



GL Hearn

Aylesbury Vale Retail Study 2015

Aylesbury Vale District Council

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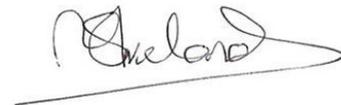
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31 March 2015

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Aylesbury has many strengths and town centre appears to be vital and viable with encouragingly low vacancy rates. However the recent economic downturn has forced the closure of a number of operators which seems to have been particularly damaging to the town's comparison offer. Reducing numbers of comparison shopping units could threaten the wider appeal of Aylesbury and increase the levels of leakage.

The Council will need to closely monitor the health of Aylesbury town centre and provide a strong policy basis to support and enhance the role of the centre as a focal point for the community, positively responding to identified trends with policies that support adaptability will be the key to successfully driving footfall and vitality in the nation's town centres. Qualitative improvements and investment will be needed to retain Aylesbury's credibility as a sub-regional centre and ensure the town centres can increasingly be seen as a place for social interaction.

Convenience floorspace within the wider urban areas of Aylesbury and Buckingham retain almost all of their respective available expenditure in each core catchment. Budget/value operators appear to be trading very well, and small independent operators are performing strongly in Aylesbury town centre. However in general in-centre stores are performing below benchmarks while out-of-centre stores are trading strongly, this pattern of trade demonstrates the preference of Aylesbury shoppers to undertake their main food shopping at out-of-centre locations. There is limited quantitative capacity for convenience retail floorspace growth in the short term and investment/development should concentrate on consolidating and improving the quality of the existing offer. Both Buckingham and Aylesbury have good levels of trade retention befitting their roles in the retail hierarchy; however continued investment in the quality of the public realm will help maintain the attractiveness of these town centres.

The turnover of commitments will absorb more than the growth in convenience expenditure in Aylesbury forecast for 2019 and 2024, with residual expenditure not materialising until 2029 when there will be enough growth to support 790 sqm new retail floorspace. This will grow to 2,317 by 2033. There is some existing capacity for new small convenience store in Winslow which should be in a position to accommodate 222 sqm of convenience floorspace by 2019, growing to 328 sqm by 2033.

Convenience Floorspace Capacity	2019	2024	2029	2033
Aylesbury Town Centre	-	-	790 sqm	2,317 sqm
Buckingham	-	-	-	-
Haddenham	-	-	-	-
Wendover	-	8 sqm	20 sqm	29 sqm
Winslow	222 sqm	262 sqm	299 sqm	328 sqm

With respect to comparison shopping, much expenditure is leaking out to Milton Keynes although Aylesbury seems to be holding its own against other centres in the wider sub-region. The turnover of commitments will outweigh projected growth in available expenditure until 2024 when residual expenditure will be in a position to support 3,137 sqm of additional net comparison floorspace across the district. This capacity will grow to 10,292 sqm by 2029 and to as much as 16,048 sqm by 2033.

Convenience Floorspace Capacity	2019	2024	2029	2033
Aylesbury Vale District	-	3,173 sqm	10,292 sqm	16,048 sqm

Leisure facilities in Aylesbury seem to be adequately catering to the needs of the population. There is no apparent evidence of people having to travel long distances to satisfy their leisure-based requirements. It is suggested that leisure needs should be addressed organically by operators responding to market demand and opportunities.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 GL Hearn have been appointed by Aylesbury Vale District Council (AVDC) to undertake a Retail Capacity Study, as part of the Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA), that will feed into the evidence base underpinning the emerging Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP). The purpose of this retail study is to examine the current expenditure patterns in Aylesbury Vale, assess the current trading performance of retail destinations across the district and establish the need for new retail floorspace balancing qualitative and quantitative considerations.

1.2 This study draws on a combination of on-site surveys and desk-top research, and is informed by a new household telephone survey (undertaken in October 2014) which gathers information on expenditure patterns from 1,000 respondents across the survey area.

- **Section 2** sets out the national planning policy context for the commissioning of this report and its design and preparation;
- **Section 3** examines commercial and economic trends, involving shifts in on-line and out-of-centre retailing, that inform the retail outlook for town centres generally;
- **Section 4** reviews the health of Aylesbury town centre;
- **Section 5** sets out our modelling methodology; we describe the parameters and inputs used in the study and explain our assumptions;
- **Section 6** examines the results of the household telephone survey, drawing conclusions about trading performance and shopping patterns;
- **Section 7** sets out our quantitative capacity assessment for new retail floorspace across the district.
- **Section 8** summarises our findings and makes a series of recommendations about the quantum and type of development that will be appropriate in different parts of Aylesbury Vale over the plan period.

2 NATIONAL POLICY CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

2.1 This section reviews the key elements of national planning policy guidance that provides the context for this study.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

2.2 The NPPF was published in March 2012. It replaces the raft of national Planning Policy Statements, Planning Policy Guidance and circulars with an all-encompassing document. At the heart of the NPPF is an overarching 'presumption in favour of sustainable development', which is intended to be held as a golden thread running through the planning system. It encourages Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) to positively seek opportunities to meet development needs and recognises that the planning system is plan-led.

2.3 Local Plans are the starting point for the determination of any planning application. Each LPA is charged with producing a Local Plan and the task of ensuring that such plans are based on adequate, up-to-date and relevant evidence about the economic, social and environmental characteristics and prospects of the area. These assessments should be integrated and take full account of relevant market and economic signals.

2.4 In accordance with the NPPF LPAs should use the evidence base to assess:

- the needs for land or floorspace for economic development, including both the quantitative and qualitative needs for all foreseeable types of economic activity over the plan period, including for retail and leisure development;
- the existing and future supply of land available for economic development and its sufficiency and suitability to meet the identified needs;
- the role and function of town centres and the relationship between them, including any trends in the performance of centres, and
- the capacity of existing centres to accommodate new town centre development.

2.5 The NPPF endorses the 'town centres first' approach to accommodating new development of main town centre uses, and that requires planning policies be drawn up to positively promote competitive town centres and manage their growth over the plan period. LPAs should plan for town centres by:

- Recognising town centres as the heart of their communities and pursue policies to support their viability and vitality;

- Defining a network and hierarchy of centres that is resilient to anticipated future economic changes;
- Defining the extent of town centres and primary shopping areas, based on a clear definition of primary and secondary shopping frontages in designated centres and set policies that make clear which uses will be permitted in such locations;
- Promoting competitive town centres that provide customer choice and a diverse retail offer which reflect the individuality of town centres;
- Retaining and enhancing existing markets and, where appropriate, re-introducing or creating new ones, ensuring that markets remain attractive and competitive;
- Allocating a range of suitable sites to meet the scale and type of economic development needed in town centres. Where town centre sites are not available, LPAs should adopt a sequential approach to allocate appropriate edge of centre sites;
- Setting policies for the consideration of proposals for main town centre uses which cannot be accommodated in or adjacent to town centres;
- Recognising that residential development can play an important role in ensuring the vitality of centres; and
- Where town centres are in decline, plan positively for their future to encourage economic activity.

National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)

- 2.6 In March 2014 the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) published the NPPG, which provides technical guidance on how to prepare a robust evidence base and to assess the impact of retail, office and leisure based proposals.
- 2.7 It states that the key to ensuring successful town centres (which enables sustainable economic growth and provide a wide range of social and environmental benefits) is to ensure that a positive vision or strategy for town centres is articulated through the Local Plan.
- 2.8 The NPPG states that any strategy should be based on evidence of the current state of town centres and opportunities to meet development needs and support their viability and vitality. Strategies should ascertain what the appropriate and realistic role, function and hierarchy of town centres are in the area over the plan period. *“This will involve auditing existing centres to assess their role, vitality, viability and potential to accommodate new development and different types of*

development. This assessment should cover a three-five year period, but should also take the lifetime of the Local Plan into account and be regularly reviewed”.

