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1 BACKGROUND


1.2 PPS4 requires local planning authorities to keep the following matters under review:
   
a) the network and hierarchy of centres
b) the need for further development and
c) the vitality and viability of centres

1.3 Local authorities should measure the vitality and viability and monitor the health of their Town Centres over time to inform judgements about the impact of policies. Local authorities should also regularly collect market information and economic data, preferably in co-operation with the private sector, on the key indicators (listed in Section 3 below). The list of Town Centre Health Check indicators set out in PPS4 is almost identical to that recorded under PPS6. Any changes to the indicators have been highlighted in bold. The Town Centre Health Checks are now to be included in Annual Monitoring Reports.

1.4 Local authorities also need to assess the retail and leisure capacity/need and the potential of the area to accommodate new development. They should identify centres in decline, those that could be extended, and those where change needs to be managed.

1.5 The last Town Centre Vitality and Viability report was produced in 2008, published on our website in Autumn 2009, and forms the baseline for measuring changes in Vitality and Viability.

1.6 Town Centre Surveys are undertaken by the Council’s Planning Policy Service annually in early summer. The use of each unit is classified by their Use Class\(^1\), with most Town Centre uses falling into one of the following classes.

   A1 - Shops
   A2 - Financial and professional services e.g. banks, building societies, estate agents
   A3 - Restaurant and Cafés
   A4 - Drinking Establishments e.g. Public Houses, wine bars
   A5 - Hot food take away
   B1 - Business e.g. Offices other than in a use within Class A2

\(^1\) Town and Country Planning (Use Class) Order 1987 (as amended)
C1 - Hotel  
C2 - Residential institutions e.g. Hospitals, nursing homes  
C3 - Dwellinghouse  
D1 - Non-Residential Institutions e.g. Medical and health services - clinics and health centres. Museums, public libraries, art galleries, non-residential education, church halls  
D2 - Assembly and Leisure e.g. cinemas, indoor and outdoor sports and leisure  
Sui Generis - in a class of its own e.g. laundrettes, petrol filling stations, theatres, selling and displaying of motor vehicles  

2 RETAIL NEED  

2.1 The need/ capacity for further retail floorspace until 2021 was considered by the Guildford Retail Study (June 2006). The results are shown in the table below:  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of floorspace</th>
<th>Gross floorspace required by 2021 (m²)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Town Centre comparison goods²</td>
<td>71,475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convenience goods³</td>
<td>4,399 - 8,501</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulky goods retail warehousing⁴</td>
<td>22,030</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.2 Some of the assumptions made in the 2006 study regarding population trends, and expenditure growth in calculating need within Guildford’s comparison and convenience catchment areas need reconsidering. The impact of the economic downturn, the growth of other forms of shopping including internet shopping, and changes in retail densities may have impacted on the scale of the identified retail need. An update to the 2006 Study will be competed before the end of 2010, and will be added to the Retail Needs Study Local Development Framework evidence base webpage. This update will also include a borough Leisure Needs Assessment.  

2.3 Since the 2006 Study several large planning applications have been approved for approximately 6,000m² comparison floorspace (much of this bulky goods floorspace around Woodbridge Road). An additional 1,100m² convenience floorspace has been approved.  

² Comparison retailing is the provision of items not on a frequent basis. These include clothing, footwear, household and recreational goods. (Planning Policy Statement 4)  
³ Convenience retailing is the provision of everyday essential items, including food, drinks, newspapers/magazines and confectionery. (Planning Policy Statement 4)  
⁴ Large stores specialising in the sale of household goods (such as carpets, furniture and electrical goods), DIY items and other ranges of goods, catering mainly for car-borne customers. (Planning Policy Statement 4)
approved in the borough. Two notable new convenience stores in Guildford Town Centre are a Marks and Spencer Simply Food store (220sqm) at Guildford Railway Station that opened in July 2010, and a small Tesco Express (approx. 430m²) at 7-11 Bridge Street, as a result of a permitted change of use from a bar in 2010.

2.4 In Guildford Town Centre, two applications were approved in 2008 for the western half of the Civic Hall car park that included 564m² of A3 and A4 floorspace in connection with the new entertainment venue. Planning permission was also granted in 2008 for the extension of the Guildford Hotel close to the new Civic Entertainment Venue at the top of North Street. This will provide a four star Radission Edwardian hotel of 185 bedrooms with full leisure and conference facilities, and includes 413m² of A3 floorspace.
3 TOWN CENTRE HEALTH CHECK INDICATORS

PPS4 includes all the indicators previously monitored under PPS6. The new requirements of PPS4 are highlighted below.

I. Diversity of main Town Centre uses (by number, type and amount of floorspace): the amount of space in use for different functions – such as offices; shopping; leisure, cultural and entertainment activities; pubs, cafes and restaurants; and, hotels.

II. The amount of retail, leisure and office floorspace in edge-of-centre and out-of centre locations.

III. The potential capacity for growth or change of centres in the network: opportunities for centres to expand or consolidate, typically measured in the amount of land available for new or more intensive forms of Town Centre development.

IV. Retailer representation and intentions to change representation: existence and changes in representation of types of retailer, including street markets, and the demand of retailers wanting to come into the centre, or to change their representation in the centre, or to reduce or close their representation.

V. Shopping rents: pattern of movement in Zone A rents within primary shopping areas (i.e. the rental value for the first 6 metres depth of floorspace in retail units from the shop window).

VI. Proportion of vacant street level property and the length of time properties have been vacant: vacancies can arise even in the strongest Town Centres, and this indicator must be used with care. Vacancies in secondary frontages and changes to other uses will also be useful indicators.

VII. Commercial yields on non-domestic property (i.e. the capital value in relation to the expected market rental): demonstrates the confidence of investors in the long-term profitability of the centre for retail, office and other commercial developments. This indicator should be used with care.

VIII. Land values and the length of time key sites have remained undeveloped: data on changes in land value and how long key Town Centre and edge of centre sites have remained undeveloped provide important indicators for how flexible policies should be framed and can help inform planning decisions.

IX. Pedestrian flows (footfall): a key indicator of the vitality of shopping streets, measured by the numbers and movement of people on the streets, in different parts of the centre at different times of the day and evening, who are available for businesses to attract into shops, restaurants or other facilities.

X. Accessibility: ease and convenience of access by a choice of means of travel, including – the quality, quantity and type of car parking; the frequency and quality of public transport services and the range of customer origins served; and, the quality of provision for pedestrians, cyclists and disabled people and the ease of access from main arrival points to the main attractions.

XI. Customer and residents’ views and behaviour: regular surveys will help authorities in monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of Town Centre improvements and in setting further priorities. Interviews in the Town Centre and at home can be used to establish...
views of both users and non-users of the centre, including the views of residents living in or close to the centre. This information could also establish the degree of linked trips.

XII. Perception of safety and occurrence of crime: should include views and information on safety and security, including from the threat of terrorism, and where appropriate, information for monitoring the evening and night-time economy.

XIII. State of the Town Centre environmental quality: should include information on problems (such as air pollution, noise, clutter, litter and graffiti) and positive factors (such as trees, landscaping and open spaces).
4 GUILDFORD TOWN CENTRE

4.1 The 2008 Report provided a baseline against which we assess changes within the Town Centre. It noted 489 units in the designated shopping frontage. In the 2008 report, only one floor of the Friary shopping centre was included in the survey as only the ground floor shops were surveyed. This year's report has incorporated all three floors of the Friary Shopping Centre as Local Plan Policy S5 relates to the secondary shopping area, and all units in the Friary Centre are subject to this policy. This has increased the total amount of units in the Guildford Town Centre from 489 to 530. This compares to 519 units recorded in the GOAD Centre Report 2004.

