

## SCRUTINY COMMISSION - 23 AUGUST 2012

### THE DISTRICT, LOCAL AND NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE REVIEW FEBRUARY 2012 REPORT OF DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE (COMMUNITY DIRECTION)



Hinckley & Bosworth  
Borough Council

*A Borough to be proud of*

#### WARDS AFFECTED: ALL WARDS

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#### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform Members of the Scrutiny Commission of the results of the District, Local and Neighbourhood Centre Review (Feb 2012) which will be used to inform the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD.
- 1.2 Copies of the District, Local and Neighbourhood Centre Review (Feb 2012) can be found on the website as part of the agenda documents. Alternatively copies are available via email upon request, or a hard copy can be viewed at the Council Offices by asking a member of the Planning Policy Team.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That Scrutiny endorse the Review so that it can be utilised as an evidence base when preparing the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD.

#### 3. BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT

- 3.1 The District, Local and Neighbourhood Centre Review 2012 is designed to serve as an update of the findings of the 2010 Review and ensure all relevant shopping provision which has local importance is identified and any changes reflected. Please note that this is a snap shot in time and changes will have occurred since the site surveys were undertaken earlier this year. The important elements of the study which will be utilised to inform the Site Allocations are the boundaries of each of the different centres. The Review will also enable policies to be developed which will aim to retain these important centres for the community.
- 3.2 The aim of the review is to provide an up-to-date and relevant evidence base about retail provision within the urban and rural area, excluding Hinckley Town Centre as this is dealt with in the Adopted Hinckley Town Centre Area Action Plan is monitored annually within the Town Centre Monitor. This evidence base reflects the priorities of the adopted Core Strategy and supports the allocation of District, Local and Neighbourhood Centres and the formulation of development management policies in the emerging Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document.

#### Methodology

- 3.3 The Review examines local shopping provision through the following three stage process;
- 3.4 Stage 1- Data collection and Desktop Review
  - Review existing data from the District, Local and Neighbourhood Centre Review 2010
  - Review planning applications through a planning history search of applications within and directly adjacent to identified centres from May 2010 to April 2012.

- Identify any additional centres based on local knowledge and an assessment of aerial photography.
- Identify potential impacts on the District, Local and Neighbourhood Centres i.e. Sustainable Urban Extensions

### 3.5 Stage 2- On Site Surveys

3.6 These were undertaken between 15<sup>th</sup> February 2012 and 1<sup>st</sup> March 2012 during standard retail opening hours of between 9am and 5pm.

3.7 During the on-site appraisals the following information was checked against records from the 2010 review and any changes noted;

- The address, Use Class and business name (where available) of each unit
- The overall number of units on-site
- The number of vacant units on-site
- Approximate number and location of parking including disabled spaces
- The number and siting of cycle storage
- Number and siting of Automated Telling Machines

3.8 Premises adjacent to the existing Centre boundaries were also examined to establish the relevance of these boundaries and identify any potential amendments.

### 3.9 Stage 3- Evaluation

3.10 Each centre has been assessed against a simple scoring system to determine whether it falls within the District, Local or Neighbourhood Centre Classification. This scoring system has not been altered from the 2010 review.

3.11 Where the on-site appraisal has identified a contraction or expansion of the centres from those previously identified in the 2008 and 2010 surveys and adopted proposals map this will be assessed and reflected in the revised maps and boundaries where appropriate.

3.12 The centres classification has informed its catchment area which in turn determines the extent in which the centre meets the shopping and everyday needs of local residents. Catchment areas are defined as;

- 2000 metres for District Centres
- 800 metres for Local Centres
- 400 metres for Neighbourhood Centres

### 3.13 Results of the 2012 Review

3.14 The 2012 Review examines and updates the findings of the 2010 Review. To avoid unnecessary repetition, only the identified alterations from the 2010 Review are reported below.

#### Hinckley

3.15 A new retail unit has been constructed at Clifton Way Local Centre adjacent to Sainsbury's which is occupied by Carpet Cuts. The centres eastern boundary has been amended to include this new unit. This centre now has a total of 10 units.

3.16 The dry cleaners within the Rugby Road Local Centre is now vacant and due to its detached position on the periphery of the centre. This unit has been removed from the centres boundaries. Two stores have changed their use to a computer specialist and catering supply store. The 2010 Review failed to list unit 1 which has now been

added to the list of units. In addition Unit 1 has gained planning permission for the change of use to an A5 Take-away.