- 2.9 The vision for the future of each town centre should consider what the most appropriate mix of uses would be to enhance overall vitality and viability.
- 2.10 The Strategy should assess whether the town centre can accommodate the scale of assessed need for main town centre uses. This should include considering expanding centres, or development opportunities to enable new development or redevelop existing under-utilised space. The strategy should also determine what timeframe new retail floorspace should be provided over, and what complementary strategies are necessary or appropriate to enhance the town centre and help deliver the vision for its future, as well as how can these be planned and delivered.
- 2.11 Strategies should identify changes in the hierarchy of town centres, including where a town centre is in decline. In such cases, strategies should seek to manage decline positively to encourage economic activity and achieve an appropriate mix of uses commensurate with a realistic future for that town centre.
- 2.12 The NPPG states that LPAs should take full account of relevant market signals when planning for town centres and keep their retail land allocations under regular review. These market signals should be identified and analysed in terms of their impacts on town centres. This information should be used to inform policies that are responsive to changes in the market as well as the changing needs of business.

Conclusion

- 2.13 This Retail Study has been commissioned, designed and drafted in accordance with the policy context outlined above and the AVDC Brief (September 2014) and is intended to provide the Aylesbury Vale District Council with a robust, up-to-date evidence base upon which it can formulate the planning policies that will feed into the emerging Local Plan. For the avoidance of doubt, the terms used are set out in Annex 2 of the NPPF.

3 NATIONAL RETAIL TRENDS

Historic trends

- 3.1 Over the past 30 years or so, the role and function of town centres has undergone dramatic change. The high street is no longer the main focus for convenience and comparison shopping as large out-of-centre developments in the form of retail parks and convenience superstores have diverted much retail expenditure and shopping trips. This has been exacerbated by the increasing trend for seeking to lift bulky-goods restrictions on units trading from retail parks, as well as the gradual proportionate shift over time in the range of comparison goods that are stocked in very large supermarkets at out-of-centre locations. The growing market share of internet shopping is adding to the pressure on high street shops. Town centres will need to adapt and re-imagine their role and function in order to compete, and they will need to rely on strong yet flexible policy support to survive.
- 3.2 Over-prioritisation of retailing in town centres has led to office space and key civic uses being relocated out-of-centre in order to free up development land in-centre, this has led to a reduction in activity and footfall in these centres which has negatively impacted the vitality of some centres.

Recent Trends

- 3.3 Squeezed expenditure and the drive for value shopping have led to the proliferation of deep discounting foodstores and pound shops, which are increasingly fulfilling an anchoring role in some smaller and medium-sized centres.
- 3.4 The UK is emerging from a prolonged period of recession. There are positive signs that consumer spending and business investment are improving. Low inflation, strong employment growth and high levels of consumer and business confidence suggest sustained growth in the short to medium-term, albeit at a slower pace than experienced during the last period of expansion due to the fact that fiscal restraint and weak exports are expected to exert a drag on growth generally.
- 3.5 The volume of retail sales have improved in this context, however heavy discounting and a period of deflation have acted as a countervailing constraint. Whilst recent trends indicate a strong upswing in the UK economy since early 2013, despite increased government borrowing, the preceding economic downturn has had a major impact on the retail sector nationally.

Internet shopping

- 3.6 Internet spending and other forms of retailing that are not derived from physical floorspace need to be taken into account when undertaking retail studies. Special Forms of Trading (SFT) includes all types of non-store retailing (internet, street markets and mail-order shopping) and in 2013 was

equivalent to 11.5% of total retailing (14% for comparison goods and 7% for convenience goods). Experian predict that by 2020 non-store sales (adjusted to take account of sales from stores with a physical presence) will reach 11.9% of total retail (15.5% for comparison goods and 4.2% for convenience).

- 3.7 The internet and advances in mobile technology are increasingly affecting shopping behaviour. The pace of growth in non-store retailing is starting to slow but is still expected to outpace the growth in traditional retail expenditure in the short to medium-term.
- 3.8 Home delivery has become very common in the convenience sector, where goods are sourced from stores with a physical presence. While the spend might end up as turnover in the same store, such transactions do not translate to activity on the high street and remove the potential for linked shopping, this trend is undermining the anchoring role that large foodstore operators traditionally fulfil in well-configured centres.
- 3.9 Home delivery of comparison goods are commonly sourced from far afield (possibly even abroad), the steepening of this trend results in increased leakage and reduces the volume of available expenditure that can support local traders on the high street.
- 3.10 Convenience operators and some comparison retailers, such as John Lewis, now offer a click-and-collect service where shoppers make their selection and purchase on-line but travel to a bricks-and-mortar store to collect their goods. This form of shopping has the potential to contribute to the levels of vitality on the high street and the consequent opportunities for incidental shopping help underpin the viability of smaller operators who rely on pass-by trade.
- 3.11 Technological advancements and the ability to scan barcodes in-store and instantly research where the same item can be bought cheaper is driving competition and eroding retailers' profit margins. The rise of tablet and mobile technology is improving the browsing experience and facilitating on-line transactions. The distinction between on-line and in-store shopping channels is becoming less clear cut. The advent of click-and-collect and multi-channelling has meant that bricks-and-mortar stores will continue to play an important role in enhancing the shopping experience. There is evidence that more people are researching items on-line before making a purchase. Such multi-channelling, where the ultimate transaction is carried out in-store, or in cases where people touch and feel the goods in-store before buying on-line, mark an instance where the rise of the internet can bolster the performance of traditional bricks-and-mortar shops and the activity on the high street.

Comparison Shopping

- 3.12 Comparison retailing has been greatly affected by the economic cycle. A number of high street retailers have folded (Comet, Jessops, Blockbuster, Borders, JJB Sports, Woolworths, Peacocks, Fire trap, Habitat, Barratts, Past Times and Clinton Cards) leaving vacancies in town centres across the country. Retailers such as HMV and Game have drastically cut back the number of stores they operate. However comparison expenditure is set to improve over the coming years as the UK advances further out of recession; and while vacancies have increased substantially since 2007, in many towns the departure of national multiple retailers has created opportunities for independent retailers by removing strong competition and freeing up well situated premises for occupation.

Convenience Shopping

- 3.13 The pace of expansion of convenience operator representation has slowed dramatically with major foodstores easing their drive for large format stores. Small convenience stores have proliferated more recently with Tesco, Sainsbury's and Morrisons all competing for suitable sites in town centres and accessible out-of-centre locations, however, there are already signs that this activity is starting to slow.
- 3.14 It is apparent that the traditional pattern of convenience expenditure is changing, people are starting to move away from the practice of undertaking a weekly main-food shop (traditionally assumed to represent approximately 80% of total convenience expenditure) and topping-up sporadically (accounting for the remaining 20% of convenience spend). Instead it seems that people are starting to undertake a greater number of smaller yet more frequent trips to a variety of locations. Constrained expenditure has encouraged people to undertake their main food shop at a number of destinations in order to economise and avail of specific in-store promotions at a number of different locations. Other people rely on big foodstore operators for their basic convenience goods and visit specialist retailers for certain items such as meat or fish.
- 3.15 The success of internet shopping and supermarket delivery services mean that a growing proportion of people are starting to secure durable the basic convenience goods in this way and top-up on fresh fruit, meat, fish and vegetables and baked goods as and when they need them, at a variety of locations. These kind of shopping habits are reinforced by community focused initiatives, the proliferation of street markets and the success/attractiveness of home-grown and organic produce.
- 3.16 The lines between traditionally distinct market segments in the convenience sector has begun to blur, with value operators such as Aldi and Lidl, taking an increasing market share of available expenditure.

