

CHAPTER 9: SHOPPING

INTRODUCTION

- 9.1 Shopping is an essential activity for all sections of the local community, employees and visitors and is an important element of the local economy. The policies in this chapter aim to protect and enhance the area's shopping centres and facilities in order to increase the range, variety and quality of shopping and associated services available to the people of Crawley. The Local Plan must ensure that the future sub-regional shopping role of the town and its main centre is enhanced by providing opportunities for development in an increasingly dynamic retail sector and that the shopping environment meets the expectations of shoppers, retailers and other users.

MAIN CHARACTERISTICS

- 9.2 Crawley's development as a New Town gave the opportunity to provide a locally based network of neighbouring shopping centres and parades, evenly distributed around a modern and accessible town centre. This was planned to have a consolidated, safe and modern main shopping area serving all of Crawley and beyond which was surrounded by a wider town centre commercial area of other businesses and important public uses and facilities.
- 9.3 Up to the mid 1970s, Crawley town centre developed in tandem with the growth of the town centre's shopping area. The opening of County Mall in 1992 enhanced the status of the centre by providing a wider range of large stores, national chain stores and department stores in a modern high quality environment. In particular, it has increased Crawley's retail catchment area and strengthened its retail role within the sub-region. However, its opening combined with the recession has been reflected in the presence of many vacant units, charity shops and temporary shops and the continuing replacement of retail uses by non-retail uses such as banks, building societies and other services. High rents and increasing overheads of prime town centre units have also undermined the ability of many small and specialist retailers to survive or establish in Crawley town centre.
- 9.4 The design of the New Town centre, and in particular the main shopping area, although generally pleasant and safe, is now perceived by many as being dated. This has exacerbated the decline in the area's attraction to retailers and shoppers. The availability of prime development sites in or near the heart of the main shopping area provides the opportunity to improve the range and quality of facilities and to accommodate new trends in retailing, including those which operate outside normal shopping hours. Such development opportunities could also provide the catalyst for a comprehensive environmental improvement of the centre.
- 9.5 Many forms of retailing have been attracted to out-of-town centre locations partly as a response to the growth in car ownership. Generally, major out-of-town centre retail developments provide for the purchase of bulky goods through retail warehouses or bulk food shopping through superstores. These activities are often viewed as inappropriate in a town centre or residential location because of their traffic generation and their requirement for large areas of surface level parking. In many instances these operations also sell goods which are normally available in the town centre or neighbourhood parades and consequently are often seen as undermining the strength and viability of these areas. Currently there are 12 retail warehouses and 2 superstores in the borough and a number of other large warehouse units in industrial areas which have a substantial retail operation.

- 9.6 Local neighbourhood shopping parades were intended to cater for local daily needs such as chemists, bakers, butchers, greengrocers and newsagents. While some of these uses remain in some parades, most have lost several of these shops or seen them amalgamated into one multi-purpose store. These uses have been replaced by other forms of retail operation, uses and services. Despite their relative decline, the neighbourhood parades and local shops perform an important local shopping function and remain a key part of the local community of most areas of Crawley.

PLANNING CONTEXT

Government Guidance

- 9.7 Planning Policy Guidance Note 6, 'Town Centres and Retail Development' , emphasises that local plans should aim to ensure the availability of a wide range of shopping opportunities while sustaining and enhancing the vitality and viability of town centres. For the purposes of interpreting Planning Policy Guidance Note 6 in Crawley, the main shopping area can be clearly identified as the area to which edge of centre and other shopping criteria can most appropriately be applied. The guidance introduces indicators and measures of viability and vitality against which to assess the potential impact of out-of-town retail developments. It emphasises the role of existing centres in establishing development patterns which minimise the need to travel and promote alternatives to the car, particularly through the use of public transport. This is re-emphasised in Planning Policy Guidance Note 13 on Transport.

Regional Guidance

- 9.8 Regional Planning Guidance for the South-East recognises the importance of the social and economic function of town centres and that their focus of activity should be shopping. Wherever possible, retail development should be located within town centres to enable one trip to serve several purposes and to ensure accessibility for those without cars. Only when sites are not available within town centres should edge-of-town or out-of-town developments with good access to public transport be considered.

West Sussex Structure Plan 1993

- 9.9 The Structure Plan identifies Crawley town centre as a sub-regional centre and seeks improvements to its services, facilities and infrastructure in order to consolidate its retail position. The Plan requires retail developments outside existing centres to complement them by only providing facilities which will not otherwise be provided. Such retail development must demonstrate it will not have any serious adverse impact on the vitality and viability of nearby existing centres.

STRATEGY, ISSUES AND OBJECTIVES

- 9.10 The continued growth of Crawley's population and consolidation of its sub-regional shopping role will bring about a demand for new retail development. However, a recent retail study completed in September 1995 by consultants Hillier Parker for Crawley Borough Council has revealed that the main shopping area of Crawley, as defined on the Proposals Map, is going through a period of adjustment. How and where to provide for new retail development in Crawley is the main issue to be addressed by policies in this Chapter.