4.2 The Town Centre survey was undertaken in June 2010 by the Council's Planning Policy Service. These surveys represent a snapshot in time, and do not record length of vacancy, therefore this indicator should be used with care.

![All Designated Frontage](image1.png)

**Figure 1: Guildford Town Centre designated shopping frontages (June 2010)**

4.3 The shopping frontage consists of primary, secondary, tertiary and specialist shopping frontages within the Town Centre as allocated in the Local Plan 2003. The primary, secondary, tertiary and specialist shopping areas are shown in the Local Plan 2003 Town Centre Proposal Map. The four shopping frontages are defined as follows:

4.4 The Primary Shopping Frontage is the prime shopping area along the western part of the High Street where the main concentration of the retail multiples are represented. This area is characterised by the highest proportion of A1 (shop) uses, the highest Zone A rental
values, and predominantly the highest pedestrian flow levels.

The Secondary Shopping Frontage provides greater opportunities for a diversity of uses, so performing an important function within the Town Centre. Its rental levels and footfall enable a wider range of shopping uses.

The Tertiary Shopping Frontage is where greater flexibility of uses can be permitted without harming the shopping character, vitality and viability. This Tertiary frontage, while not part of the core shopping area, provides a range of uses that are a vital part of the functioning of the Town Centre. These streets also provide important pedestrian links to and from the more centrally located shopping areas within the Town Centre and the surrounding residential areas.

The Specialist Shopping Frontage is centred on three streets where it is appropriate to permit a higher proportion of food and drink (Class A3) uses. These uses play an important role in enhancing the Town Centre's evening economy.

4.5 The 2008 Vitality and Viability report inadvertently included Phoenix Court as secondary frontage when it is actually specialist frontage. The 2008 corrected percentages are as follows: Primary 14% (67 units), Secondary 63% (308 units), Tertiary 17% (84 units) and Specialist 6% (30 units). Comparing the corrected 2008 figures to Figure 1 shows that there has been an increase in the Secondary frontage that is due to the inclusion this year of the basement and first floors of the Friary Shopping Centre, not surveyed in 2008. Both the Primary and Tertiary frontages have decreased by one percent while the Specialist frontage has remained the same.

4.6 The graphs used throughout this report will use the corrected 2008 results making it possible to compare the results from this year.

4.7 The Council is pursuing the potential for a Business Improvement District (BID) for the Town Centre. A BID is a defined area within which businesses have voted collectively to fund local improvements, to enhance their trading environment, and to provide new services within the area. Improvements may include increased security, environmental improvements, and marketing. These are funded by a BID levy charge that is payable by all businesses liable for non-domestic rates within the area. BID works and initiatives are additional to services and works funded and provided by the Council.
I. Diversity of main Town Centre uses (by number, type and amount of floorspace): the amount of space in use for different functions – such as offices; shopping; leisure, cultural and entertainment activities; pubs, cafes and restaurants; and, hotels.

Figure 2: Guildford Town Centre designated frontage uses (June 2010)

4.8 Of a total of 530 units in Guildford designated shopping frontage (consisting of primary, secondary, tertiary & specialist frontages), 63% of units were in retail use. 9% were A2 and 8% A3, with a very small proportion in other Town Centre uses. 9% (48 units) were vacant. A few units have a dual use, for example A1/A3. Comparing this data to the 2008 survey, the main differences are that A1 retail has decreased by 4% and vacant units have increased by 5%.
Figure 3: Vacancy rate in Guildford Town Centre 1988-2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Oct 1988&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>June 1995&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>1999&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>2003&lt;sup&gt;d&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>2004&lt;sup&gt;e&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>2005&lt;sup&gt;f&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>2008&lt;sup&gt;g&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>2010&lt;sup&gt;h&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vacancy Rate</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>4.43%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup> and <sup>b</sup> Guildford Town Centre Shops Survey, Guildford Borough Council, October 1995  
<sup>c</sup> Surrey Town Centre Health Checks, Surrey County Council 2002  
<sup>d</sup> Prime Retail : The definitive guide to the UK’s leading High Streets, Gerald Eve, Autumn 2003  
<sup>e</sup> Experian Survey 9 July 2004, reported in Guildford Retail Study 2006, Chase and Partners  
<sup>f</sup> Guildford Retail Study 2006, Chase and Partners (surveyed October 2005)  
<sup>g</sup> Guildford Town Centre Survey, Guildford Borough Council, March 2008  
<sup>h</sup> Guildford Town Centre Survey, Guildford Borough Council, June 2010

4.9 Figure 3 shows a 5% increase in vacant units between 2008 and 2010. This increase shows that despite being a strong retail location, Guildford is not immune from the economic downturn. Despite this increase however, Guildford Town Centre still fares favourably compared to the national average of 12.3%<sup>5</sup>. The primary frontage was the

<sup>5</sup> The Local Data Company (29/06/2010)
most resilient in the economic downturn, with a 4% vacancy rate at the time of survey, and units not being vacant for long (see Figure 13). The secondary frontage had 9% vacancy and specialist frontages had 10% vacancy. The highest vacancy rate was recorded in the tertiary frontage at 12%. The draft Town Centre Area Action Plan (Preferred Options June 2006) is now being progressed as a supplementary planning document. This document will encourage and facilitate strengthening of the retail offer and environmental enhancements in the centre, particularly in these more peripheral areas, making them more resilient to economic downturn.

4.10 Although the overall vacancy rate has increased since 2008, this is not unexpected in an economic downturn. Despite the downturn, many new stores and restaurants opened in Guildford Town Centre in 2009 and 2010, increasing its attractiveness as a retail destination. Following a change of use application from a vacant shop unit on Friary Street just outside of the designated retail frontage, Jamie Oliver’s Italian restaurant, one of only a few in the country, opened in October 2009.

4.11 In September 2010 Primark opened on the ground floor of the Friary Shopping Centre in the large unit occupied by British Home Stores until April 2010. It is likely to be a main attraction, potentially increasing footfall in this part of the indoor shopping centre.

4.12 The façade improvements and surface enhancement works to Friary Street have resulted in a vastly improved shopping and restaurant environment in this part of the Town Centre. Almost all of the refurbished units are now occupied, including some key stores such as TK Maxx (in the units formerly occupied by Woolworths), and Superdry. These key multiple retailers increase the attractiveness and therefore footfall of this part of the Town Centre.

4.13 Other recent enhancements to the Town Centre include a £2 million conversion of the HSBC bank building at 168 High Street beside the George Abbott statue to provide a retail unit accommodating the Steamer Trading Cookshop, with offices at the rear of the shop and permission for a coffee shop on the second floor. The modern façade integrates well into the Town Centre Conservation Area and is an attractive addition.
4.14 67 units were recorded in the primary frontage. Figure 4 shows a comparison between 2010 and 2008. There has been a decrease in the number of A1 units since 2008. This is mainly due the increase in vacant units from 0 to 4% (3 units) in the primary frontage that were previously in A1 use. Whilst the increase in vacant units in the primary frontage is worrying, the vacant units were being refurbished so will not remain vacant for long. This highlights the fact that this survey represents a snapshot in time and some slight variation is expected depending on when the survey is taken.