Leisure Spend

- 3.17 There has been much activity in the commercial leisure sector over the last 25 years. Average household expenditure on leisure services increased substantially between 1984-2005, more than doubling. The pace of development activity nationally began to slow 2005 as some sectors in the commercial leisure market neared saturation point (bingo halls and multiplex cinemas for example). The economic downturn has further compressed spend on leisure activities across the board as consumers sacrifice spend on discretionary activities due to fiscal constraints.
- 3.18 Eating and drinking out of home has proven the most popular leisure activity that most people undertake on a regular basis. The 'eating out' market has grown by 8% over the period 2008-2013, which is impressive considering this growth occurred during the economic downturn. The sector is now worth approximately £32 billion annually.
- 3.19 Cinema-going is the second most popular activity whereas visiting a theatre, museum or a bowling alley are activities undertaken less frequently. Approximately 40% of adults use a health centre or swimming pool, and only 15% are members of private clubs (figures derived from Mintel). This indicates that there is significant potential for growth in this sector in the future.
- 3.20 Coffee culture is burgeoning across Britain with the proliferation of coffee shops in high streets in towns of all sizes. The number of high-end independents is growing and chain operators are very active with Caffé Nero, Costa Coffee and Starbucks competing most aggressively for market share. The coffee chain sector has been growing at 6% annually since 2012 and is expected to exceed 6,000 outlets by 2015 with sales reaching £3.2 billion.
- 3.21 The fast food sector has also proven resilient throughout the downturn, with operators seemingly reorienting themselves towards offering healthy and gourmet products. The restaurant sector has been diverging with some multiple operators such as Frankie & Bennys, Pizza Hut and Nandos pursuing expansion strategies at out-of-centre retail and leisure parks.
- 3.22 Public houses have come under pressure recently as the competition in the local convenience sector has seen the closure and change-of-use of numerous licenced premises. Pub chains are still active however, seeking prominent urban and suburban sites by main roads.
- 3.23 During the 1990s multiplex cinema operations expanded rapidly, most notably in the form of 10-16 screen developments in retail parks and out-of-centre locations. This pattern of growth has been curtailed more recently with the current trend being for smaller cinemas with few screens in town centre locations. However the cinema sector has remained buoyant with competition between Cineworld, Vue Cinemas and Odeon driving site acquisition and development as the major operators pursue their respective expansion strategies.

- 3.24 The health and fitness sector has recently performed reasonably well with budget operators expanding rapidly while some rationalisation has taken place among the higher end operators. The sector is dominated by private clubs such as Virgin Active and David Lloyd Leisure which benefit from the ability to offer a variety of fitness classes and spa facilities. There has also been strong growth in the market for non-contract budget operators such as Pure Gym and The Gym. Chains such as Fitness First and LA Fitness have been pursuing a programme of acquiring smaller sites across small and medium-sized centres, while JJB sports have been developing a combination of gym facilities with retail space at out-of-centre locations.
- 3.25 The bowling sector (ten pin) has been relatively static recently, there are some strongly performing operators in the market but the pace of expansion has been slow. Mintel records that the popularity of bowling is waning.
- 3.26 It seems that commercial leisure will play a bigger role in the future as the economy continues to improve freeing up more discretionary expenditure and as activity in town centres shifts away somewhat from a purely retail-oriented focus. Town centres have the potential to capitalise on this trend by allowing their function to be redefined as destinations in their own right: places for people to meet, interact, stay and recreate rather than just shop and leave. A strong commercial leisure offer can increase dwell times help sustain vitality beyond retail hours. This in turn will generate significant advantages for existing shops and services that will benefit from linked trips and incidental/pass-by trade as well as the increased vitality and viability of the town centres in general.

Expenditure Forecasts

- 3.27 Although economic growth will continue to remain relatively muted compared with the last period of expansion, household expenditure is beginning to pick up. Consumer confidence has been boosted by the strong performance of the housing market and a rise in consumer credit is fuelling the buoyancy of household expenditure.
- 3.28 Against this economic backdrop, the latest Experian Retail Planner Briefing Note (October 2014) raises its expectations regarding its longer term forecasts for annual comparison expenditure growth from 2.9% to 3.3%. Expectations for annual convenience expenditure growth, however, have dipped from 0.8% to 0.6%. The past high rates of growth are unlikely to return any time soon.
- 3.29 The high street continues to face challenges with a number of factors affecting shopping patterns. Innovations in on-line retailing continue to strengthen its market share of available expenditure. Changing consumer behaviour and preferences have been affected by the development of multi-channelling, technological advancements and the convenience and accessibility of out-of-centre retailing, where retailers benefit from larger floorplates and ample free surface-area car parking.

Retail Outlook

- 3.30 The recession hit retailers hard, reducing profit margins and undermining the viability of weaker performing operators leading to the failure of numerous high street brands. A combination of an expenditure squeeze and changing shopping habits has reduced operators' space requirements. Vacancy levels increased during the recession with significantly affected centres experiencing vacancy rates of more than 20%. Many town centre development schemes were put on hold or scaled back significantly during the recession. Now that the economy is improving vacancy levels have begun to drop, improving retailer confidence, however major operators are likely to pursue a cautious expansion programme in the short-term.
- 3.31 In the last 20 years retailers have been slowly consolidating in a smaller number of larger centres incurring a polarising effect where small and medium-sized centres struggle to attract investment and representation. This pattern has been exacerbated recently as multiple retailers have reduced their floorspace requirements by using a combination of a few large flag-ship stores supported by smaller satellite shops and strong on-line presence that adequately serve customer needs nationally and internationally.
- 3.32 The cautious outlook of major retailers is causing them to be increasingly selective, this is fuelling the on-going trend of polarisation: strong centres are getting stronger while medium-sized centres are struggling to retain their major multiple retailers. Smaller centres are already geared up to serve the local convenience and day-to-day service needs of smaller catchment areas.
- 3.33 As usual, low rents and the wide availability of car parking are fuelling the attractiveness of out-of-centre locations for expansion for operators such as Next at Home, John Lewis at Home etc.
- 3.34 In the context of such challenges to the traditional high street - in the form of the internet, out-of-centre retailing and changing consumer behaviour - it is becoming increasingly important for robust town centre strategies to protect and support town centres and the high street.
- 3.35 With retail expenditure being increasingly diverted out-of-centre and on-line, the role and function of town centres is set to shift somewhat from being primarily a shopping destination to more of a leisure-centric and community orientated destination. Positively responding to these trends with policies that support adaptability will be the key to successfully driving footfall and vitality in the nation's town centres.