- 9.11 The retail study revealed that Crawley town centre was going through a period of adjustment. The availability of vacant retail floorspace and the relative strength of nearby competing centres indicated that Crawley had limited scope for extending its catchment area and market penetration up to the turn of the century. Consequently, it is necessary to take account of the vitality and viability of the main shopping area, its accessibility to the whole community, the affect of new retail development on other neighbourhood centres and to consider whether new retail development is a sustainable use of resources, particularly with regard to minimising the energy used for travel.
- 9.12 At present Crawley town centre is facing several problems, in particular how it can be regenerated to provide the type of shopping facilities and environment required in the future and how its status as a sub-regional centre can be consolidated and improved. It does, however, remain the most accessible location in the borough, especially by public transport, and several opportunities for new main shopping area development have been identified.
- 9.13 Town centres should not be considered solely as shopping centres. The vitality of the centre depends on achieving a mix of retail and non-retail uses, including leisure and entertainment uses. However, shopping is the prime function and consideration is needed to determine how much and where non-retail activity can be sustained without undermining the centre's primary shopping function.
- 9.14 The local shopping role of neighbourhood parades has come under increasing pressure from competing forms of retail operation, with the result that many local shops have been replaced by non-retail uses and shops with a catchment area wider than the local neighbourhood. While the vitality of the centre may be enhanced by a wider mix of retailers and services, it is important to ensure the neighbourhood parades retain their ability to cater for local daily needs, especially those of the less mobile sectors of the community.
- 9.15 Outside of the built-up area retail activity also occurs, mostly in the form of farm shops. These shops can provide a socially beneficial role by supplying local produce. Farm shops are however, the subject of policies in the Countryside Chapter, particularly in Policy C11.
- 9.16 The following objectives provide a framework for the policies of this chapter and are also reflected in other chapters of this Plan.

Objectives for Shopping

Objective 1

To ensure that all the reasonable needs of the local community for shopping facilities and access to them are adequately met and are not diminished by any changes in the area

- 9.17 Future retail development in Crawley should aim to meet a specific identifiable need or should clearly demonstrate that it makes a new provision available. Development which results in a substantial loss of retail facilities will be resisted in order to maintain a range and quality of shops.
- 9.18 In order to reduce the impact of traffic on the environment and provide access for the whole community to these developments, it is desirable to locate new retail and associated development where public transport facilities are most accessible and where all shopping requirements can be undertaken without creating further vehicle movements to other locations.

Objective 2

To provide opportunities within Crawley for new retail development and associated uses which cater for new retail trends and protect and enhance the viability and vitality of Crawley town centre as a sub-regional shopping centre.

- 9.19 Retailing is continually subject to new innovations not only in terms of products, but also in terms of operation. There is scope, by increasing the quality and range of retail facilities and services in the town centre's shopping area, to accommodate new forms of retailing and to enhance the town centre's sub-regional shopping role.

Objective 3

To provide opportunities within the main shopping area to widen the range of shops and shopping facilities available and, in particular, to encourage the retention and establishment of more food shops, specialist shops and independent retailers.

- 9.20 As a sub-regional centre, Crawley's main shopping area is dominated by comparison and durable goods shops of national chain stores. The number of food shops, specialist shops and independent retailers has reduced considerably over the last two decades. Many people regret the loss of such shops, not only because their location within the town centre is convenient, but also because they provide interest and variety to the area and the shopping experience. The loss of such shops in the town centre is probably largely the result of retail and property market forces. However, it may be possible to address the situation, for example, by identifying new opportunities particularly suited for the establishment of such shops and by operating planning policies which encourage their development.

Objective 4

To ensure the town centre acts as a focus for shopping, civic, cultural, entertainment and service activities and that these activities are in locations which are accessible by a variety of modes of transport and are readily accessible to the whole community.

- 9.21 The town centre is not just a shopping centre. It provides the main location for many civic, cultural, leisure and service activities. Indeed, the mix of uses makes an essential contribution to the vitality of the town centre and provides a central core which is readily identifiable with the town. It is also considered desirable to promote activities out of normal shopping hours to bring life back into the town centre in the evening.

Objective 5

To ensure there is a balance of activity between the east and the west of the town centre in terms of retail and complementary activities.

- 9.22 The recent opening of County Mall has led to the focus of activity shifting to the east of the town centre. There is a need to ensure that the increased attraction of County Mall can be harnessed by the whole town centre by providing the shopping attractions, complementary facilities and quality environment expected by shoppers today. To achieve objective 5, the plan allocates several sites on the western side of the town centre. These include two large mixed uses sites, a commercial leisure site and two retail sites. Policies also promote environmental enhancements, some of which are on the western side of the centre (SH4 and SH5) and seek to focus new retail development in appropriate locations (SH2 and SH3).

When considering proposals for new retail development outside of the main shopping area the Council will have regard to the extent to which the Town Centre Strategy has been fulfilled and allocations developed and the vitality and viability of the centre.

Objective 6

To promote improvements to the environment and facilities of Crawley town centre.

- 9.23 The environment of the New Town centre, although pleasant, is in need of modernisation and improvement. The openness of certain areas of the centre provides an opportunity to introduce new facilities and to bring about complementary environmental improvements.