- 3.17 One additional unit has been identified within the Barwell Lane Local Centre and has been included within its boundary.
- 3.18 One additional unit has been identified within the Hawley Road Neighbourhood Centre within the building forming the Railway Station.
- 3.19 The Hinckley Club for Young People within the Tudor Road Neighbourhood Centre was under construction during the 2010 Review but is now complete. The Middlefield Inn Public House is now demolished and the site has planning permission for the erection of a residential care home. The Centres boundaries have been substantially reduced to reflect this recent demolition. One store has altered its name from Cheaters to Tudor News.
- 3.20 McDonalds has been removed from the Northern Perimeter Road and Stoke Road Neighbourhood Centre due its detached position in relation to the main shopping provision. The planning approval for 145 dwellings adjacent Sword Drive has largely been built out since the 2010 review. In addition the unit occupied by Focus has been replaced by Wickes.

#### Burbage

- 3.21 The Galaxy Public House within the Boyslade Local Centre has become vacant since the 2010 review however the site has planning permission for its change of use to a convenience store. The progress of this development will be examined through the subsequent review. In addition a previously unidentified ATM has now been included within the centre.
- 3.22 The one unoccupied unit within Windsor Street Neighbourhood Centre identified through the 2010 review is now occupied but an additional two units have become vacant. One unit has been incorporated into Creative Curtains and one additional unit, Spar convenience store has been identified on the periphery of the centre. The centre's boundary has been extended to include the newly identified Spar. Two additional units have also been identified within the centre. This movement has increased the number of units from 27 in 2010 to a total of 29 in 2012. Five units within the centre have either changed ownership or their business name. The free standing ATM on Windsor Street is no longer in situ however an ATM is available at Spar.
- 3.23 One additional unit has been identified in the Atkins Way Neighbourhood Centre incorporated into The Hastings public house which forms a sandwich take-away shop.

#### Barwell & Earl Shilton

- 3.24 The Earl Shilton District Centre has seen a slight increase in the number of vacant units by an additional three units. The amended centre boundary has been expanded to reflect the 2008 Local Centre Review boundary to include previously vacant premises which is now occupied. The number of take-aways in the centre has increased from five in 2010 to six through this review. The centre has lost its sports shop reducing the range of comparison shopping provision in the area. In addition five units have either changed their name or ownership since the 2010 review.
- 3.25 Earl Shilton Belle Vue and Moore Road Neighbourhood Centre has been reclassified to a neighbourhood centre. This centre has four of the seven uses required for a local

centre designation however two of the uses stand within one premise, the shops are small in nature and the centre appears to have neighbourhood significance.

- 3.26 The gym which stood within the Earl Shilton Upper and Middle High Street Neighbourhood Centre is now vacant and with notification of the premises demolition has been removed from the centres boundaries. The Parish Hall has been included within the centres boundaries due to its proximity.
- 3.27 The proposed Tesco supermarket application site has been included within the centres boundary due to the extension of time application which will expire in 2015. Two minor company name amendments have been made since the 2012 review and one vacant premises has been occupied with another becoming vacant.

#### Key Rural Centres relating to Leicester

- 3.28 One unit identified as vacant within the 2010 review is now occupied within Groby Village/Local Centre. Two premises have merged into one unit reducing the total number of units from 22 in 2010 to 21. There are currently no vacant units within this centre.
- 3.29 Groby Lawnwood Road Neighbourhood Centre has two vacant units which is the same as the 2010 review. 3 Lawnwood Road remains vacant from the 2010 review and the B1(a) unit, 9 Lawnwood Road has recently become vacant.
- 3.30 Ratby Village/Local Centre has seen an increase of four units since the 2010 review. These include the Parish Council Offices and primary school which weren't listed and a change of use from a dwelling to a pharmacy. The Bathroom Store has become vacant since the 2010 review which has increased the vacancy rate from 0% in 2010 to 6.25% in 2012.
- 3.31 Markfield Main Street Local Centre has seen an increase of an two additional units from the 2010 review which have been included in a revised centre boundary. The health food shop has been replaced by a sandwich shop. The approved application for 6 dwellings and a new convenience store on the site of the vacant George Inn Public House has not been implemented at the time of the review but is reflected on the revised map.

#### Key Rural Centres Stand Alone

- 3.32 Market Bosworth District Centre has seen an increase in the number of units from 38 in 2010 to the current 40 units. This increase is as a result of two residential properties gaining planning permission for their conversion to retail. Four businesses have amended their name since the 2010 review and the centres boundaries have been amended to include the Black Horse car park.
- 3.33 Barlestone Local Centre has been reclassified to a Neighbourhood Centre since the 2010 review as the Post Office has recently closed. This resulted in the centre not providing for 4 out of the 7 facilities required to qualify as providing the everyday essential needs of the local population. The Red Lion public house has changed use to an Indian restaurant since the 2010 review and a hairdressers has changed ownership.
- 3.34 The vacant unit identified in Newbold Verdon Local Centre through the 2010 review is now occupied and the Post Office includes a Santander bank counter. Two premises within the centre have changed name or ownership since the 2010 review.
- 3.35 The restaurant inclusive of the Three Horseshoes public house in Stoke Golding has changed its name to the Mango Tree since the 2010 review.