4 QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENT – AYLESBURY TOWN CENTRE

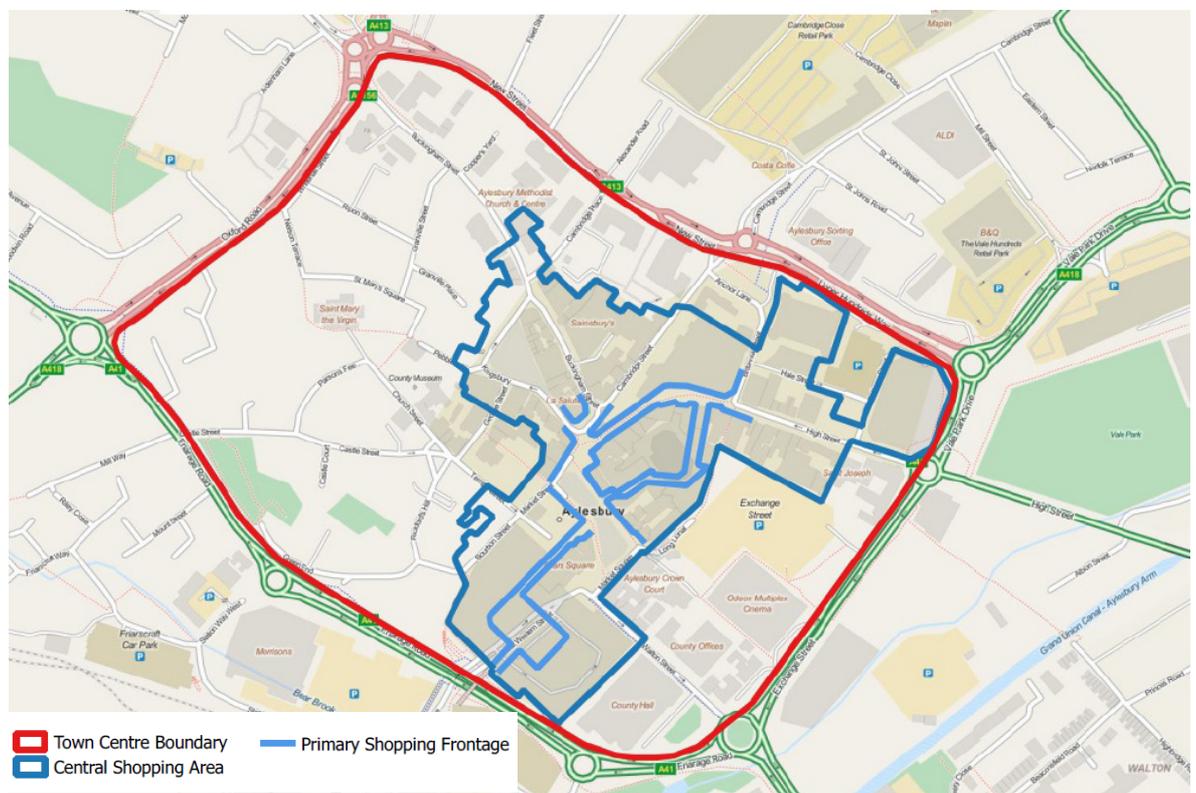
4.1 This section explores the vitality and viability of Aylesbury town centre against a range of key performance indicators in order to ascertain how healthily the centre is currently performing and to identify pertinent opportunities for and threats to improving or sustaining the health of the centre.

Retail Context

4.2 Aylesbury is the county town of Buckinghamshire and being a sub-regional centre is by far the largest urban settlement in the Vale. It effectively sits in the middle of a triangle of three larger centres with Milton Keynes to the north, High Wycombe to the south and Oxford to the west.

4.3 The centre combines the vestiges of an old market town with the more recent development of modern shopping facilities including two shopping centres: Friars Square and Hale Leys. The prime retail pitch is located within these two shopping centres and along High Street and Market Square, where comparison shopping predominates. There is a busy open market located at the pedestrianized Market Square that sits directly between the shopping centres, with the effect of creating a vibrant and compact retail core with a reasonably diverse retail offer, catering mainly to the value and mid-range market segments.

Map 1: Aylesbury Town Centre and Existing Retail Frontages



Retail Composition - Diversity of Uses

Comparison Retail

- 4.4 Aylesbury Town Centre has a wide variety of comparison shopping facilities. This report updates the latest Goad centre survey of Aylesbury with site visits undertaken in November 2014 (a map is included at Annex H which displays the retail provision of Aylesbury Town centre by use class). It is noted that there is 28,843 sqm (gross) of comparison shopping floorspace in 112 retail units. The proportion of comparison units (at 35.9%) is slightly above UK average, this amounts to a slightly higher proportion of comparison floorspace (at 41.2%) than the UK average (36.2%). This shows that the centre has a good range of comparison shopping facilities.
- 4.5 If these figures are compared to those of the last retail study it can be shown that the comparison provision has reduced considerably since the 2009 health check recorded comparison floorspace at 57.3% of the total provision, with 140 comparison units. The intervening economic downturn has evidently had an effect on the retail composition of the town centre.
- 4.6 Over half of these comparison units are 'multiple retailers', including such operators as Boots, WH Smith, Wilkinson, Burton, Dorothy Perkins, H&M, River Island and Top Shop. High quality high street brands are not well-represented in the primary shopping area but there is a good balance of independent retailers throughout the centre, focused mainly on Cambridge Street and High Street. Department stores Bhs and House of Fraser have representation in Aylesbury, and the centre also benefits from a Waterstones and two independent book sellers; nine jewellers; nine ladies wear shops; three furniture shops; five hardware and household goods shops, and eleven charity shops. There is clearly a good degree of diversity in the comparison sector though this range is limited to particular market segments.
- 4.7 The recent development of Aylesbury Shopping Park, in close proximity to the town centre, provides a well-integrated provision of bulky goods retailers (and discount foodstores). This retail park effectively combines with the retail offer in the town's primary shopping area to serve a wide range of shopping needs.

Convenience Retail

- 4.8 Although below average in terms of unit count (6.4%) and floorspace provision (13%) the centre's convenience provision is also well-served with five bakers, one butchers, one green grocer, one delicatessen, five convenience stores and three health food stores. There is an Iceland and two foodstores in the town centre: a small, tired-looking Sainsbury's store (1,286 sqm net) (with existing planning permission for refurbishment) and a Marks & Spencer food-hall (856 sqm net), all are

centrally located. These stores predominantly serve a top-up shopping need for a walk-in catchment.

- 4.9 Convenience retailing appears to have been largely resilient to the economic upheaval experienced since the 2009 study with the proportion of units and floorspace remaining virtually static.
- 4.10 In addition to these foodstores mentioned above, and although not recorded by Goad in their town centre survey, there are very well-used supermarkets located at the edge of the town centre: The Morrisons store at Station Way (beside the railway station) is very busy and combines with the new Waitrose store at Waterside South to serve a broad spectrum of convenience needs, catering to specific market segments. Both of these stores are conveniently located in close proximity to the centre in such a way as to help underpin the vitality and viability of the town centre with the benefit of a large surface car park across the road and an on-site multi-storey customer car park.
- 4.11 There is also a Lidl located in Aylesbury Shopping Park (as mentioned above), which are within walking distance of the town centre although not technically part of Aylesbury town centre as per the NPPF definition of in-centre) nor seamlessly integrated with the focus of retailing. An Aldi store is located just on Cambridge Street, a short walk from the town centre. It seems to be trading particularly well and is a major generator of footfall in the town centre due to its close proximity. These operators are considered deep discounters and serve the 'value' end of the convenience market while providing greater choice and competition in the convenience sector as a whole.

Service Provision

- 4.12 The provision of retail service units in Aylesbury (44 units) is directly in line with the UK average (14.1%), however the diversity is very limited as this includes 27 hair & beauty parlours, six opticians and three travel agents. Leisure service (73 units) is well-represented and also in line with the national average, at 24.9% of the total unit count. The uses are diverse with three bars/wine bars, nine public houses, 15 cafés, two clubs, eleven restaurants and 16 fast food takeaways. While there is a broad provision of food and beverage units, the bulk of this provision currently serves the budget end of the market, quality brands and high-end independents are sparsely represented.
- 4.13 The restaurant and public house provision is scattered throughout the town however the concentration is currently greatest around Kingsbury Square. Fast food outlets seem to be grouped at the north of the town along Buckingham Street. The development of the Odeon cinema together with improved food and beverage uses at The Exchange to the west of the Exchange Street car park has enhanced the town's access to leisure facilities; so too has the renovation of Vale Park and the extended facilities at the Aqua Vale Leisure Centre.

- 4.14 Financial service units are very well represented with 48 units making up 15.4% of the total unit count, which is above the national average. There are three building societies, ten banks, 20 estate agents, seven legal services and four financial services (among other A2 uses).

Vacancies

- 4.15 Vacancies are quite low with only 15 units making up 4.8% of the total unit count. This is below the national average (11.4%). These figures are even more encouraging when one considers that four of the vacant units are to be demolished to as part of redevelopment proposals (Sainsbury's redevelopment at between Cambridge Street and Buckingham Street, and the Waterside North development.)