Objective 7

To ensure the local shopping role of the neighbourhood parades is maintained and their environment and facilities are improved.

- 9.24 The important role of local neighbourhood parades in providing for the daily needs of local residents ought to be maintained, especially for those who are more dependant on them such as the disabled and elderly. Many of the neighbourhood parades are showing signs of age, inadequacies in their design and poorly maintained environments.

POLICIES

GENERAL

Policy SH1

Planning permission will be granted for new retail development which adds to the range and quality of shopping facilities in the main shopping area of Crawley town centre and the local shopping parades of the neighbourhood centres.

- 9.25 Much retail investment has taken place in Crawley in recent years, both in the town centre and in out-of-town locations. This has reflected both the growth in Crawley's population and the increasingly sub-regional role of the town. The main shopping area of the town centre is considered the most accessible location by a variety of modes of transport and it is felt that new retail development should, wherever possible, be located within this area. A number of retail sites have been identified. On these and on unidentified sites a development must be in accordance with the requirements made in Policy SH12. In addition, this will provide the opportunity to modernise and improve retail facilities in the main shopping area to the benefit of the local community, complementing the public investment which is taking place in the area. Local shops in the neighbourhood centres also perform an important retail function. They fulfil the day to day shopping needs of the local community and consequently the Borough Council would particularly encourage developments that improve these facilities.

Implementation: CBC forward planning and development control processes, private sector and other developers.

Policy SH2

Planning permission will be granted for new retail development on the edge of the main shopping area subject to the following criteria being met:

- (i) the development is of a scale and form, and in a location, which is compatible with the primary objective of sustaining and enhancing the vitality and viability of the main shopping area and town centre as a whole;**
- (ii) the development is in keeping with the character of the area and contributes to the image and attractiveness of the town centre;**
- (iii) the development is well integrated with and has good pedestrian links to the main shopping area;**
- (iv) the development cannot satisfactorily be accommodated within the main shopping area;**
- (v) the development is accessible by a variety of modes of transport;**
- (vi) the development provides car parking in a form which can serve the main shopping area as well as the development itself.**

If a retail development comes forward that would have been refused on grounds of adverse impact on the vitality and viability of the main shopping area, it may be necessary to restrict the development to certain goods and unit sizes in order to protect the retail function of the main shopping area.

- 9.26 Crawley town centre has undergone significant changes in its retail function. The opening of County Mall, combined with the recent recession has meant that the town centre is now going through a period of adjustment and consolidation in terms of its retail floorspace. In addition, a recent health check of the vitality and viability of the town centre has indicated that Crawley's ability to extend its current retail catchment area and market share are limited given the strength of nearby competing centres. Consequently, a period of consolidation should occur within the existing centre. Any further major retail development outside of the main shopping area should only be permitted subject to criteria which ensure that it is complementary to the facilities in the main shopping area and enhances the vitality and viability of the town centre.
- 9.27 In line with the overall strategy for the Plan and the particular objectives for shopping, the town centre is considered the most appropriate location for any future retail development. In order to achieve a consolidated town centre that can take advantage of single shopper trips serving a number of purposes, new retail development should be within a reasonable walking distance of Queens Square. Physical distance is not the only consideration and account should also be had to possible barriers to access such as main roads, the location of existing retail frontages and large single level car parks which can deter the pedestrian. Within the context of the Local Plan, new retail development should not jeopardise the implementation of the Crawley Town Centre Regeneration Strategy. When considering edge of town centre locations for new retail

development, developers will be required to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Council that they have thoroughly assessed all potential main shopping areas options first (this will include allocated sites, unidentified redevelopment and new development opportunities and vacant units). When carrying out this exercise, developers will be expected to be flexible in their store format, design, scale and car parking requirements. When major new retail development is considered appropriate, it should also reflect the quality, attractiveness and character of the centre and integrate fully with the main shopping area.

- 9.28 Accessibility to the whole community by a variety of means of transport is particularly important and locations which provide the opportunity to use modes of transport other than the car will be required. Developers should consider submitting retail impact studies which consider the likely impact of new retail proposals on the main shopping area of the town centre. Such studies should include evidence of approach to site selection, environmental impacts, and an assessment of accessibility and travel patterns of the proposed development. These studies will be a material consideration when determining any application. In order to ensure that retail development on the edge of the main shopping area does not adversely affect its vitality and viability, the control of a proposal's unit size and range of goods sold may be necessary. Bulky, durable goods and large food store development may be appropriately located on edge of centre sites.
- 9.29 Within Crawley there are a number of major retail developments outside the main shopping area. Further development of these sites or any new site, including subdivision into smaller units will be assessed in relation to their impact on the vitality and viability of the main shopping area. Conditions may be imposed to prevent subdivision and to limit the range and type of goods sold where they are necessary to prevent unacceptable harm to the vitality and viability of the main shopping area.

Implementation: CBC forward planning and development control processes, private sector and other developers.

