
Miscellaneous		5	5	7	8	10	10	6	6
Service		56	58	55	54	56	55	57	48
Vacant		11	8	6	6	6	4	6	5
Total		**188**	**193**	**193**	**193**	**197**	**197**	**194**	**192**

1.7 Holt is one of the most attractive and popular retail centres in North Norfolk. The Georgian architecture and choice of quality specialist independent stores attract shoppers and visitors from beyond North Norfolk. The centre is also supported by a strong second-home market in the surrounding area, especially along the North Norfolk coast, and the presence of Gresham's School. Accordingly, Holt primarily functions as a niche centre which provides a complementary, rather than competing, offer to the other North Norfolk centres.

1.8 Whilst providing a greater number and mix of specialist shops selling comparison goods, the centre's convenience offer is more limited and results in a high proportion of Holt's population travelling to Cromer for their 'bulk' food purchases.

1.9 Holt attracts more year-round visits than other smaller centres that are important tourist and visitor destinations, and is therefore less vulnerable to seasonal fluctuations in holiday patterns. It is therefore important that the environment, character and choice of stores is maintained and enhanced in order to strengthen its attraction and popularity. The town centre could not readily be expanded without proving detrimental to its character and environment and, therefore, proposals for further retail development should be focussed on improving its café and restaurant offer. The other main improvement relating to Holt should be the provision of additional car parking facilities that are well related to the centre and do not significantly detract from the character of the surrounding area.

1.10 It is considered that any out-of-centre retailing would significantly detract from the vitality and viability of the town centre.

Hoveton

1.11 Hoveton is an important 'gateway' centre to the Broads which has evolved to meet the needs of both its local catchment population and the many tourists that visit the area. For a village with a population of approximately 1775[xvii], it has an unusually large centre, with a wide range of outlets on offer, but dominated by the large comparison and convenience stores operated by the independent retailer 'Roys'.

1.12 It is not considered that there needs to be any significant increase in Hoveton's retail and service

xvii *Norfolk County Council estimate of mid-2004 population. For information purposes, the adjoining village of Wroxham, situated in Broadland District, had an estimated population of 1,580.*

  

business offer, but the overall vitality and viability of the centre would be enhanced by any opportunities taken to improve the quality of cafe and restaurant provision for the benefit of local residents, visitors and tourists.

North Walsham

- Total retail floor space 14,100m^2
- Average unit size 130m^2

North Walsham	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Comparison		53	56	64	62	65	65	64	72
Convenience		17	17	18	18	16	15	15	10
Miscellaneous		11	10	13	16	17	17	13	6
Service		42	44	44	47	52	52	55	65
Vacant		13	11	15	11	8	8	12	8
Total		**136**	**138**	**154**	**154**	**158**	**157**	**159**	**161**

1.13 North Walsham town centre is ranked behind Fakenham in terms of its total floor space and number of 'multiple' stores[xviii]. It primarily serves the everyday convenience and service needs of its local population and it is a less significant tourist and visitor destination. As with Fakenham, the local population which it serves is growing and there is an increasing gap between the centre's retail offer and the needs of the local population. This is particularly marked in the fields of fashion and commercial leisure uses.

1.14 To address these deficiencies, the right-sized units (possibly including a cinema) should be provided in town centre locations. Evidence of an opportunity for accommodating such development has been provided by the DTZ Study.

Sheringham

- Total retail floor space 11,530m^2
- Average unit size 93m^2

Sheringham	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Comparison		76	77	77	76	76	75	76	79

xviii *'Multiple' stores are those stores run by companies with a national or regional presence.*



Sheringham	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Convenience		25	23	25	25	23	22	23	28
Miscellaneous		8	8	9	9	8	9	10	8
Service		49	50	49	50	56	58	61	51
Vacant		4	5	3	4	6	7	4	4
Total		**162**	**163**	**163**	**164**	**169**	**171**	**174**	**170**

1.15 Sheringham is a popular coastal resort town. Its retail and leisure offer caters for the day-to day convenience and service needs of its local residents and the more specialist needs of its significant tourist and visitor population. The town's substantial mix of small retail units is considered to be well suited to its tourism-led customer profile. However, whilst this includes a good provision of smaller convenience-goods shops, there is a gap in the town's foodstore offer. This results in a significant number of local residents travelling to other centres, particularly Cromer, for their main 'bulk' food purchases.

1.16 Accordingly, the DTZ Study has identified a 'qualitative need for a supermarket in Sheringham to help "claw back" a proportion of the shoppers and spend currently "leaking" outside its local catchment , and to anchor its retail offer'.

1.17 Although Sheringham has a number of pubs, cafes and take-away outlets, its evening economy would benefit from an improved restaurant offer to the advantage of both local residents and tourists. Conversely, there is considered to be an over-provision of amusement arcades in the town centre.

Stalham

- Total retail floor space — Not available
- Average unit size — Not available

Stalham	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Comparison		40	39	39	39	45	45	41	44
Convenience		12	12	12	11	9	9	7	7
Miscellaneous		7	7	10	8	8	9	9	8
Service		26	30	32	30	32	35	39	41
Vacant		8	7	4	10	8	7	10	5
Total		**93**	**95**	**97**	**98**	**102**	**105**	**106**	**105**

1.18 Stalham is one of North Norfolk's smaller centres and functions primarily as a convenience and service destination for its local catchment population. This role has been enhanced by the new

  

Tesco store, which has achieved a strong market share of the local convenience spend. However, it appears that the new store has also proved unpopular with some elements of the local community.

1.19 There is clearly a need to reinforce the role and attraction of the High Street as the main shopping area, which was perceived to be in decline even before the Tesco store was developed. Evidence suggests that a significant proportion of the local catchment population travels to larger neighbouring towns for their comparison goods shopping and entertainment needs, and there are concerns about the poor image portrayed by the derelict 'old station' site as a northern gateway to the town and the inadequate linkages between the town and the Broads area situated on the other side of A149.

Wells-next-the-Sea

- Total retail floor space Not available
- Average unit size Not available

Wells	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Comparison		38	38	41	40	40	40	40	43
Convenience		13	14	14	14	15	14	14	11
Miscellaneous		7	7	9	8	15	16	12	10
Service		30	29	30	29	24	24	24	24
Vacant		6	6	1	1	2	1	4	7
Total		**94**	**94**	**95**	**92**	**96**	**95**	**94**	**95**

1.20 Although the smallest of North Norfolk's towns, Wells-next-the-Sea is, by virtue of its coastal location within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, an important visitor and tourist destination. The centre performs a 'twin' role by catering for the day-to-day convenience and service-based needs of the local population and providing a mix of specialist tourist and leisure uses, with the tourism-related outlets concentrated around the attractive harbour area.

1.21 A significant proportion of local residents travel to larger towns for their retail needs and entertainment; and therefore the town would benefit from improvements to the quality of its retail offer to meet the growing demand from residents of the town and nearby villages. However, as with most of North Norfolk's centres, there are built-heritage constraints to new development in the town centre.

1.22 The town retains much of its historical character with small traditional buildings fronting narrow linear streets

1.23 The popularity of Wells-next-the-Sea as a tourist and visitor location has resulted in parking problems during the traditional holiday periods, and these need to be addressed if the town is to protect and enhance the benefits it derives from tourism.