Table 1: Retail Composition by Unit Count

	Units	%	UK Avg	Index
Comparison	112	35.9%	32.6%	1.10
Convenience	20	6.4%	8.4%	0.76
Retail Service	44	14.1%	14.1%	1.00
Leisure Service	73	23.4%	22.3%	1.05
Financial Service	48	15.4%	10.9%	1.41
Vacant	15	4.8%	11.4%	0.42
Total	312	100%		

Table 2: Retail Composition by Floorspace

	sqm	%	UK Avg	Index
Comparison	28,843	41.2%	36.2%	1.14
Convenience	9,058	13.0%	15.0%	0.86
Retail Service	3,988	5.7%	7.4%	0.77
Leisure Service	17,387	24.9%	23.2%	1.07
Financial Service	5,711	8.2%	8.2%	1.00
Vacant	4,961	7.1%	9.3%	0.76
Total	69,948	100%		

Retailer Demand

- 4.16 A limited number of retailers have listed Aylesbury among the range of centres for which they have a requirement for retail space. Demand for A1 units ranges from 950 sqm to 1,350 sqm from four operators: Marie Curie Cancer Care, Linens Direct, Jollyes Petshop and Cycle Surgery.
- 4.17 There is also demand for space from a self-storage operator (Class B8), a coffee shop (class A3) and an alternative medicine clinic (Class D1/A1). Given the current level of vacancies in the town, there does not seem to be any physical barrier preventing most of these operators from gaining representation in Aylesbury in time. Vacancy levels are low and there appears to be a high velocity of turnover in lettings, which is a good indicator of the centre's health.

Pedestrian Flows and Accessibility

- 4.18 Aylesbury town centre was very busy at the time of our site visits, with pedestrian activity concentrated on Market Square and within Friars Square and Hale Leys shopping centres. High Street was reasonably busy while Kingsbury Square and Cambridge were relatively quiet by comparison.
- 4.19 The Exchange Street car park (413 spaces) provides very convenient access to the centre by car from the ring road to the south east of the centre (Exchange Street), serving the Aylesbury Waterside Theatre, the cinema and associated food and beverage units, and linking through to Hale Leys shopping centre. This car park provides an abundance of low-cost surface area parking in very close proximity to the focus of retailing, delivering much footfall to the centre. It was observed to be at capacity by mid-morning and was very well-used throughout the day. This car park plays a significant role in giving car-borne shoppers convenient access to town centre facilities, however the proposals in the Town Centre Vision document show plans for part of this car park to be given over to commercial development.
- 4.20 Friarscroft car park (588 spaces) is located beyond the Morrisons store at the edge of the town to the south west. This is a long-stay car park and that is separated from the focus of retailing by Station Way and the A41, a footbridge provides a linkage with the town centre. There are a number of other smaller car parks that are peripherally located, including Hampden House long stay car park to the east of High Street (364 spaces), the Upper Hundreds multi-storey car park at the corner of Hale Street and Railway Street (305 spaces), which takes its access off Upper Hundreds Way and provides convenient access to the town centre; and the large Walton Street car park on the western side of Walton Street (525 spaces).

Environmental Quality

- 4.21 The environmental quality in Aylesbury is generally fair to good in the central areas although peripheral streets need to be observed closely as some shop fronts are poorly maintained in parts of Kingsbury, Cambridge Street and Buckingham Street for example.
- 4.22 Kingsbury is the gateway to the old town. The urban layout of Kingsbury Square (which is actually a triangle) is nicely proportioned. The informal configuration of the urban space combined with a few established trees and paving of the generous pedestrianised area give this place a distinctive character. This is an area of significant potential to improve both the aesthetic character and to broaden the quality and diversity of uses catering to the evening economy. The absence of vehicular traffic and the generous space for sitting out make this area ideal for the leisure-based food and beverage type uses. Some attractive two and three-storey buildings sit alongside modern structures of less architectural merit and demarcate an appealing public realm. Although some shop fronts could be better maintained, a lack of upkeep is a threat to the overall success and attractiveness of this area. Kingsbury square is in need of investment and could benefit from a coordinated strategy, in partnership with landlords, to improve shop fronts and the quality of the urban realm by upgrading paving, installing seating and attractive lighting.
- 4.23 Market Square is the focus of retailing in Aylesbury town centre. High Street, Cambridge Street, Buckingham Street and the southern egress from Kingsbury square all converge at Market Street, which forms the northern vertex of Market Square. Consequently pedestrian flows are naturally ushered into the square from each of these routes. Friars Square and Hale Leys shopping centres anchor the centre; they lie opposite each other at either side of Market Square. Both drive footfall for the other and around the centre.
- 4.24 The High Street is pedestrianised between Market Street and Britannia Street, retailing along this stretch is dominated by Marks & Spencer, WH Smith and Specsavers. The northern access to Hale Leys Shopping Centre is located opposite the M&S and much pedestrian traffic is diverted into the shopping centre which helps to form a small retail circuit at this end of town. Britannia Street is uninviting with flanking walls of Coral bookmakers and M&S both presenting blank, inactive frontages to the street. This isolates the Wilkinsons store and the Lj'Z café bar at the northern end of Britannia Street. A market takes place here on Wednesdays which drives much footfall in the town centre.
- 4.25 Heading east down High Street from Britannia Street, where vehicular traffic resumes, retailing is very much secondary in nature with a proliferation of charity shops, betting shops, discount/frozen-food stores, and amusement arcades/casinos. The easternmost end of High Street is anchored by

the large-format 'QD Stores' providing budget household goods, although this unit is set back from the road breaking the established building line and distorting the sense of place.

- 4.26 Cambridge Street is a narrow secondary shopping area that provides a northerly pedestrian approach to the town centre from the roundabout at the A418. Some of the buildings along this stretch are in poor condition, and the character of the area is dominated by the back-land nature of the M&S service yard access, elevated car parking and the disproportionate four-storey structures that line the narrow street. The building line is irregular, building heights vary widely, and there is a number of incongruous architectural styles in odd juxtaposition, and there are wide gaps in the retail frontage that interrupt the activity at street level. However, the small format of the retail units and the secondary nature of the retail pitch have fostered a collocation of interesting independent retailers that contribute to the retail diversity in the town centre as a whole.
- 4.27 There has obviously been much investment in Aylesbury town centre over recent years however continued investment and public realm improvements are needed to help Aylesbury attract quality operators that will allow the town compete more effectively with other centres such as High Wycombe. Gaps in the retail frontage could be activated in a way that consolidates the retail core and strengthens the sense of place.
- 4.28 There were no sign of antisocial behaviour apparent from our site visits. Litter levels were very low and graffiti was minimal. Overall the town feels safe and welcoming.

Visitor Views and Perceptions

- 4.29 A household telephone survey was carried out in October 2014 and sought views from 1,000 respondents. People were asked which centre they visited most often (Aylesbury, Buckingham, Haddenham, Wendover or Winslow). The vast majority of respondents (67%) named Aylesbury as their destination of choice. However a very high proportion of people from Zones 1 and 2 (88% and 72% respectively) named Buckingham as their primary destination, which demonstrates the loyalty of Buckingham's localised catchment.
- 4.30 Of those people who visit Aylesbury most often, 11% visit daily, and 57% said they visit once a week or more often. We asked people what the main purpose was of their last visit to Aylesbury and the most popular response, at 38%, was non-food (comparison) shopping, while 21% undertook primarily food and grocery shopping. The third most popular reason for travelling to this centre was for the purpose of visiting a bank/post office/financial institution. 3% visited the theatre and 4% went for work.
- 4.31 By contrast 75% of those respondents who cited Buckingham as their favoured centre visit the centre once a week or more frequently. People seem to be visiting Buckingham primarily for food-

shopping, with only 19% of people citing non-food shopping as the primary purpose of their last visit to this centre.

4.32 People are visiting Haddenham, Winslow and Wendover in fewer numbers and primarily for their grocery shopping needs, or to visit cafes, bars and restaurants. These smaller centres cater to non-food shopping needs but to a more limited extent.