Policy SH3

Planning permission will be refused for new retail development on sites which are not within or on the edge of the main shopping area unless all of the following criteria are met:

- (i) there are no sites within or on the edge of the main shopping area which could reasonably be brought forward for new retail development;**
- (ii) the proposed new retail development, is in a location, and of a scale and form which is compatible with the primary objective of sustaining and enhancing the vitality and viability of the Main Shopping Area and nearby centres;**
- (iii) the development cannot satisfactorily be accommodated within the main shopping area;**
- (iv) the proposed new retail development would be in keeping with the character of the area and would contribute to the image and attractiveness of the town.**

If a retail development comes forward that would have been refused on grounds of adverse impact on the vitality and viability of the main shopping area or nearby neighbourhood centres, it may be necessary to restrict the development to certain goods and unit sizes in order to protect the retail function of the main shopping Area and nearby neighbourhood centres.

9.30 In line with Government guidance, the Local Plan Strategy and the Retail Study of Crawley Town Centre, sites within or on the edge of the main shopping area are the most appropriate locations for major retail development. Sufficient scope should exist within these areas to provide a range of shopping facilities to meet the predicted needs of the community for retail development during the Plan period. However, a situation may arise where a proposed development cannot be satisfactorily accommodated within the main shopping area or on edge of centre sites. In these circumstances out of centre retail development proposals will be considered against the above criteria and the strategy for shopping in Crawley outlined by objectives 1-7.

9.31 Major retail developments which complement rather than compete with the main shopping Area's retail function are less likely to adversely affect the vitality and viability of the town centre as a whole and in particular the Council's strategy for its protection and enhancement. Subject to other criteria in Policy SH3, developments of these types are more likely to be appropriate.

9.32 When considering proposals for major retail development, the primacy of the main shopping area and nearby neighbourhood centres will be paramount. The local neighbourhood centres include:

The Parade, Northgate; Langley Parade, Langley Green; Broadfield Barton, Broadfield; Dorsten Square, Bewbush; Dobbins Place, Ifield West; Furnace Green Parade, Furnace Green; Tilgate Parade, Tilgate; Gossops Green Parade, Gossops Green; Pound Hill Parade, Pound Hill; Peterhouse Parade, Pound Hill; Shires Parade, Pound Hill; Gales Drive, Three Bridges; West Green Parade, West Green; Downland

Place, Southgate; Southgate Parade, Southgate; and Maidenbower Parade, Maidenbower.

Although the eastern end of Three Bridges Road is not a purpose built local shopping centre commonly associated with a residential neighbourhood, it also functions as a local neighbourhood centre. Proposals for major retail development in out of centre locations will be expected to provide a retail impact study and this will be a material consideration when assessing any application. Applications for developments over 2,500 sq.m should include a study, however, it may also be appropriate for much smaller proposals to include a study if there could be an impact on an existing centre. Such studies should include evidence of the approach to site selection, the impact, including cumulative impact with other retail proposals on the main shopping area and nearby neighbourhood centres, the effect of the proposal on local travel patterns, including the demand for travel to stores outside Crawley, and the accessibility of the proposal by alternative forms of transport. This is particularly important within the context of ensuring that a proposal is accessible to the whole community by forms of transport that are sustainable

Implementation: CBC forward planning and development control processes, private sector and other developers.

TOWN CENTRE

- 9.33 The town centre boundary is defined on the Proposals Map. It includes the main shopping area, as defined by the cordon of roads surrounding the individual shopping frontages of policies SH9, SH10 and SH11. Where the main shopping area merges with other uses it has been necessary to divide between the two. The town centre boundary also includes commercial areas and a number of other town centre uses and facilities e.g. the college, library, police station and town hall.

Town Centre Regeneration

Policy SH4

The Borough Council will work with other authorities and interests to achieve the regeneration of Crawley town centre with the aims and objectives of:

- (i) consolidating and enhancing its sub-regional shopping role;**
- (ii) enhancing its physical environment and facilities;**
- (iii) improving the effectiveness and co-ordination of its management and maintenance;**
- (iv) enabling it to be developed and improved in a comprehensive and co-ordinated manner;**
- (v) creating a new, modern and attractive identity;**
- (vi) redressing the imbalance caused by recent retail development on the eastern side of the town centre.**

- 9.34 The design and layout of the shopping centre no longer meets all the expectations and requirements of retailers and shoppers today. As a consequence, the centre has not been able to take full advantage of the potential wider catchment area created by

County Mall. This is particularly the case in the more peripheral and western areas of the town centre where many unit vacancies have occurred and where there is a deterioration in their environments and perceived shopping function. The Borough Council is committed to improving the town centre and has produced a regeneration strategy entitled 'Centre Vision 2000'. The strategy identifies new opportunities for retail development and sets out the basis for securing improvements in the centre's environment. The regeneration of Crawley town centre is an important issue and one which should involve the local community. In particular, public consultation could provide local people and businesses with the opportunity to put forward their views on any improvement schemes. In this way, the local needs and aspirations of the community can be taken fully into account.

Implementation: All CBC departments including town centre co-ordination, landowners and occupiers, private sector and other developers and agencies.