4.15 In accordance with national policy, primary frontages should contain a high proportion of retail uses. Local Plan Policy S4 protects the retail function of this area by not permitting changes of use of retail (A1) units to other uses. Under this policy, the 88% recorded in 2008 of the units in the primary frontage in A1 should be retained in subsequent years, unless any of these units are vacant at the time of survey. The drop in proportion of A1 use between 2008 and 2010 is due to the slight increase in the number of vacancies. There has been no change of use approved within the primary frontage since 2008. This shows that Local Plan Policy S4 is effective, as it does not permit a change from A1.
4.16 From this year all levels of the Friary Shopping centre have been included in the survey, as the entire shopping centre is designated as secondary frontage. In the 2008 survey only the ground floor of the shopping centre was surveyed. This year all levels of the Friary Centre were included in the survey as explained in Para 4.1. This has increased the number of units in the secondary frontage from 316 to 345.

4.17 Local Plan Policy S5 permits changes to A2 and A3 uses (and therefore also to A4 and A5 uses) provided that several conditions area met (including retention of at least approximately two-thirds of units in A1 use, and provided there would be no more than two adjacent permitted non-A1 units). Exceptionally, other main Town Centre uses may be permitted. There have been two changes of uses approved from A1 use in the secondary frontage; both of these to A3 use. The change of use to A3 is in accordance with Policy S5.

4.18 Figure 5 shows that similarly to the primary frontage, the main change since 2008 is a reduction in the percentage of A1 and an increase in the number of vacant units.

4.19 The secondary frontage vacancy rate was 9%, with the only notable clusters of vacant units occurring on White Lion Walk, Friary Street (that was recently refurbished) and Swan Lane. Friary Street was refurbished in 2008-2009 with new facades to the shops, removing
unsightly concrete pillars, and adding attractive modern glass shopfronts. The street paving was also replaced, resulting in a far more appealing shopping environment.

**Tertiary Frontage**

![Tertiary frontage comparison chart](chart)

Figure 6: Percentage of use class within the tertiary frontage (June 2010)

4.20 Figure 6 shows a far greater mix of uses in Guildford’s tertiary frontage than in the secondary frontage. The Local Plan requires the tertiary frontage to retain a proportion of A1 uses for day-time activity, whilst allowing complimentary uses. Local Plan Policy S6 permits changes to A2 and A3 uses (and therefore also to A4 and A5 uses) in the tertiary frontage provided that several conditions area met (including retention of at least approximately one-third (33%) of units in A1 use, provided there would be no more than three adjacent permitted non-A1 units), and the length of any non-A1 (retail) frontage would not exceed 20 metres. Exceptionally, other main Town Centre uses may be permitted.

4.21 There are a total of 87 units in the tertiary frontage. There is only a small difference between 2008 and 2010, most notably a 3% decrease in use class A2 and a 4% increase in the number of vacant units. Between 2008-2010, only one change of use application from A1 was approved, being a change to A2. This is in accordance with Policy S6.
Specialist Frontage

![Specialist frontage comparison chart]

**Figure 7: Percentage of use class within the specialist frontage (June 2010)**

Surprisingly, given that the Policy S7 permits greater flexibility (excepting for changes to A2 use) than Policy S6 (for Tertiary Shopping Frontages), there is a relatively high proportion (55%) of ground floor units in A1 retail use. The proportion of A2 uses is higher (at 3%) than expected given that Policy S7 does not permit changes to A2 use. There are two likely explanations for this, that these A2 uses are historic (in place before the policy), and/or that changes of use from A3 (restaurant/cafés), A4 (drinking establishments) and A5 (hot food takeaways) to A2 (financial and professional uses) being permitted development6 and therefore do not require planning permission. Between 2008 and 2010, two change of use applications were approved from A1 to sui generis uses (nail salon) through exceptional circumstances under Policy S7.

4.22 There are 31 units in the specialist frontage, at Phoenix Court and Chapel Street / Castle Street, only 6% of the total designated frontage units. There is a small cluster of vacant units on Phoenix Court but this may be due to the redevelopment of Friary Street that backs onto Phoenix Court.

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6 Under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (as amended)
II. The amount of retail, leisure and office floorspace in edge-of-centre and out-of centre locations.

Edge-of-Centre

4.23 The edge-of-centre is defined in PPS4, where it has two definitions, one for retail use\(^7\), and a wider area for non-retail uses\(^8\).

4.24 As no Town Centre boundary is designated by the Local Plan 2003, the Town Centre boundary is the Guildford Town Centre Parking Boundary (defined by Policy M1 - Parking Provision and shown on the Proposals Map, see figure 8 below), as referred to in the Guildford Town Redevelopment Sites Chapter of the Local Plan.

\(7\) A location that is well connected to and within easy walking distance (i.e. up to 300 metres) of the primary shopping area (the area where retail development is concentrated, and generally comprises the primary and those secondary frontages that are contiguous and closely related to the primary shopping frontage).

\(8\) A location that is generally within 300 metres of the Town Centre boundary. Offices outside of a Town Centre but in urban areas within 500m of a public transport interchange are also considered as edge-of-centre
4.25 Edge of centre retail floorspace in Guildford is almost all within the designated tertiary and specialist frontages. The Town Centre Boundary, Primary Shopping Area and shopping frontages are currently being reviewed through Local Development Framework documents.

4.26 The main area of leisure floorspace in Guildford is within the Town Centre boundary, to the west of the designated shopping frontage between Onslow Street / Millbrook and the River Wey. This includes various bars, public houses, nightclubs, two theatres and a 9-screen cinema.

4.27 Guildford Town Centre is also a key location for offices, concentrating around Guildford station. The 2008 report identified Guildford Town Centre as an administrative centre, including for public sector offices. A key office location in Guildford Town is west of Onslow Street / Millbrook, with a particular concentration of large office blocks around Guildford Railway Station.

4.28 There are various arts and cultural facilities in the Town Centre, including the Yvonne Arnaud and Electric Theatres, Guildford museum, Guildford library and Guildford House and Harvey Galleries. The Council is currently replacing the Civic Hall with a modern 1,000 capacity (or 1,700 standing) entertainment facility that is due for completion in 2011. It will include a main auditorium, a versatile studio space, two function rooms, five seminar rooms, bars and a cafe.

Out-of-Centre

4.29 An out-of-centre location is one that is neither in, nor on the edge of a centre, but is within the urban area. With the exception of the two main out-of-centre food stores in the borough (Sainsbury and Tesco), the majority of out-of-centre retail floorspace in the borough is centred on the junction of Woodbridge Road and Ladymead, north of Guildford Town Centre. These are mainly retail warehouses, large stores specialising in the sale of bulky goods (such as carpets/floor coverings, furniture/furnishings, electrical goods, and DIY items), and catering mainly for car-borne customers.