Table 3: Reasons for Visiting Centre of Choice

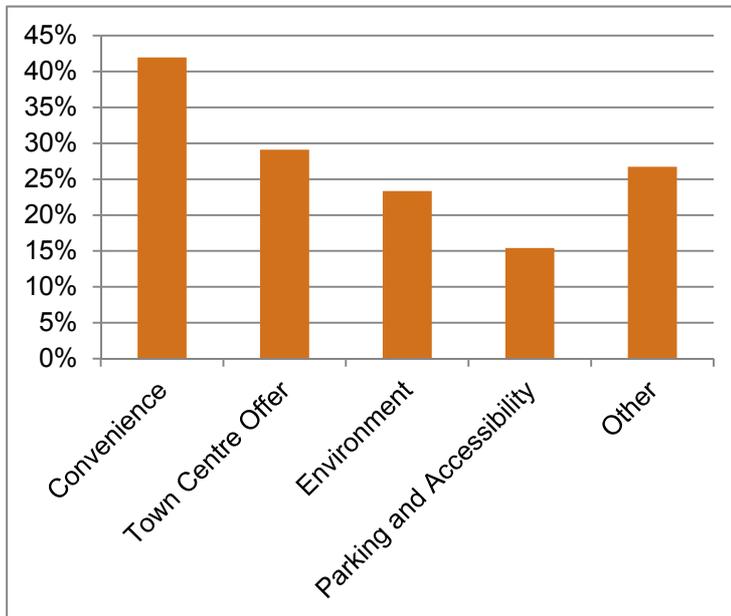
	Non-food Shopping	Food Shopping	Financial Service	Cafes / Bars & Restaurants	Medical / Dental	Visiting friends / family	Leisure Activity
Aylesbury	38%	21%	9%	3%	2%	4%	3%
Buckingham	19%	37%	15%	5%	6%	3%	1%
Haddenham	14%	6%	0%	16%	0%	47%	0%
Winslow	13%	23%	8%	19%	3%	12%	5%
Wendover	15%	33%	0%	10%	2%	6%	3%

4.33 When asked what they like about their centre of choice, some people gave multiple responses; these were recorded and grouped by general theme (convenience, town centre offer, environment, parking & accessibility and other).

4.34 With respect to Aylesbury, 42% of people stated that it was their centre of choice for reasons of convenience, while 29% were persuaded positively by the quality and diversity of the town centre offer. 23% were impressed with the local environment and 15% mentioned parking and accessibility as key strengths. The graph below serves to illustrate the responses in this regard and a series of more detailed graphs at Annex E provides a more intricate breakdown of individual responses by theme. Percentages do not add up to 100% due to the recording of multiple responses.

4.35 People were asked what they disliked about their centre of choice. With respect to Aylesbury, 40% of people said there was nothing they did not like. However 57% of people highlighted issues regarding the town centre offer by citing a 'poor range of shops' (24%), 'poor quality of shops' (8%), and 'not enough leisure facilities' (2%).

Figure 1: What People Like about Aylesbury



4.36 The theme of parking and accessibility was also raised in a negative capacity by 16% of Aylesbury visitors with individual concerns ranging between 'too much traffic' (6%), 'expensive parking' (5%), 'difficulty parking' (4%).

4.37 Issues concerning the environment were also raised by 10% of Aylesbury visitors with perceptions ranging from Aylesbury having an unattractive environment (4%), the streets feeling unsafe (3%), and the shopping are being too spread out (1%). The very low proportion of such concerns is encouraging.

4.38 Interestingly, 87% of Haddenham's visitors said there was nothing they disliked about the centre and 13% said the area was growing too large.

4.39 The pace of economic recovery continues to be slow and certain parts of Aylesbury town centre will need to be specifically addressed if visitors' perceptions are to be improved. The full list of responses is set out in the household telephone survey results at Annex A (see questions 23 – 27E).

SWOT Analysis

Strengths

4.40 Aylesbury has many strengths including the distinctive character of the vestigial elements of the old market town including important heritage assets such as St Marys Church and the Buckingham County

Museum. The development of the new Aylesbury Waterside Theatre has helped underpin the viability of a number of new restaurants. There are many independent retailers that reinforce the identity of the retail centre. The proximity of Buckingham University Technical College brings much footfall and a young demographic into the centre shoring up its vitality.

Weaknesses

- 4.41 Aylesbury also exhibits some weaknesses: the catering offer is focused on mass market, with an abundance of fast food takeaways and few quality operators. The town centre's food and drink offer would benefit from more choice across all categories. There is no meaningful retail circuit in the town and the layout renders peripheral streets isolated and poorly trafficked. The retail offer caters mainly to the lower market segments, there is limited choice in the quality end of the market and there is much room for accommodating a broader range of high street multiple retailers.

Opportunities

- 4.42 Opportunities for Aylesbury include making more use of the canal as an attractive geographical feature for leisure uses; the potential pedestrianisation of Cambridge Street could encourage more footfall and underpinning the viability of smaller independent retailers; and the potential for Kingsbury Square to improve its offer and attractiveness to create a viable cluster of leisure services catering to the food and beverage sector, creating an attractive and vibrant gateway to the old town. Market Square has great potential as a performance and exhibition space for staging the type events that will bring more people into the centre.
- 4.43 The continued engagement with and support of the Town Centre Partnership represents a good opportunity to progress the action plans devised for specific areas in the town.

Threats

- 4.44 The reducing numbers of comparison shopping units could threaten the wider appeal of Aylesbury and increase the levels of leakage to destinations such as High Wycombe and Milton Keynes, as could the lack of comparison and service units serving the quality market segment. Investment in competing centres such as High Wycombe and Bicester will increase their popularity and put further pressure on Aylesbury's market share.
- 4.45 Qualitative improvements and investment will be needed to retain Aylesbury's credibility as a sub-regional centre (serving a wide catchment area beyond the district boundary) and ensure that the town centre can increasingly be seen as a place for social interaction.

Summary

- 4.46 In summary, therefore, Aylesbury appears to be trading well with reasonable levels of vitality and viability. There has been significant investment in Aylesbury over the past few years with the development of the University campus (which will bring many students within the core catchment of the town centre) and the Aylesbury Waterside Theatre together with the new Waitrose store and Travelodge which has effectively extended the reach of town centre in a south eastward direction. Although this development is not well-integrated with the focus of shopping, the facilities are close enough to facilitate linked trips and promote footfall in the primary shopping area. And improve the attractiveness and profile of Aylesbury town centre in general.
- 4.47 People are still coming to the centre, primarily to undertake comparison shopping, and to a lesser extent to do food and grocery shopping. It is clear that the centre suffered during the economic downturn losing a number of retailers, with the comparison shopping offer being impacted most significantly. Aylesbury continues to offer a good range of shops and services although mainly targeting the value/budget end and mid-range of the market.
- 4.48 Economic recovery has been slow and the town centre vitality and viability will need to be supported and closely monitored. Investment in the centre and public realm improvements will help retain the centre's competitiveness. Action plans that are in place should be supported and both planning policies and development management decisions should be coordinated to protect and enhance the health of the town centre in accordance with the vision of the published Aylesbury Town Centre Plan.

5 RETAIL MODELLING METHODOLOGY

- 5.1 The robustness of any retail model relies on the suitability of parameters, the accuracy of data inputs and the feasibility of assumptions. This section describes the preparation of the capacity study, and sets out the range of data inputs used to build up the model and explain any assumptions that have been used.

Survey Area

- 5.2 The same survey area as previous studies has been used in order to allow a direct comparison of survey results; this will make it easier to track the change over time in market shares and trade-draw patterns for specific retail destinations.
- 5.3 Seven survey zones have been built up from postal sectors, and have been drawn to represent distinct areas approximating the core and secondary catchments of both Aylesbury and Buckingham town centres. The first six zones broadly constitute Aylesbury Vale District while Zone 7 represents the outer fringe of Aylesbury and lies beyond the district boundary to the south. A map of the survey area is included at Annex B to this report (Map 1).