Policy SH5

The Borough Council will seek environmental and other improvements to the town centre in order to:

- (i) create a modern image for the centre consistent with its sub- regional role;**
- (ii) extend and improve the range and quality of retail facilities and services;**
- (iii) provide greater protection from inclement weather;**
- (iv) improve the visual interest and variety of the town centre;**
- (v) improve the appearance and standard of maintenance of the town centre.**

9.35 Improving the environment and other related facilities of the town centre and ensuring it is properly managed are probably the spheres where the local authorities can contribute most to regenerating the centre. Improvements to the environment and facilities of the centre could include new paving, the provision of canopies, enhancing pedestrian safety, new street furniture and street lighting, treatment of building facades, the provision of a children's play area and crèche facilities and the erection of works of art. However, such a comprehensive programme will almost certainly require a large measure of private sector funding, e.g. from capital gains made from development sites.

Implementation: All CBC departments including town centre co-ordination, West Sussex County Council as Highway Authority, landowners and occupiers, private sector and other developers and agencies.

The Boulevard

Policy SH6

The Borough Council will normally support proposals for improvements to the environment and the management of traffic in The Boulevard, especially proposals to improve pedestrian movement between the main shopping area and the major users on the north side of town.

- 9.36 The Boulevard occupies an important position within the town centre. It separates the main shopping areas from an area of major civic uses and important local employers. Partly as a consequence of traffic flows and its layout, including the parallel service road and car park, the environment of The Boulevard is not particularly pleasant. Moreover, the use of the street creates hazards and barriers to pedestrians moving between uses on both sides. Although the Town Centre Regeneration Strategy is mainly targeted at improvements to the main shopping areas, improvements to The Boulevard could also make an important contribution. The Borough Council will support and encourage improvement proposals and will investigate, with the landowners, the opportunities for putting forward improvement schemes. This could include encouraging improvements as part of any proposals for the north side of The Boulevard in conformity with Policy E8.

Implementation: All CBC departments including town centre co-ordination, West Sussex County Council as Highway Authority, landowners and occupiers, private sector and other developers and agencies.

Town Centre Management

Policy SH7

The Borough Council will support the Crawley Town Centre Management Initiative within the context of the Town Centre Regeneration Strategy by:

- (i) co-ordinating and improving the public sector services which are vital to the centre;**
- (ii) actively promoting the image and importance of the centre within and beyond the town;**
- (iii) bringing together public, private and voluntary sectors within an agreed and co-ordinated campaign for the centre's management, improvement and development;**
- (iv) raising funds wherever possible to contribute to improving the overall environment and management of the town centre;**
- (v) persuading private sector owners to manage their land holdings in the best interests of the centre as a whole.**

- 9.37 The Town Centre Management Initiative is considered a vital and integral part of the Town Centre Regeneration Strategy. Its aim is to gather all the management functions within the town centre under a "single influence" to ensure the effective direction and control of a wide range of operations and responsibilities. This includes improving standards of local authority services within the town centre, such as street cleansing, undertaking promotion through advertising and holding special events such as street entertainment and fairs. The Borough Council, in conjunction with the local Chamber of Commerce, has appointed a Town Centre Co-ordinator charged with this responsibility. This requires the full co-operation of the various private, public and voluntary sector interests. A Town Centre Forum has been set-up to achieve the involvement of all these interests.

Implementation: All CBC departments including town centre co-ordination, WSCC as Highway Authority, landowners, public, private and voluntary agencies under umbrella of Town Centre Forum.

Use of Upper Floors in Shopping Areas

Policy SH8

Proposals which bring into use or require a change of use of upper floors within the main shopping area will normally be permitted provided that they:

- (i) enhance the variety and quality of facilities available in the town centre;**
- (ii) will not result in the visual deterioration of the building facade;**
- (iii) will not undermine the viability of an existing ground floor retail unit.**

9.38 The upper floors of shops are used for a variety of purposes often unconnected with the shops below. Office use is most common, although some upper floors are in residential use and others are used for storage or are vacant. The increased use of upper floors can make a valuable contribution to the town centre by increasing the amount of retail floor space available or by providing an opportunity for new complementary uses which prefer not to have a ground floor presence. Notwithstanding the change of use permitted by the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order, 1995 the Borough Council will particularly encourage the retention of good standard residential accommodation on upper floors.

Implementation: CBC forward planning and development control processes, private sector and other developers.

Non-Retail Uses in the Town Centre

9.39 There has been an increasing trend over several decades for various types of non-retail use to occupy ground floor frontages in the shopping centre. This originally occurred in peripheral areas although recently it has become increasingly noticeable in the main shopping area. Whilst it is recognised that a visit to some non-retail uses is a complementary part of a shopping trip, there is concern over the extent to which many non-retail uses should be permitted to encroach upon and dominate the main shopping area. This concern has normally focused upon the extent to which non-retail uses change people's perceptions of an area such that it is no longer viewed as part of the shopping centre. When this occurs it could undermine the viability of existing retail units and reduce the prospects of attracting new shops, particularly given that once a change of use to non-retail is permitted it is very rare for the unit to return to retail use.