### Key Rural Centres within the National Forest

- 3.36 Bagworth has one additional unit since the 2010 review which is a Children's Sure Start Centre, this has increased the number of units to a total of 12. A public house has changed its name and/or ownership.

### Conclusions

- 3.37 The Borough of Hinckley and Bosworth has a total of three District Centres, eight Local Centres, twelve Neighbourhood Centres in the urban area, five in Key Rural Centres relating to Leicester and two Neighbourhood Centres in Stand Alone Rural Centres. Thornton also has a Neighbourhood Centre. The total composition of the retail provision of the borough (excluding Hinckley Town Centre) is:

**Table 1**

<b>Classification</b>	<b>Total Number in the Borough</b>
District Centres	3
Local Centres	8
Neighbourhood Centres	19
<b>Total number of Centres</b>	<b>30</b>

- 3.38 The urban areas of the Borough including Hinckley, Burbage, Barwell and Earl Shilton are well served by their local shopping areas with access to both a range of retail and everyday items as well as community facilities and non-retail services. These areas are also considered to be accessible by public transport with other good transport links.
- 3.39 The District Centres of Earl Shilton and Barwell were identified as having high vacancy rates through the 2010 review. Earl Shilton District Centre has an additional unit identified within its boundaries but an additional four units have become vacant since 2010 increasing the vacancy rate to 17.9%. Whilst Barwell District Centre has seen no increase in the level of vacancies, the vacancy rate is still considered high. As a result of these figures Earl Shilton and Barwell should be the focus for improvement, particularly considering the proposed increase of the residential population through the Sustainable Urban Extensions. This has also been identified in the Core Strategy through Policies 2 and 3.
- 3.40 Market Bosworth District Centre has seen an increase of two units from 38 in 2010 to 40 in 2012. The centre boundary quite closely hugs the built form surrounding the Market Square and the additional units have been created through the conversion of residential premises to retail. This increase combined with a 0% vacancy rate during this and prior reviews indicates potential pressure to create additional retail provision within Market Bosworth, particularly around the Market Square.
- 3.41 The Burbage Neighbourhood Centres of Windsor Street and Church Street have a range of retail and non retail services. These centres generally lack convenience shopping, although the recently established Spar close to Windsor Street has slightly improved this situation. In addition parking is predominantly restricted to on-street parking and a distinct shortfall of parking provision has been identified both through this review and Core Strategy Policy 4.
- 3.42 Through the 2010 and 2012 reviews four pubs have been identified as either vacant, demolished or changed their use. This indicates a general market shift away from this use type leading to the loss of this type of facility in centres across the Borough. This is a trend which may require policy intervention to reflect paragraph 28 of the

NPPF which requires that Local Plans promote the retention of local services and community facilities which includes public houses.

3.43 The rural villages are generally isolated settlements within the countryside with the exception of Witherley which stands in close proximity to Atherstone and would most likely fall under Atherstone Town Centre catchment area. The rural villages' facilities are currently limited to a public house and or a small local shop. Due to the isolated nature of these settlements, poor accessibility and limited service provision the retention and expansion of these facilities is considered important and supports Core Strategy Policy 12.

3.44 It should be noted that this review does not remove any designation from the Local Plan. The review only informs the Submission version Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD, which will be consulted upon late summer 2013.

#### 4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS [CB]

None

#### 5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS [MR]

Set out in the report.

#### 6. CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS

- Thriving Economy
- Safer & Healthier Borough
- Strong & Distinctive communities

#### 7. CONSULTATION

Parish Council's were consulted in 2010 on the contents of the District, Local and Neighbourhood Centre Review as this is an update to that review and the methodology has not changed it was not felt necessary to undergo a consultation on an evidence base which is not a statutory requirement of plan making. The Development Plan Document which this evidence base will inform will be consulted upon as part of the statutory process.

#### 8. RISK IMPLICATIONS

It is the Council's policy to proactively identify and manage significant risks which may prevent delivery of business objectives.

It is not possible to eliminate or manage all risks all of the time and risks will remain which have not been identified. However, it is the officer's opinion based on the information available, that the significant risks associated with this decision / project have been identified, assessed and that controls are in place to manage them effectively.

The following significant risks associated with this report / decisions were identified from this assessment:

Management of significant (Net Red) Risks		
Risk Description	Mitigating actions	Owner
Failure to publish the Report would result in the Borough Council having no	Publication of the report	David Kiernan

evidence to support the policy or approved methodology to assess new sites. Without an up-to-date evidence base the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document would be found unsound at examination in public.		
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9. **KNOWING YOUR COMMUNITY – EQUALITY AND RURAL IMPLICATIONS**

10. **CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

By submitting this report, the report author has taken the following into account:

- Planning Implications

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Background papers: None

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