4.30 Ladymead Park, completed in 1991 was approved prior to the “Town Centre first” government policy introduced in the mid-1990s. The planning permission for this retail park is specifically for non-food retail (with the exception of the Burger King restaurant unit and Unit 8, built in 2002/3 and now occupied by Comet).
### Figure 9: Ladymead Park Map

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Floor Area m²</th>
<th>Use Class</th>
<th>Shop Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B&amp;Q</td>
<td>4191</td>
<td>A1</td>
<td>B&amp;Q (DIY)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 8</td>
<td>1858</td>
<td>A1</td>
<td>Comet (white goods and electrical items)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(previously Unit 6)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 1</td>
<td>3861</td>
<td>A1</td>
<td>Homebase (DIY, incl. Moben, Sharps, Dolfin)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 5</td>
<td>529</td>
<td>A3</td>
<td>Burger King (drive through restaurant)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 2A</td>
<td>2760</td>
<td>A1</td>
<td>Furniture Village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 2B</td>
<td>1516</td>
<td>A1</td>
<td>Carpet Right</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 3A</td>
<td>929</td>
<td>A1</td>
<td>Vacant (formerly Allied Carpets)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 3B</td>
<td>1563</td>
<td>A1</td>
<td>Sports Direct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 4</td>
<td>1848</td>
<td>A1</td>
<td>Halfords (car maintenance, including Carphone Warehouse)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Figure 10: Ladymead Park Units (June 2010)
4.31 The park is predominantly occupied by DIY and retailers selling bulky goods. Ladymead is one of the most successful non-food retail parks in the country, with many of the retailers having continuously occupied the same stores for over 18 years. Since the early 1990s there have been a few changes in occupants. Allied Maples replaced by Allied Carpets (although this unit is now vacant) and Sports Direct, Comet has moved to a new building that replaced the Mississippi Exchange and some industrial buildings, and Carpet Right has replaced Southern Electric. With the exception of Unit 3A, that is currently vacant but was last occupied by Allied Carpets, the retail park has been continuously occupied since it was built. The top rent recorded\(^9\) for all of the South East England out-of-town retail centre was at Ladymead Park, Guildford, with top rent of £538/m\(^2\) (£50/ft\(^2\)).

4.32 Most of the retailers sell large, bulky goods that require transport by car or van, and so complement rather than compete with the retailers in the Town Centre and nearby Local Centres. Guildford Retail Study 2006 (Para 3.20) advises that ‘the Town Centre is still perceived to be an important centre for furniture and carpets, soft furnishings, electrical goods, china glass and hardware, but less so for DIY goods.’

4.33 With reference to Figure 9, although not part of Ladymead Park, Currys (selling electrical items) and PC World (selling computers and accessories) are also out-of-centre retail units. Adjacent to the west of Magnet is the Local Plan designated proposal site of Woodbridge Park Industrial Estate, on which a new Wickes DIY retail warehouse store of 4,163m\(^2\) was approved in 2006. This has not yet been built.

4.34 The former Esso petrol station and XRN Engineering on Woodbridge Road, south of the Jaguar car sales showroom, was redeveloped to provide a new retail unit (1,275m\(^2\) of comparison bulky goods floorspace). The new store is now occupied by Dreams bed store, having relocated from the Town Centre tertiary frontage in summer 2010. Directly to the south of Dreams store is CP Hart Kitchen and Bathroom shop. The designated local shopping centre of Woodbridge Road is some 300m south of Ladymead Park.

4.35 Although there is a large amount of retail floorspace in this out-of-centre location, much of it is restricted to comparison bulky goods sales (particularly DIY white goods and kitchen furniture), and no food sales and so is not in direct competition with the Town Centre retailers.

4.36 The other main out-of-centre retail locations are the two food-led superstores in the borough. Sainsburys in Burpham to the east of Guildford Town Centre was opened in 1988, and extended in 2008 to provide a net sales area of 5,477m\(^2\). Tesco at Ashenden Road, to the west of the Town Centre close to the University of Surrey and Royal Surrey

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\(^9\) South East Retail Market Overview, Colliers CRE (Sept 2008)
County Hospital, was opened in 1990. It has a net sales area of 3,987m$^2$.

4.37 A cycle shop, with ancillary storage and workshop (678m$^2$ of retail floorspace) was granted planning permission on appeal in early 2010 to change from a skin treatment centre at Woodbridge Meadows.

4.38 An out-of-town location is one outside the existing urban area. Guildford has no major out-of-town retail developments, with most significant retail units in rural areas being located within designated local and district centres in green belt villages. Guildford has a thriving rural economy consisting of some specialist retailers. This includes a small micro brewery in Shere and the Hogs Back Brewery. Also within the borough are farms selling their own produce, petrol stations with small convenience shops and small neighbourhood convenience shops that provide for the daily shopping needs of their local communities. PPS4 now discourages small neighbourhood shops in urban areas outside of designated centres, including those in petrol stations, unless they cannot be accommodated in designated centres.

III. The potential capacity for growth or change of centres in the network: opportunities for centres to expand or consolidate, typically measured in the amount of land available for new or more intensive forms of Town Centre development.

4.39 There are no sites allocated in the Local Plan 2003 solely for retail use. Three Town Centre sites are allocated for mixed-use development including retail. Bedford Road surface car park and the Former Farnham Road Bus Depot are owned by Guildford Borough Council. Land at Guildford Railway Station is owned by Network Rail.

4.40 The site bounded by the rear of properties on North Street to the south, the Friary Shopping Centre to the west and Leapale Road to the east, including the bus station, is included in the Local Plan 2003 as the Friary Major Approved Development Site. Planning permission (outline ref 04/P/00090, reserved matters ref 06/P/00028) for a mixed use development including 24,923m$^2$ of retail floorspace as an extension to the Friary Centre expired unimplemented in December 2009. Planning permission (09/P/02043) has recently been granted for an extension of time to implement this permission.

4.41 This 3.57ha redevelopment site offers significant opportunities for growth in Town Centre uses within the existing secondary and tertiary shopping frontage of Guildford Town Centre. This would meet some of the retail need identified by Guildford’s Retail Study 2006.
IV. Retailer representation and intentions to change representation: existence and changes in representation of types of retailer, including street markets, and the demand of retailers wanting to come into the centre, or to change their representation in the centre, or to reduce or close their representation.

4.42 The presence of national multiple retailers\(^{10}\) can greatly enhance the appeal of a centre to local consumers, in particular, those multiples that act as “anchor” stores, including Marks and Spencer, House of Fraser and Debenhams, attracting other retailers to the area. The attractiveness of Guildford Town Centre to both retailers and to shoppers is evidenced by the presence of a large number of multiple retailers. The Town Centre designated frontage is approximately 65% national multiples, and 35% independent stores.\(^{11}\) This is slightly higher than in 2005, when it was 60%\(^{12}\).

4.43 Despite a predominance of national multiple retailers, Guildford Town Centre has avoided being identified solely as a clone town, i.e. a town where national multiple retailers occupy the majority of a Town Centre. It retains a strong local identity, in part due to its focus around historic buildings, and its picturesque part-pedestrianised lower High Street with cobbled setts and views out to the hills. The lower High Street has one of the highest concentration of Grade I and Grade II* buildings of any UK High Street, with 10 such buildings. Most of the remaining buildings on the lower High Street are listed Grade II. Independent stores are particularly concentrated in the small streets, known as Gates that link the High Street with North Street and the High Street to the Castle. These are designated secondary and specialist frontages, where rents are lower and units smaller than in the prime shopping area. They also provide an attractive environment for small independent shops and cafes.