9.40 The Town Centre Inset Map identifies those ground floor frontages within the main shopping area where limits are set to control the prominence, dominance and cumulative impact of non-retail uses on the shopping frontages. A Shopping frontage, for the purposes of Policies SH9 and SH10 is defined as a section or block of retail units that is physically separated from another block, for example by a road junction. It is considered to be that block of retail units which is perceived by shoppers as a

distinguishable frontage of shops. In the Core Area, Policy SH9 will apply to sectors (groups) of frontages, for example Queens Square frontages will be a sector and Queensway frontages will be another sector. In the Primary Shopping Area Policy SH10 will apply to each individual frontage rather than sectors. This is because each individual frontage is generally longer and so provides more scope for changes of use.

Core Shopping Area

Policy SH9

At ground floor level within the Core Shopping Area, planning permission for non-retail uses will not be granted unless the following criteria are met:

- (i) the use is within Class A3 (Food and Drink) and A2 (Financial and Professional Services);**
- (ii) the development would not result in more than 15% of the total length of the frontage in the particular sector (i.e Queens Square, Queensway, The Martlets, Broad Walk/The Broadway, and County Mall Ground Floor) being occupied by non-retail uses; and**
- (iii) the development, whether on its own or in association with other existing non-retail uses, would not be so prominent or dominant within the frontage so as to seriously erode its attractiveness.**

9.41 The Core Shopping Area, as identified on the Proposals Map, is centred around Queens Square and the main pedestrian routes to County Mall. This area is viewed as the most important retail area and so a high proportion of retail uses is considered appropriate within each defined sector. A2 and A3 uses can add to the variety of shops in the area and A3 uses in particular can extend the length of time shoppers stay within the shopping area as a whole. However, the function of the area could also be weakened and its attractiveness to shoppers eroded by the introduction of non-retail uses into prominent sites or by the creation of 'dead frontages' in which several non retail units dominate. In most places it is expected that this problem will occur when the continuous frontage of non-retail uses exceeds 20 metres or the number of adjoining A3 or A2 units exceeds 2. Proposals for non-retail uses will also be expected to provide and maintain a shop window display which complements the area's retail function and which would not otherwise prejudice the future use of the unit for retail purposes. Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 7, 'Shopfronts' provides design advice.

Implementation: CBC development control process, private sector and other developers.

Primary Shopping Area

Policy SH10

At ground floor level within the Primary Shopping Area (upper level in the case of County Mall) planning permission for non-retail uses will not be granted unless the following criteria are met:

- (i) the use is within Class A3 (Food and Drink) or Class A2 (Financial and Professional Services);**
- (ii) no more than 50% of the individual frontage would be occupied by non-retail uses; and**
- (iii) the development, whether on its own or in association with other existing non-retail uses, would not be so prominent or dominant within the frontage so as to seriously erode its attractiveness.**

9.42 The Primary Shopping Area, as identified on the Proposals Map, consists of very important shopping frontages which adjoin the core shopping area. As with the core shopping area, the introduction of Class A3 uses is considered complementary to the vitality of the shopping centre. These individual frontages are perceived by shoppers as being supportive to the Core Shopping Area and as such, some opportunities for Class A2 uses are also considered acceptable. However, in a similar way to Policy SH9, account will be taken of the need to avoid 'dead frontages' where the number of adjoining non-retail units and the continuous frontage taken up by non-retail uses might change the perceived function of the Primary Shopping Area and erode its attractiveness to shoppers. In addition, non-retail use proposals will be expected to provide and maintain a shop window display that compliments the area's retail function and would not otherwise prejudice the future use of the unit for retail purposes.

Implementation: CBC development control process, private sector and other developers.

Secondary Shopping Area

Policy SH11

At ground floor level within the Secondary Shopping Area planning permission for non-retail uses will not be granted unless the use is within Class A3 (Food and Drink) or Class A2 (Financial and Professional Services).

9.43 Much of the Secondary Shopping Area, as identified on the Proposals Map, comprises the High Street Conservation Area, once the historic trading centre of Crawley, including Ifield Road and Church Walk. This area has had its shopping function gradually eroded to the point where non-retail uses are now predominant. In the light

of Government guidance, the Borough Council has had to reluctantly conclude it could not sustain a policy of resisting further changes of use to non-retail. However, it is still the Borough Council's intention to restore the High Street's character, appearance and function as a trading centre and, as such, only uses within the Class A2 or A3 of the Use Classes Order would be permitted. In order to enhance the prospects of restoring the area's trading function and to maintain the appearance of the area as, at least potentially, a shopping area, changes of use or alterations to premises will be required to maintain the basic form of a shop unit and a shop window with a window display. Guidance on the special requirements for shopfronts within the High Street Conservation Area is provided in the Conservation Area Statement. Proposals for amusement centres are dealt with separately within Policy SH19.

Implementation: CBC development control process, private sector and other developers.

Town Centre Development Opportunities

Policy SH12

Proposals for new retail development, redevelopment or extensions within the main shopping area will be permitted providing the following criteria are met:

- (i) they are of a high quality design sympathetic to the surrounding area;**
- (ii) they are integrated into and can complement the established structure of the shopping centre;**
- (iii) they enhance the variety of types and sizes of shop units and complementary facilities available in the town centre;**
- (iv) they contribute to the improvement and regeneration of the town centre.**

9.44 In addition to the identified sites, there could be other opportunities in the main shopping area for retail and associated development. Development of these will normally be encouraged provided that they enhance the shopping status, vitality and viability of the town centre and contribute to the consolidation of the centre's retail function. The Borough Council wishes to encourage a range of shopping provision including food shops and specialist shops in order to enhance the sub-regional shopping role of the town centre.

