

SECTION 8

**Town Centre and
Shopping**

8.0. TOWN CENTRE AND SHOPPING

8.1. INTRODUCTION

- 8.1.1. The main functions of the town centre is to provide adequate shopping, commercial and other community facilities for the local population. The aim of this section is to protect those functions and the character of the centre and to satisfy future needs.
- 8.1.2. Turning to shopping, the main aim will be to protect its commercial viability in accordance with Policy S2 of the Draft Structure Plan Review which also seeks to discourage shopping development outside defined town centre areas.
- 8.1.3. The District Council have previously adopted a policy to safeguard the existing central shopping zone in the town centre and this policy has been incorporated in the Local Plan as follows.

8.2. POLICIES AND PROPOSALS

Policy TCS 1 - "Continuous shopping frontages as defined on the town centre inset plan (Plan No. 3) will be safeguarded and new non-shopping uses will generally be resisted."

- 8.2.1. This policy relates to those premises fronting onto streets in the central part of Ross-on-Wye's commercial and shopping area and is intended to provide for reasonable competition in shopping interests and also for locations for other commercial interests appropriate to a shopping area but its main purpose is to safeguard the availability of continuous shopping frontage for the amenity of the public.
- 8.2.2. The most common "non-shopping" uses include; building societies, estate agents, insurance offices, betting offices, banks and solicitors offices. Other uses which often portray a blank look to the street scene are cafes; all fried fish shops and launderettes. The policy relates specifically to all such uses and is intended to limit their further introduction in this specific shopping zone of Ross-on-Wye and to encourage the potential of those parts of the town outside of this zone for these non-shopping uses.
- 8.2.3. The following section further defines 'non-shopping' uses:-
- i) Uses of ground floor premises not falling within the definition of "shop" in the Town and Country Planning Use Classes Order, 1972, should not immediately adjoin each other. There should be at least one shop intervening.
 - ii) Not more than 15% of ground floor frontage of the defined shopping zone will be permitted to be used for non-shopping purposes.

(Access to rear and upper floor premises used for non-shopping purposes and not exceeding 2 metres in width will not be taken into account in computing (i) and (ii)).
 - iii) Blank faces/opaque glass frontages presented to the street scene will not be permitted. Where further consents are granted for non-shopping uses conditions will be imposed to provide for show-case type windows so as to maximise visual attraction and provide for display of goods and information.

- 8.2.4. With regard to the level of sales floor space in the town centre the Report of Survey refers in paragraphs 9.4 to 9.5. to an estimated increase in the number of shoppers expected to shop in the town within the next ten years. This will give rise to an increase in expenditure in the town which has been converted to a demand for more sales floor space.
- 8.2.5. Some 20,000 to 25,000 square feet of additional sales floor space could be required to meet the demand for the sale of durable goods (furniture, D.I.Y., carpets etc.). Similarly, a need has been identified for an additional 5,000 to 10,000 square feet for the sale of convenience goods (food shops, newagents, etc.).

Policy TCS 2 - "Make provision for additional sales floorspace by the extension of existing shops and/or the development of new shops."

- 8.2.6. Potential for small scale redevelopment schemes was identified in the Report of Survey (see paragraphs 8.9.2. and 9.9.1)

Proposal TCS 3 - "THE DISTRICT COUNCIL WILL ENCOURAGE THE REDEVELOPMENT OF ANY OR ALL OF THE LISTED SITES IN THE INTERESTS OF IMPROVING THE TOWN CENTRE ENVIRONMENT. THE REDEVELOPMENT OF THOSE SITES TO ACCOMMODATE ADDITIONAL SHOPPING, HOUSING, COMMUNITY OR RECREATIONAL FACILITIES WHERE APPROPRIATE WILL BE ENCOURAGED:-"

- i) FORMER ALTON COURT BREWERY OFF STATION STREET
- ii) LAND TO THE REAR OF BROOKEND STREET/KYRLE STREET
- iii) AN AREA OF LAND AT THE WESTERN END OF CROFTS LANE
- iv) THE CAR PARK SITE IN CANTILUPE ROAD
- v) SITE OF KYRLE STREET CAR PARK."

- 8.2.7. Whilst encouragement will be given to the development of both of the above car park sites, it will be necessary to find alternative off-street parking areas before development commences in order to safeguard overall numbers of spaces currently in the town.
- 8.2.8. Since the preparation of the Report of Survey, a further opportunity for redevelopment has arisen on the site of the former County Primary School in Cantilupe Road. This site has for many years been earmarked for the new Library (see paragraph 10.7.5. Report of Survey), however, financial constraints have halted its construction to-date although it is still a priority of the County Council. More recently, proposals have been mooted for the redevelopment of this site to provide not only a Library but a replacement car park and a supermarket.
- 8.2.9. Any additional new shopping could therefore be accommodated on one or more of these redeveloped sites. Sites which are not ultimately redeveloped for shopping purposes, could be used for other town centre and community needs including some housing development.
- 8.2.10. There is some evidence of under-use of upper floors above the principal shopping and commercial frontages. Whilst there is no apparent outstanding demand for office accommodation at the present time, it is considered that should a need arise during the Plan period, it

could be met by utilising some of the under-used upper floors in and around the town centre. Similarly, some under-used and vacant upper floors could be used for residential purposes subject to overcoming problems of access.

Policy TCS 4 - "Proposals for the use of under-used and vacant upper floors of buildings in and around the town centre for office and/or residential use will be encouraged subject to satisfactory access and parking provision."

8.2.11. Section 9.10.1. (Report of Survey) referred to the considerable congestion caused on market days by heavy traffic on the town centre network.

Policy TCS 5 - "The Cattle Market presently located in Homs Road will be relocated on a suitable site."

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* Policies are indicated in italics and underlined whilst PROPOSALS
* are shown in BLOCK CAPITALS and are again underlined.
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