4.44 Retailer demand for presence in a Town Centre is a very important indicator of the centre’s viability, and therefore its health, as it indicates retailers’ perceived desirability of the centre as a trading location. Appendix 12 of Cushman and Wakefield’s 2010 Town Centre Development Study shows a continued high level of retailer interest in locating in Guildford, demonstrating Guildford’s attraction as a viable location and a good retail investment.

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\(^{10}\) Retailer that is part of a larger chain of 5 or more locations found across the country (includes A1, A2, A3, A4 and A5 uses)

\(^{11}\) The Local Data Company 2010, referenced in “Town Centre Development Study”, Cushman and Wakefield (2010)

\(^{12}\) GOAD Centre Report (October 2005)
V. Shopping rents: pattern of movement in Zone A rents within primary shopping areas (Zone A being the first 6 metres depth of floorspace in retail units from the shop window)

4.45 The pattern of movement in primary shopping area Zone A rents provides an indication of the viability or strength of the retail centre. When compared with nearby centres and with competitors, it indicates the relative importance of the retail centre in the regional hierarchy. **Zone A rents** are measured in £/m² (i.e. the rental value for the first 6 metres depth of floorspace from the shop window).

![Prime High Street Zone A Rents](image)

(Source: Cushman & Wakefield 2010)

**Figure 11: Prime High Street Zone A rents**

4.46 Figure 11 represents the Zone A rents of the prime retail in the Town Centre; the High Street between Swan Lane and Market Street. It shows Guildford’s consistent increase in Zone A Rent between 1994 and 2009. Guildford's Zone A rents overtook those of Reading in 2008, and is now is now approximately £215/m² (£20/ft²).

4.47 The Zone A rent for 2009 for the prime High Street area (the western end) is in the order of £3,122/m² (£290/ft²). This decreases up (eastwards) the High Street with Zone A rents in the secondary frontage of approximately £1,560/m² (£145/ft²). The secondary frontage
of North Street achieved Zone A rents of £1,830/m² (£170/ft²). The gates between High Street and North Street achieved Zone A rents of £1,722/m² (£160/ft²).  

VI. Proportion of vacant street level property and the length of time properties have been vacant: vacancies can arise even in the strongest Town Centres, and this indicator must be used with care. Vacancies in secondary frontages and changes to other uses will also be useful indicators.

4.48 There has been an increase in the proportion of vacant shops in Guildford Town Centre since the 2008 survey, from 4% to 9%. This increase of 5% reflects the economic recession at the time. As noted in paragraphs 4.8 – 4.9, the Primary shopping area was least affected, and Guildford fared better than many Town Centres.

<table>
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<th>Frontage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
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<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialist</td>
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**Figure 12: Proportion of Guildford Town Centre Vacancies (June 2010)**

4.49 Figure 12 presents total vacancies (number on the left) and proportion of vacancies by shopping frontage. Whilst the secondary frontage had the most vacant units with 32, the highest proportion was in the tertiary frontage with over a 12% vacancy rate. The lowest vacancy rate was in the primary frontage. This is expected as it is the core retail area, with the highest footfall.

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13 Town Centre Development Study : Guildford, Cushman and Wakefield (2010)
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Months Vacant</th>
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<th>Tertiary</th>
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Figure 13: Length of time Town Centre shops have been vacant (June 2010)

4.50 Figure 13 shows the length of time that vacant properties in the Town Centre in June 2010 (our survey date) had been vacant. Guildford Town Centre Manager provides us with monthly data on vacancies in the High Street and North Street. This data was only available up to March 2010. This gap of 3 months (March - June 2010) may account for the high number of units whose vacancy period is unknown. The Council’s Planning Service itself will monitor vacancies every month from November 2010 to ensure continuity of data. Units becoming vacant in the primary frontage do not stay vacant for more than a few months, usually whilst being re-fitted.

VII. Commercial yields on non-domestic property (i.e. the capital value in relation to the expected market rental): demonstrates the confidence of investors in the long-term profitability of the centre for retail, office and other commercial developments. This indicator should be used with care.

4.51 Commercial yield is the capital value in relation to the expected market rental. It provides an indication of the investment strength of the property, the level of yield broadly representing the market’s evaluation of the risk and returned attached to the income stream of shop rents. A higher yield indicates to investors that the rental income may grow less rapidly, and be a less secure investment than a property with a low yield. This benchmark is used by the property market to assess the comparative attractiveness of different shopping centres.

4.52 As a measure of retail viability, yields are a valuable indicator, but one that needs to be used with care. The level of yield on its own is of less value than in comparison with yields at different points in time and in different centres.
4.53 Figure 14 shows the retail yields in the prime Town Centre location (the High Street between Swan Lane and Market Street), compared to prime locations in competing centres. It shows that Guildford’s retail yield has remained one of the lowest compared to its competitors Reading, Kingston and Basingstoke providing a healthy retail investment market.

VIII. Land values and the length of time key sites have remained undeveloped: data on changes in land value and how long key Town Centre and edge of centre sites have remained undeveloped provide important indicators for how flexible policies should be framed and can help inform planning decisions.

4.54 The Town Centre Development Study by Cushman & Wakefield 2010 provides us with information on land values for the Town Centre. The highest land values are found for properties on both side of the High Street, the south side of North Street (Marks and Spencer and House of Fraser extend between the two) and the Friary Shopping Centre. The lowest land values in the Town Centre were recorded at Phoenix Court, the northern part of the Friary Development Site including the shops at the top of Leapale Road and between Haydon place and Dolphin House. Land values at Friary Street and Tunsigate Square and North Street between Commercial Road and Haydon place have land values between the highest and lowest.
4.55 Guildford Plaza, between Portsmouth Road and Bury Street is a key site within the Town Centre, within the Town Centre Conservation Area and close to several Listed Buildings. It was originally granted planning permission for redevelopment for offices in 1999, but has remained undeveloped since demolition of the building in 2000. Planning permission was granted at appeal for a large office redevelopment in February 2008, and was extended for another five years in July 2010. Parts of the Friary Development Site have remained in temporary uses including car parking, some for over four years, although much is still in use.

IX. Pedestrian flows (footfall): a key indicator of the vitality of shopping streets, measured by the numbers and movement of people on the streets, in different parts of the centre at different times of the day and evening, who are available for businesses to attract into shops, restaurants or other facilities.

4.56 In 2008 Guildford Borough Council commissioned Springboard to set up two footfall counters in Guildford Town Centre. These counters are located on the High Street and North Street. Many factors affect footfall, including weather, special events (both in Guildford or other local and cities), street performers and markets, retailer discounts, public holidays. Whilst yearly and weekly patterns can be observed, care must be taken in interpreting the numbers as they can be erratic and unpredictable.

4.57 The counters became operative in October 2008, therefore the most meaningful comparisons are between the 2009 and 2010 figures. For both years the amount of people passing the counter on the High Street has remained constant and followed the same pattern over the months. It recorded on average around 700,000 visitors passing the counter each month. Compared to the High Street, the North street counter recorded fewer visitors. This is expected; with the lower High Street (the eastern end) being the primary retail frontage and should have a higher pedestrian foot flow. On average Saturday was the most popular day for visiting the Town Centre.

X. Accessibility: ease and convenience of access by a choice of means of travel, including – the quality, quantity and type of car parking; the frequency and quality of public transport services and the range of customer origins served; and, the quality of provision for pedestrians, cyclists and disabled people and the ease of access from main arrival points to the main attractions.