Implementation: CBC forward planning and development control processes, private sector and other developers.

Policy SH13

Land at the following sites within the main shopping area of the town centre is allocated for retail development and compatible town centre uses:

- (1) Queens Square - western end;**
- (2) East side of The Martlets and Parkside car park-(Completed);**
- (3) Queensway/College Road (TC7) car park- (Completed);**
- (4) Cross Keys service area/ The Broadway car park;**
- (5) The “Crawley Traders Market,” High Street.**

9.45 For Crawley town centre to develop its sub-regional shopping role and consolidate its main shopping area, it is appropriate to identify opportunities for new retail development with the intention of increasing the quality and range of town centre facilities and shops, including food shops and independent retailers. Five sites have been allocated for retail purposes within the main shopping area. Two of these sites at, (2) The Martlets/Parkside and (3)Queensway/College Road (TC7) have been completed during the plan period.

- A development at the western end of Queens Square could provide the opportunity for an impressive and well designed development that adds to the variety of activity within the town centre. This area is subject to ongoing regeneration works as part of the Town Centre Regeneration Strategy. The development of the western end of Queens Square would need to integrate with the regeneration of the rest of the Town Centre. Complementary uses or facilities, including leisure, cafes, restaurants or a specialist market are particularly appropriate. However, uses which require vehicular service access from the Broadway should make adequate provision for service parking in such a way as to not affect the use of and improvements to the Broadway. In particular, service vehicles may need to be restricted to certain times of the day when their activity will not adversely affect the main shopping function of the area.

- Cross Keys service area/ The Broadway car park area could be suitable for the development of a precinct of small shop units with other compatible town centre uses, paying particular attention to the site's Conservation Area status, the setting of St John the Baptist Churchyard and the need to form improved pedestrian links between the High Street and the main shopping area.

- The “Crawley Traders Market” in the High Street provides an opportunity for the redevelopment of a small arcade of specialist stores or shops. Upper floors could be used for small office suites. Proposals should include provision for a direct pedestrian link between the Orchard Street multi-storey car park and the High Street.

9.46 Planning briefs have been produced for Queens Square, The Martlets and Parkside car park, Cross Keys and the Crawleys Traders Market. It is intended that briefs setting out the planning requirements and guidelines will be produced for the other sites.

Implementation: CBC forward planning and development control processes, private sector and other developers

The Town Market

Policy SH14

The Borough Council will seek to retain the Town Market within the High Street following the construction of the High Street Relief Road.

- 9.47 The Town Market is a well used and popular facility which adds to the attractions of the town centre, bringing in shoppers from outside of Crawley. It is the Borough Council's intention to seek its retention within the High Street. This will help restore some of the High Street's trading function by attracting shoppers and, in due course, shops. This will also contribute to the Regeneration Strategy's objective of restoring the east-west balance of the town centre. It will be necessary for the design and management of the market to be compatible with the historic trading function, character and appearance of the High Street.

Implementation: CBC Planning and Environmental Services including town centre co-ordination, WSCC as Highway Authority, market operators.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PARADES AND LOCAL SHOPS**Policy SH15**

The Borough Council will seek to maintain the role of neighbourhood and local shopping facilities in providing mainly for the daily needs of the surrounding local community.

- 9.48 Despite changes in consumer behaviour, primarily as a consequence of the increased use of the car for shopping purposes, local neighbourhood shopping facilities still play an important role in meeting the day-to-day needs of many local residents, particularly the less mobile.

Implementation: CBC Planning and Environmental Services, Property and Construction Services, private sector and other developers.

Non-Retail Uses in Neighbourhood Parades**Policy SH16**

Proposals for the change of use from Class A1 (Retail) of the ground floor of shop units in neighbourhood parades and other parts of housing areas will only be permitted if:

- (i) the new use is within Class A2 (Financial and Professional Services) or Class A3 (Food and Drink) or other uses that commonly form part of a local shopping trip;**
- (ii) they do not adversely affect the ability of the local centre to provide for the daily needs of local residents;**
- (iii) the proposals include the provision and maintenance of a shop window display;**
- (iv) there is no adverse impact upon the amenity and environment of the locality by virtue of additional traffic, parking demand and level of general activity.**

- 9.49 Many neighbourhood parades have become vulnerable to the encroachment of non-retail uses such as estate agents, betting shops, and fast food establishments. Although these can often provide a useful local service, their extensive introduction can undermine the viability of existing units which cater for local shopping needs. Therefore, an assessment of the extent to which such encroachment would undermine a neighbourhood centre's role is required and would vary according to the size and function of each centre. If necessary, conditions will be imposed on any planning consent limiting the change of use to that specifically permitted. Where such uses would cater for a wider catchment area than the immediate local neighbourhood, it is necessary to consider whether, by attracting traffic from beyond the neighbourhood, the proposal could have an adverse impact on the local residential area. Local neighbourhood parades are important to the community. Consequently, other non-retail use proposals should reflect the nature and type of activity that occurs within these parades.