Household Telephone Survey

- 5.4 NEMS Market Research was commissioned to undertake a household telephone survey to gather information from 1,000 respondents. The survey was carried out in October 20114 and the results provide up-to-date information on the patterns of expenditure in the area and market share data for individual retail destinations. The survey results (weighted and filtered) are included at Annex A to this report.

Expenditure

- 5.5 The expenditure data is derived from Experian Micromarketer which provides information on average convenience and comparison expenditure per head by postal sector. The base year for the retail model is 2012, being the year for which the latest expenditure per capita figures from Experian are available. Annual expenditure growth rates were then applied to these figures (derived from Experian's Retail Planner 12 briefing note) to produce expenditure per capita figures for 2014 (when the survey was undertaken) and the various assessment years (2019, 2024, 2029 and 2033). All prices are set to a 2012 price base. These per capita expenditure figures were then applied, per zone, to the population projections to produce the total amount of available convenience and comparison expenditure in 2014 and future assessment years.
- 5.6 With respect to convenience expenditure, an assumption of a 70:30% split has been adopted for main food and top-up shopping. This has been revised since the 2009 retail study (when an 85:15% split was used) to reflect retail trends and changing shopping behaviour whereby more people are

undertaking a greater number of smaller shopping trips thereby increasing the proportion of top-up shopping expenditure.

Special Forms of Trading (SFT)

- 5.7 No assumptions have been made about SFT instead this study relies on the results of the telephone survey to inform the market shares for street markets, internet shopping (both 'click & collect' and home delivery, and other special forms of trading. This allows to us apportion spend in line with actual responses and the local pattern of expenditure rather than applying broad-brush assumptions drawn from national trends.

Sales Density

- 5.8 All foodstore company average sales densities have been calculated from Verdict (an established data source on company turnovers and trading performance) by assessing overall company performance (company turnover), sales performance by comparison and convenience foods (i.e. turnover levels of convenience and comparison goods excluding petrol and café sales etc. accounting for VAT where appropriate) and considered against the sales mix (i.e. area of stores set out for such purposes).
- 5.9 For 'local stores' in Aylesbury and Buckingham town centres this study relies upon the benchmark convenience sales density figures in 2012 of £5,000/sqm and £3,500/sqm respectively. These figures are consistent with the average sales densities that we would expect from reasonably performing small and independent convenience operators in comparable centres.
- 5.10 Such benchmarks are compared against the actual trading performance figures (as revealed by the results of the household telephone survey) to determine how strongly these stores and centres are currently trading. The future sales densities of these stores are also forecast for 2019, 2024, 2029 and 2033 on the basis of constant market shares, to allow a calculation of headroom by comparing such anticipated performance levels against benchmarks.

Existing Turnover and Inflow Assumptions

- 5.11 Applying available expenditure data to the results of the household telephone survey allow the establishment of turnover levels for existing retail destinations from the survey area. This study allows for a degree of inflow for some centres to produce total turnover figures. There is no survey information or primary evidence that can help inform these assumptions and best estimates have been made taking account the accessibility of each store via the road network, the distribution of other foodstores and centres in the vicinity and the proximity of specific destinations to the edge of the survey area. This allows the study to estimate how likely each destination is to draw trade from beyond the survey area.

Market Shares and Turnover

- 5.12 Survey responses directly inform the market share calculations. For convenience spend, people were asked where they undertake their main food and top-up shopping. 1.14% of respondents said they do not do main food shopping. In this case 100% of their available convenience expenditure has been allocated to their stated top-up shopping destination as this is the only form of convenience shopping these people undertake. Similarly, 22.6% of respondents stated that they do not undertake separate top-up shopping trips; we have therefore allocated their portion of top-up expenditure to their stated main-food shopping destinations. Main food and top-up market shares were then combined to produce total market share data for each convenience shopping destination.
- 5.13 For comparison shopping people were asked where they undertake various subcategories of comparison shopping and their responses were weighted by the proportion of total comparison spend each subcategory represent, in order to produce total composite comparison market shares for each destination.
- 5.14 Market share results for convenience and comparison spend can be converted into turnover figures at 2014 and future years by applying these market shares to the pools of available expenditure identified in each zone at any given year. The study evaluates the performance of retail destinations by indexing their existing and future turnover figures (projected on the basis of constant market shares) against benchmark turnover to establish the level of under or overtrading.

Retail Capacity Modelling

- 5.15 When the future anticipated turnover of a store or town centre is compared (on the basis of constant market shares) with the expected benchmark turnover, the level of headroom that should be available to support new retail floorspace can be established. The study then factors in the volume of expenditure that is likely to be absorbed by the quantum of committed floorspace to derive the volume of residual available expenditure. This figure is divided by a benchmark sales density to derive a floorspace capacity figure in a given year.
- 5.16 In the case of convenience floorspace, the study analyses quantitative capacity for particular parts of the district (Aylesbury, Buckingham, Haddenham, Winslow and Wendover). For comparison floorspace the quantitative capacity is assessed for new development across the district as a whole.

6 CURRENT EXPENDITURE PATTERNS

6.1 This section sets out some of the key findings from the household telephone survey. The results provide empirical evidence from a pattern of expenditure in the survey area can be built up. By analysing market-share and trade-draw information it is possible to chart the influence that existing retailers and destinations have in each zone and analyse from where they draw the bulk of their turnover.

Convenience Market Share, Turnover and Trade Draw

Aylesbury In-Centre

6.2 The convenience provision in Aylesbury town centre comprises the Sainsbury's store on Buckingham Street, the M&S food hall and the Iceland located on High Street, and a selection of small local shops. When the results of the household telephone survey are examined it is clear that these stores do not feature prominently in the main food shopping results. The combined in-centre provision has a 2.9% market share of main food shopping expenditure from the survey area with a turnover of £9.98 million in 2014 (at 2012 prices), all of which originates from Zones 5 and 6, Aylesbury's core catchment. Sainsbury's is the most popular convenience store in Aylesbury town centre for main food shopping with a market share of 4.8% from the core catchment, which amounts to 2.5% from the survey area as a whole (£8.35 million).

6.3 Aylesbury's convenience provision mainly serves the top-up shopping needs the town's core catchment, and has a market share of 17.8% of top-up spend from Zone 5; 4.1% from Zone 6 and 6.1% from the survey area as a whole, which amounts to a top-up turnover of £11.45 million. The bulk of which is allocated to local shops.

6.4 With main food and top-up spend combined, Aylesbury has a 4.1% market share of available expenditure from the survey area (7.7% market share from the core catchment). This amounts to a total turnover of £19.87 million, over half of which goes to the Sainsbury's store (see tables 4 and 5 of Annex C).

6.5 In terms of trade draw, Table 6 of Annex C shows that 71% of Aylesbury's convenience turnover from the survey area is derived from Zone 5, with 26% being drawn from Zone 6, this demonstrates that convenience shops in Aylesbury have a well-defined local catchment, drawing very little expenditure from beyond Zones 5 and 6.

Aylesbury Edge-of-Centre

6.6 By contrast to the town centre convenience provision, the edge-of-centre supermarkets (including the Morrisons at Station Way, Waitrose at Waterside South and both Aldi on Cambridge Street and

Lidl in Aylesbury Shopping Park) collectively enjoy a larger market share of available expenditure (17.3%) and draw expenditure from slightly further afield than in-centre stores.

- 6.7 The Aldi store appears to be the most popular with an 8.1% market share of total convenience expenditure and a turnover of £39.28 million from the survey area. Morrisons is the second most popular edge-of-centre supermarket with a 4.7% market share from the survey area and a turnover of £22.78 million. Waitrose has a market share of 3% from the survey area amounting to a convenience turnover of £14.59 million. Table 6 of Annex C shows that the Waitrose store has the largest catchment, drawing small amounts of trade from Zones 2, 3 and 7 with the bulk of its turnover being drawn from Zones 6 (71%) and Zone 5 (22%).
- 6.8 These edge-of-centre stores are well positioned in relation to Aylesbury town centre and provide good opportunities for linked shopping trips, thereby underpinning the health and viability of the town centre. If we look at the combined in-centre and edge-of-centre provision we can see that the combined 9,581 sqm of net convenience floorspace enjoys a 21.4% market share of expenditure from the survey with a turnover of £103.05 million.