4.58 Accessibility to Guildford Town Centre has not changed since the baseline Town Centre Vitality and Viability Report 2008 (page 16). Please see this report for more information.

4.59 Security for the public in Guildford's car parks continues to increase. The Council Car Park
service has achieved the Customer Service Excellence Award (and its predecessor the
Charter Mark), it is ISO 9000 accredited\textsuperscript{14}. All the Town Centre car parks that are
available for use by the general public have the Association of Chief Police Officers Park
Mark Safer Car Park Award. 13 of the Town Centre car parks are covered by CCTV.
There is a 24 hour help line and 24 hour security patrols.

XI. Customer and residents' views and behaviour: regular surveys will help authorities
in monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of Town Centre improvements and in
setting further priorities. Interviews in the Town Centre and at home can be used to
establish views of both users and non-users of the centre, including the views of
residents living in or close to the centre. This information could also establish the
degree of linked trips.

4.60 The last useful surveys for this indicator were the Guildford Visitor Survey 2007 and the
Draft Town Centre Usage Guide 2008. The results of these surveys are shown in the
Town Centre Vitality and Viability Report 2008 (page 20). Please see this for more detail.
A new household survey of retail habits will be undertaken in late 2010 as part of the
Retail Needs Study update.

XII. Perception of safety and occurrence of crime: should include views and information
on safety and security, including from the threat of terrorism, and where
appropriate, information for monitoring the evening and night-time economy.

4.61 Figure 15 shows the crime rate within Guildford Town Centre between June 2009 and
June 2010. It shows that crime has increased by 19.9\% compared to 2009. Examples of
recorded crime include burglary, robbery, vehicle crime, violence and anti-social
behaviour.

\textsuperscript{14} ISO 9000 is a series of standards, developed and published by the International Organization and Standardization.
4.62 The Town Centre Vitality and Viability Report 2008 (page 23) provides details of the efforts of the Safer Guildford Partnership (Guildford’s Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership) and Guildsafe (Guildford’s business crime reduction partnership) in reducing crime levels. Initiatives and crime data are also regularly reported on the Safer Guildford Partnership website.

4.63 The Guildford Street Angels programme operates with support from Surrey Police and the Safer Guildford Partnership. They assist on the streets of the Town Centre on Friday and Saturday nights between 10pm until 4am, closing time for many of the Town Centre’s bars and clubs. Since Street Angels started in Guildford (October 2008), public place violent crime has fallen by around 29% on Fridays and Saturday compared to only 3% on average across the whole week¹⁷. In 2010 Guildford Street Angels acquired a new Town Centre office in Tunsgate Square Shopping Centre.

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¹⁵ Surrey Police Local Crime Mapping June 2010

¹⁶ www.saferguildford.org.uk

¹⁷ Guildford Street Angels - www.gtcc.org.uk
4.64 Surrey Police, as part of the ongoing national counter terrorism strategy, has dedicated Counter Terrorism Security Advisers (CTSAs) who are coordinated, trained and tasked by the National Counter Terrorism Security Office\textsuperscript{18} (NaCTSO), a specialist police organisation co-located with the Centre For Protection Of National Infrastructure\textsuperscript{19}. These advisors provide counter terrorism protective security advice to support business.

4.65 Purple Flag is an award scheme offered by the Association of Town Centre Management (ATCM) that recognises excellence in place management in town & city centres at night, setting standards for managing successful evening economies and benchmarking performance. Established in 2003, the Purple Flag initiative accreditation process recognises areas providing a positive experience to night time visitors and users. The award is given based on an objective assessment of five key elements of that area at night (5pm to 6am), wellbeing, movement, appeal, place, and the policy framework. Accredited centres have the right to display the Purple Flag for two years. It is awarded to town centres of any size that offer a clean and safe environment, diverse activities, entertainment and retail offer, excellent transport links, and a diverse nightlife.

4.66 The initiative aims to improve perceptions of places, address imbalances in activities, retail offer and entertainment, tackle anti-social behaviour, and encourages a diverse evening activities; providing significant recognition for councils and partnerships who deliver key services associated with the night-time economy. It helps to tackle many prominent issues associated with night time economy management. It is supported by various organisations including the Home Office and the Association of Chief Police Officers.

4.67 The initiative is becoming increasingly popular. The first two rounds in 2009 and 2010 saw town centres, including Kingston-Upon Thames, gaining accreditation. The Association of Town Centre Managers TCM Purple Flag award launched the third round of applications on 1st October 2010 until the 14th January 2011. The Council intends to submit a bid in this round.

XIII. State of the Town Centre environmental quality: should include information on problems (such as air pollution, noise, clutter, litter and graffiti) and positive factors (such as trees, landscaping and open spaces).

4.68 No environmental quality survey was undertaken to report this year. The most recent completed environmental improvements in the Town Centre are the Trinity Gate environmental improvements and the Friary Passage.

\textsuperscript{18} \url{www.nactso.gov.uk} \\
\textsuperscript{19} \url{www.cpni.gov.uk}
4.69 Before the start of work on the Trinity Gate environmental improvements in 2006, the pedestrian area at the junction of Epsom Road and the High Street was a large, barren area of tarmac. The Council-designed scheme created a unique public space, with detailing in the pavement surface and in the bespoke seats that pays tribute to the cinema that used to occupy the junction.

4.70 Raised planting beds have negated the need for traffic barriers around the junction and have also provided greenery in this built-up part of town making a small oasis. Tulip trees give interest through the seasons with colourful and unusually shaped leaves, and give scale to the surrounding buildings. In time these trees will grow tulip-like flowers that give the tree its name.

4.71 Friary Passage, a pedestrian footway linking Friary Street in the town to the riverside by Friary Bridge has been transformed. By removing the suspended ceiling to open up the space, combined with light enhancements and an eye catching new colour scheme, the subway now provided pedestrians a pleasurable route between the river and the shops. Friary Passage was the top priority of all subways in the borough identified by the Subway Working Group as needing enhancement. The working group that includes Surrey Police, Guildford Borough Council and Surrey County Council recognised that the subway was prone to vandalism, and although relatively well lit, was unappealing as a route for pedestrians to and from the riverside. These works will complement the recent improvements to Friary Street.

4.72 The former Allen House Bowls Club between Stoke Road and High Street is now a multifunctional base for schools and relational work. The revamped Allen House gardens now have a superbly equipped family area, putting green and all weather tennis, football and basketball courts. Allen House has a meeting/activity area that can host 40 people, a smaller room for team meetings, fully equipped kitchen and a creative prayer/spirituality area. In 2009 the Matrix Trust attained a new building in the centre of Guildford, with support from Guildford Borough Council. Phase one of the refurbishment will be completed by September 2009 and Phase two is planned to be completed by April 2010. The building is available for groups to use and hire.

4.73 Also within the Town Centre, Guildford Borough Council will be carrying out repair work to parts of the cobbled sets in Guildford High Street to complement the improvements already carried out by Surrey County Council. The works will repair failing areas that are most in need of urgent attention - a total of approximately 600m².