Implementation: CBC forward planning and development control processes, private sector and other developers.

Improvements to Neighbourhood Parades

Policy SH17

The Borough Council will seek improvements in the overall environment, management and attraction of neighbourhood parades.

- 9.50 The appearance of many of the neighbourhood centres is dated, reflecting the period in which they were developed. Several suffer from various problems including vandalism, poor security, lack of weather protection and inadequate maintenance often contributing to an overall poor environment. Modernisation can only occur on a gradual basis given the limited funds available. However, in the case of Broadfield Barton Neighbourhood Centre, opportunities may arise to undertake improvement of the centre in conjunction with treatment of the twin-deck car park which may have to be altered or replaced due to maintenance problems. Changes could include a new user-friendly car park, improvements to the shopping parade, better lighting and security measures and the introduction of further soft landscaping.

Implementation: CBC Planning and Environmental Services and Property Construction Services, private sector and other developers.

Policy SH18

Land within Broadfield housing areas 14 (Woodside) and 15A (Hillside) will be reserved for local shopping facilities to serve the Tollgate Hill area of Broadfield neighbourhood.

- 9.51 The final stages of the development of Broadfield will result in nearly a thousand houses being more than half a mile from the existing neighbourhood centre. The Borough Council has indicated that a site to the south and east of William Morris Way could be made available for a shopping facility if sufficient retail demand exists.

Implementation: CBC forward planning and development control processes, Property and Construction Services, private sector and other developers.

AMUSEMENT CENTRES

Policy SH19

Proposals for amusement centres will only be permitted within the town centre but outside the Core or Primary Shopping Areas provided that:

- (i) they are not in close proximity to residential property, churches, schools, hotels, hospitals and other sensitive community uses;**
- (ii) they do not have an adverse impact upon the amenity, environment and character of the locality, especially any conservation areas or areas of special environment quality or character.**

9.52 Amusement centres require special attention as their presence in town centres and other sensitive locations can cause concern to retailers, community groups, and the general public. Amusement centres are not considered to be suitable neighbours for schools, churches, hospitals, hotels, or residential property. Government advice contained in PPG6, "Town Centres and Retail Developments", indicates that amusement centres are most likely to be appropriate in secondary shopping areas or areas of mixed commercial uses and not normally in primary shopping areas. Much of the Secondary Shopping Area is designated as a conservation area where an amusement centre would be acceptable only if it can be proven that there would be no adverse impact upon the character and appearance of the area. The neighbourhood centres are unsuitable because of their location within residential neighbourhoods and the objective of the Borough Council to retain the shopping parades for meeting the daily shopping needs of the surrounding community. Any permission for an amusement centre will normally be subject to a condition requiring games of a sessional nature, such as cash bingo, not to be played on the premises in order to protect surrounding areas from the noise, disturbance, and road safety problems generated by such a use.

Implementation: CBC development control processes, private sector and other developers.

PETROL FILLING STATIONS**POLICY SH20**

Proposals for retail areas attached to petrol filling stations within residential areas will normally be permitted provided that:

- (i) they are clearly subsidiary to the main function of the site;**
- (ii) they are intended primarily to provide a local shopping facility;**
- (iii) the additional custom, activity and traffic attracted to the station has no adverse impact upon the amenity and environment of any surrounding residential area.**

9.53 In recent years, there has been a trend for petrol filling stations to include an increasingly large area devoted to the selling of convenience foods, drinks, confectionery and take-away hot food. Whilst in suitable locations the development of a wider retail role for petrol filling stations can add to the choice of convenient local shopping facilities, there is also concern about this new trend. The increased use of

petrol filling stations as shops should not be allowed to undermine the local shopping role of the neighbourhood parades which are normally more conveniently and safely located to serve all the community, especially children and the less mobile. In addition it is important that the extra activity and traffic generated by the use of a filling station as a shop should not have an adverse impact upon the amenity and road safety of the surrounding area.

Implementation: CBC development control process, private sector and other developers.

MONITORING

9.54 The main test of the strategy adopted in this chapter and of the effectiveness of its policies and proposals, is the extent to which the objectives set out in paragraphs 9.10-9.24 are met. An underlying theme is the regeneration of the original New Town shopping areas to meet current and future needs, through consolidation of the town centre's sub-regional shopping role and the provision of opportunities for new retail development.

9.55 Most policies require monitoring through regular analysis of planning decisions and implementation. In addition, periodic assessment is required of:

- progress on the Town Centre Regeneration Strategy (SH4);
- progress on environmental and other improvements, in the context of the Town Centre Regeneration Strategy (SH5);
- progress on the Town Centre Management Initiative (SH7);
- the scope for environmental improvements in the High Street (SH14);
- the continuing viability of neighbourhood parades and local shops (SH15);
- the need and opportunity for neighbourhood centre improvements (SH17);
- the need and opportunity for local shops in the Tollgate Hill area of Broadfield (SH18).