4.74 Guildford Tourism Information Centre (TIC) is soon to be relocated into Guildford House. It is recognised that the operational benefits of combining the Gallery and TIC in one building are substantial, both in terms of increasing the potential numbers of visitors to the building and achieving financial benefits.
4.75 Planning obligation monies arising from recent developments in the north of the Town Centre have been used to fund streetscape enhancement works in the vicinity of the developments. These works are now almost complete, and include new surfaces, planting and seating.
5 DISTRICT CENTRES

5.1 The Local Plan 2003 (Policy S8) designates two district centres. The national criteria for designation of local and district centres are set out in PPS4. Guildford’s district centres are shown on the Local Plan Proposal Map.

Wharf Road, Ash

5.2 Wharf Road, Ash District Centre is located within the Ash and Tongham Urban Area, directly east of Basingstoke Canal, close to the county border with Hampshire. The district centre is approximately 15 minutes walk north from Ash Station, and is centred on the cross roads of Shawfield Road and Ash Hill Road. The centre has a good mixture of convenience and comparison shops. Since 2008 there have been some minor changes. The vacancy rate has remained the same at 3%. The vacancy this year was caused by the closure of Threshers, part of First Quench that went into administration in 2009. The graph below shows the prevalence of ground floor uses by Use Classes in the 33 units in the centre.

![Graph showing Ground floor Use Classes in Wharf Road, Ash District Centre (June 2010)]

5.3 An environmental improvement project for Ash Wharf, at the junction of Vale Road and Wharf Road adjacent to Ash District Centre was commenced in June 2010. The plan to refurbish the wharf followed consultation with residents, Councillors and the Basingstoke
Canal Authority. Works include access improvements to the wharf edge, seating, mooring points for canal boats and planting.

5.4 The space, adjacent to the shops at Ash Wharf District Centre, has undergone environmental improvements and has been completely redesigned with new paving, railings, benches, mooring bollards and litter bins. Planting includes native and ornamental shrubs and grasses.

**Station Parade, East Horsley**

5.5 Station Parade, East Horsley District Centre is located on the eastern side of the borough, within the Green Belt. The district centre is only a few minutes walk south of Horsley station, and car parking is available within the centre. This centre has a good collection of both convenience and comparison stores. The vacancy recorded at the time of this survey was an A1 unit that was previously a hairdressers. A sign within the vacant unit noted that a replacement is coming soon.

![Station Parade, East Horsley](image)

*Figure 17: Ground floor Use Classes in Station Parade, East Horsley District Centre (June 2010)*
6 LOCAL CENTRES

6.1 There are 22 Local Centres located across the borough. These are designated by Local Plan 2003 Policy S9, based upon criteria listed in the Local Plan, and are shown on the Local Plan Proposal Map. Figure 18 shows a break down of the number of different use classes within the local centres.

Aldershot Road, Westborough

6.2 Located on one of the main radial routes out of Guildford Town Centre the centre is anchored by a Co-operative Supermarket (approx. 900m²) and supported by the large number of houses within walking distance. The centre consists of 10 units of predominantly retail use. The one vacant unit, recorded in the last report, is now occupied by Empire fish and chips.

Ash Vale Parade

6.3 This local centre is supported by passing traffic to and from Ash Vale railway station, around which it is centred. Units are consequently stronger on the south side of the railway arch, near the pedestrian entrance to the station. North of the railway the use class of all the units are currently finance and professional services (A2), ranging from estate agents to solicitors. The two vacant units recorded in the 2008 report are now occupied by Taylor Street Solicitors. Little of the retail is convenience except for a small grocery store. Other uses, such as a café, point to the importance of passing trade. There is a council car park of 29 spaces at the station, and also parking in front of several of the units.

Bishopsmead Parade, East Horsley

6.4 This an attractive local centre consisting of a row of 13 commercial units with two floors of residential above. There is a good retail offer, although comparatively little convenience; just two of the 13 commercial units. There is visitors’ parking in front of the units although the centre could benefit with some more available spaces. The only real convenience offer is a newsagent/Post Office. Other food retail is restaurant/takeaway and a café/delicatessen. Other uses are mainly services or niche comparison such as a dentist, optometrist and estate agent. The butcher recorded in the 2008 report is now no longer in use.

Collingwood Crescent, Boxgrove

6.5 A small local centre, but well-used with a notable convenience offering in the form of an independent food retailer, and a grocery store. There was adequate parking with spaces to the front and side of the centre. This centre has not changed in the last two years, there are no vacancies and the subjective experience of the site visit was of a centre that enjoyed a respectable footfall for one located outside of main pedestrian or traffic through routes.
Effingham
6.6 There has been no change since the last survey. This small centre has a classic mix of local convenience uses including a small independent supermarket, Post Office, independent Butcher, Baker and hardware store. The centre was well used at the time of the site visit, and there were no vacancies recorded.

Epsom Road, Merrow
6.7 Heavily trafficked, on one of the main radial routes into Guildford. The local centre is anchored by a small Marks and Spencer Food store within a petrol station. Niche comparison units such as the Italia Conti Arts School shop reiterate the importance of non-local trade. A new housing development of flats with retail units on the ground floor is now complete, and is now almost completely occupied. Parking is available in several locations behind the main shopping frontage. There are a couple of vacant units, those being the newly developed retail unit at 253-263 Epsom Road and the other the former Wine Rack retail unit.

Fairlands
6.8 Consists of a small parade of 9 units with two floors of residential above. The only convenience goods offer is from a newsagent and a Post Office that sell similar products. The centre now has no vacant units compared to the three the previous year. These have been filled by a florist, a tanning salon and a flooring shop. There is a reasonable amount of parking to the front of the shops.

Kingfisher Drive, Merrow
6.9 Small but seemingly well-used centre with flats above, part of a 1980s housing estate. A doctors’ surgery and school are located adjacent to the centre. There is also a small parking area adjacent. The design of the roads around the local centre, mainly being cul-de-sacs, makes this local centre much more convenient to reach by car than other local centres. The one vacant unit recorded in the 2008 survey was still vacant in June 2010 and has been vacant for over 2 years.

London Road, Burpham (Kingpost Parade)
6.10 A large and well-used local centre with flats above, located on one of the key radial routes into Guildford and with well used car parking bays (adopted by Surrey County Council Highways) in front. The centre has comparatively little convenience retail, mainly in the form of a Bakery and Post Office/Newsagent. Most units are comparison including a cycle shop. The restaurants/takeaways, and two estate agents and a bank, point to the significance of passing trade. Close to Sainsbury’s out-of-centre superstore and several of the units, the fishmonger and wine shop, indicate a comparatively high level of spend for a local centre. As a result of a residential building development near opposite Kingpost Parade, funds became available for environmental improvements to the area through a planning obligation. A public consultation took place in spring 2010 to determine what shop keepers, residents and shoppers think is most in need of improvement. Adjacent to
this residential development, the former Green Man public house site is now vacant following its demolition.

**Madrid Road, Guildford Park**

6.11 A medium-sized local centre, well supported by passing trade and the adjacent terraced housing. Anchored by medium-sized Co-operative supermarket, there is a range of convenience offer including a pharmacy. There are also some niche comparison shops. The old Apollo video rental store has been vacant since the last survey.

**Manor Road, Stoughton**

6.12 A dispersed local centre with a number of vacancies. Of the seven retail units there are currently three vacant. There is one grocery store, but otherwise, the units are occupied by specialist services such as a hairdresser, beauticians, a tattoo parlour and an area of offices in the south of the local centre, some appearing to have limited off the street trade. A small group of units at the north constitutes the main core of convenience retail. This is by far the weakest of the local centres, whose boundary should be redrawn to focus on the convenience retail core at the northern part of the centre.

**Ripley**

6.13 By far the largest local centre by number of units. Ripley local centre is located in the green belt village, either side of the B2215. It has a very pleasant character and environmental quality despite a reasonable through-flow of traffic. Due to its historic role and development, Ripley feels closest in character to a market town of any of the local centres. Shopping is niche comparison (mainly higher price furniture or antiques) or convenience, with the concentration of service uses such as hairdressers. There is also a concentration of estate agents, similar to the two district centres. There are, however, no banks in Ripley. Out of the 39 retail units in Ripley there were only two recorded vacancies.

**Send**

6.14 A small parade of shops with flats above. There is no grocery store, but one large newsagent. Other uses include a restaurant, take-away and sandwich bar. No vacancies have been recorded from the last two surveys, however, so the centre as a whole seems viable.

**Shalford**

6.15 A medium-sized local centre with significant passing trade. It has a pleasant character due to its architectural character and its outlook over the open space with a pond to the south. Commercial units are interspersed with houses. Most units are niche comparison, such as the gallery, toy shop, and wine store. There are also a few services including takeaways, restaurants and a dry cleaner. There is no convenience / grocery store that would greatly benefit the village. There are still no vacant units. There is a vacant site toward the middle of the local centre that was the former Total petrol station that has been
demolished and the site cleared. This site has been vacant for now over two years.

**Shere**

6.16 A medium sized local centre, in a picturesque rural location. Some uses, such as tea rooms, are clearly supported in part by a tourist trade. There is a medium-sized grocery store (Co-operative) and an independent greengrocer are the only convenience offer, however there is also a baker just outside of the designated local centre. There is also some niche comparison in the form of a gallery, antique shop and bespoke fitted kitchen retailer. With a newly refurbished car park nearby and with one vacancy in the retail frontage, the centre as a whole appears in good economic health.

**Southway, Park Barn**

6.17 A small local centre with a newsagent and Post Office having broadly similar offers. The catchment appears to be very localised. There was a double-fronted unit under refit at the time of survey. Southway local centre is very close to the out-of-centre Tesco superstore at Ashenden Road. There has been no change since the last survey. The local centre has clearly found an adequate local niche to support its viability.

**The Square, Onslow Village**

6.18 A small local centre with a somewhat village-like character, located opposite Onslow Village Hall. Very quiet and little passing trade, however there are no vacancies. There has been some change since the last survey. The store that combined a butcher / fishmonger / greengrocer has been replaced with an independent village delicatessen.

**The Street, Tongham**

6.19 A small but well-used local centre with a notable convenience offering, including a bakery and Post Office. It has a pleasant character despite the levels of passing traffic. No vacancies have been recorded in the last two surveys.

**Stoughton Road, Bellfields**

6.20 Anchored by a large double-unit newsagent/convenience store. The small local centre also has a surgery, a pharmacy and a take-away. The centre was well-used at the time of the site visit, with no vacancies in the last two surveys. The centre underwent the second phase of an environmental improvement works earlier this year.

**Woodbridge Hill, Guildford**

6.21 A large local centre immediately adjacent to the A3. The centre is anchored by a Co-operative supermarket, with several takeaways and restaurants, and a cheque-cashing service, pointing to a passing-trade catchment. The centre also has two banks and estate agents. Woodbridge Hill contains the most vacant units of all of the local centres with three empty units; two of these have been vacant since the last survey. There is rather poor environmental quality due to the volumes of passing traffic, but neither of these appears to be undermining the viability of the centre as a whole. There has been very little
change since the 2008 survey, the main one being The Co Operative Funeral Care moving into one the vacant units.

**Woodbridge Road, Guildford**

6.22 A medium sized local centre, dominated by the heavy traffic along Woodbridge Road, and consequently characterised mainly by takeaways and restaurants. There is no real convenience offer other than Majestic Wine, but notable niche comparison such as HHS hire shop and a specialist cake making shop. No vacancies have been recorded since the last survey.

**Worplesdon Road, Stoughton**

6.23 A medium-sized centre with notable passing trade from through traffic reflected in a concentration of takeaways. A petrol station includes a branch of the SPAR supermarket. There are also a few estate agents. Two vacancies were recorded this year.

6.24 The parking arrangements on the corner of Byrefield Road and in front of the shops on Worplesdon Road often blocked access for buses and service vehicles and made crossing the road difficult for pedestrians. Environmental improvements to Worplesdon Road between Byrefield Road and Sheepfold Road were designed to help alleviate these issues and to improve the safety for pedestrians accessing the shops. These included the addition of bollards and a dropped crossing point. These included a re-alignment of street furniture, planting of new trees, benches and improved parking provision. They were undertaken in August and September 2010 using planning obligation monies.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District Centres</th>
<th>Use Class</th>
<th>Sui Generis</th>
<th>Vacant</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<td>Wharf Road, Ash</td>
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<td>A2 6</td>
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Figure 18: Ground Floor Use Classes in the District and Local Centres (June 2010)
6.25 Figure 18 shows the total number of each ground floor use class in both the district and local centres. The table shows that out of the 396 units in these centres, only 18 of these were vacant. This vacancy rate of only 4.5% is even better than that of Guildford Town Centre. One of the biggest local centres is Ripley that has a total of 65 units. Discounting the residential units there are 48 commercial units, more than in either of Guildford’s district centres.

6.26 Improvements in District and Local Centres include putting up chewing gum target boards on which people can stick used gum in Ash, Park Barn and Westborough. This is part of a new initiative run by Guildford Borough Council to help reduce the amount of chewing gum litter in the borough, and the cost of its removal.
7 SUMMARY

Despite an increase in the overall vacancy rate within the Town Centre since the 2008 report, there have been few vacancies within the Primary Frontage, and those that did arise were not vacant for long. Overall Town Centre vacancy still remains lower than the national average by 3%. Guildford remains an attractive centre for investments, with favourable prime retail yields, and high land value. Despite the economic downturn, Guildford continues to provide a low risk, healthy retail investment market.

A continued high level of retailer demand for locating in Guildford is evident in the retailers and restaurants recently locating in the centre. These include Primark, TK Maxx, Superdry, Gant, Jamie's Italian, Marks and Spencer Simply Food and Tesco.

Other successes to highlight include:
All of Guildford Borough Council's Town Centre car parks that are available for general public use have been awarded the Association of Chief Police Officers Park Mark Safer Car Park Award.

Six of Guildford's parks and open spaces won a green flag\(^\text{20}\). The winning parks were Stoke Park, Sutherland Memorial Park (Burpham), the Castle Grounds, Allen House Grounds, Guildford Crematorium grounds and Riverside Nature Reserve. This is the first green flag for Allen House and the Crematorium grounds.

A number of environmental improvement projects have been undertaken in the town, district and local centres, some using planning obligation monies. These include Friary Street, Castle Grounds, Trinity Gate, Guildford High Street’s cobbled setts, and land next to Ash Wharf District Centre.

The District and Local Centre vacancy rate has remained low at 4.5% throughout the economic downturn.

\(^{20}\) The Green Flag Award® scheme is the benchmark national standard for parks and green spaces in the UK - [http://www.keepbritaintidy.org/GreenFlag/Default.aspx](http://www.keepbritaintidy.org/GreenFlag/Default.aspx)
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