Aylesbury Out-of-Centre

- 6.9 There is a range of out-of-centre convenience stores, foodstores and supermarkets within Aylesbury's urban area, including the large Tesco Extra at Broadfields Retail Park (9.6% market share with a convenience turnover of £46.08 million from the survey area) and the Tesco store at Tring Road (9% market share with a turnover of £43.16 million from the survey area). This out-of-centre provision exerts a combined 23.8% market share of spend from the survey area and absorbs a total of £114.79 million of convenience expenditure. 66% of this trade is drawn from Zone 5, 24% is drawn from Zone 6 and 8% originates from Zone 7.

Aylesbury Urban Area as a Whole

- 6.10 When looking at Aylesbury's urban area as a whole (the combined in-centre, edge-of-centre and out-of-centre convenience provision) it is clear that it enjoys a 79.1% market share of expenditure from Aylesbury's core catchment (Zones 5 and 6) which is very high level of trade retention especially considering the fact that internet shopping has a 6.3% market share from the core catchment, meaning that leakage from the core catchment to other centres amounts to just 14.6% (£36.57 million).

Table 4: Aylesbury Convenience Provision - Market Shares

	Z1	Z2	Z3	Z4	Z5	Z6	Z7	Total
In-Centre	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.6%	10.3%	4.6%	0.3%	4.1%
Edge-of-Centre	0.0%	1.0%	2.9%	0.3%	31.6%	29.0%	4.6%	17.3%
Out-of-Centre	0.2%	1.9%	1.6%	7.4%	55.1%	24.0%	7.5%	23.8%
Combined Urban Area	0.2%	3.0%	4.7%	8.3%	96.9%	57.7%	12.3%	45.2%

Table 5: Aylesbury Convenience Provision – Turnover (£Ms)

	Z1	Z2	Z3	Z4	Z5	Z6	Z7	Total
In-Centre	£0.0	£0.0	£0.1	£0.1	£14.1	£5.3	£0.4	£19.9
Edge-of-Centre	£0.0	£0.3	£0.9	£0.06	£43.2	£33.0	£5.8	£83.2
Out-of-Centre	£0.1	£0.5	£0.5	£1.7	£73.4	£27.3	£9.5	£114.8
Combined Urban Area	£0.1	£0.8	£1.4	£1.9	£132.6	£65.5	£15.6	£217.8

6.11 91% of Aylesbury’s total convenience turnover from the survey area is drawn from people residing within the core catchment, which reveals the localised nature of convenience retailing. 9% of the total turnover of this combined floorspace provision within the urban area is drawn from beyond the core catchment (1% from Zone 3; 1% from Zone 4 and 7% from Zone 7), as Table 6 below demonstrates (see Table 6 of Annex C for a more detailed breakdown of all trade draws patterns).

Table 6: Aylesbury Convenience Provision - Trade Draw Pattern (from Survey Area)

	Z1	Z2	Z3	Z4	Z5	Z6	Z7	Total
In-Centre	0%	0%	0%	1%	71%	26%	2%	100%
Edge-of-Centre	0%	0%	1%	0%	52%	40%	7%	100%
Out-of-Centre	0%	0%	0%	1%	66%	24%	8%	100%
Combined Urban Area	0%	0%	1%	1%	61%	30%	7%	100%

Performance

- 6.12 The in-centre convenience provision appears to be catering to the top-up shopping needs of the core catchment. The study allows for a degree of inflow for the sake of robustness and Table 7 of Annex C (column [H]) shows that all three foodstores are trading at well below their company average sales densities. Local shops are performing very well however at an index of 1.28 (where 1.0 represents the benchmark sales density). This situation may be improved if Sainsbury's progresses with its extant planning permission to refurbish and extend its town centre store.
- 6.13 Edge-of-centre stores are drawing in more trade than their in-centre counterparts and both the Aldi and the Lidl stores are trading very strongly, however the Morrisons and Waitrose stores are trading at below benchmarks with indexes at 0.67 and 0.80 respectively. It should be pointed out that the Waitrose store may not yet have reached an established pattern of trade. The performance indices indicate that discount foodstores are proving very attractive to Aylesbury shoppers.
- 6.14 Out-of-centre stores are trading quite well. Of all stores in the urban area the Tesco Extra at Broadfields has the highest turnover, at £48.5 million, but its large floorplate ensures this Tesco store is trading in line with company averages. The Tesco at Tring Road has a slightly lower turnover but is trading at 1.1 times the benchmark, while the combined remaining out-of-centre provision is trading at 1.61 times benchmarks. This indicates that the attractiveness and accessibility of out-of-centre stores are securing the majority of available expenditure in the core catchment. On balance, Aylesbury residents are selecting to undertake their food and grocery shopping out-of-centre.

Buckingham

- 6.15 Buckingham's core catchment (as far as convenience shopping is concerned) comprises Zones 1, 2 and 3. The quantum of available expenditure in this area is about a third of that available in Aylesbury's core catchment (£82.39 million versus £250.48 million). Buckingham town centre's convenience provision comprises the Waitrose store at Meadow Walk, the Tesco Express at Market Hill and a range of small local shops. These stores have a 14.4% market share of Buckingham's core catchment with a combined turnover of £11.83 million. Waitrose secures the majority of this trade with a turnover from the survey area of £7.67 million. An 20% inflow figure has been factored in considering the sparse distribution of Waitrose stores in the wider area and the proximity of this store to the edge of the survey area in the context of the apparent trade draw pattern that suggest a wider draw from further afield. However, even with such a high inflow assumption the sales density of this Waitrose store is only approaching benchmark levels at an index of 0.92.

- 6.16 The in-centre Tesco has a lower turnover at £3.3 million but given its small floorplate this store’s sales density is quite impressive and trading well in excess of the company average. Local shops in Buckingham are less popular and with 495 sqm net and a turnover of £1.4 million, these shops are trading at £2,866/sqm, which is below the benchmark at an index of 0.82.

- 6.17 There is an out-of-centre Tesco at London Road. This store has a 38.8% market share of spend in the core catchment (6.6% market share from the survey area as a whole); and with a total turnover of £37.6 million this store is trading below benchmarks at an index of 0.86.

- 6.18 The Aldi store at Osier Way has a turnover from the survey area of £6.95 million, drawing most of its spend from Zone 1.

- 6.19 The combined in-centre and out-of-centre convenience floorspace provision in Buckingham has a total 68.8% market share from Zone 1, 54.5% from Zone 2 and 24.3% from Zone 3. This is a good level of trade retention, although Zones 1, 2 and 3 are losing trade to Milton Keynes which has market shares from these zones in the order of 6.4%, 5.7% and 30.9% respectively. Some small amounts of trade from Zones 2 and 3 are leaking out to Bicester (3.4% and 2.6% respectively), while the market share of on-line trade for Zones 1, 2 and 3 is 2.6%, 5.6% and 5.1% respectively.

Table 7: Buckingham Convenience Provision - Market Shares

	Z1	Z2	Z3	Z4	Z5	Z6	Z7	Total
In-Centre	20.3%	13.5%	9.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	2.5%
Out-of-Centre	68.8%	54.5%	24.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	8.3%
Combined Urban Area	89.1%	68.0%	33.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	10.1%

Table 8: Buckingham Convenience Provision – Turnover (£Ms)

	Z1	Z2	Z3	Z4	Z5	Z6	Z7	Total
In-Centre	£5.5	£3.6	£2.8	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.4	£12.2
Out-of-Centre	£18.5	£14.4	£7.0	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£40.0
Combined Urban Area	£24.0	£18.0	£9.8	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.4	£52.2

- 6.20 In terms of Buckingham’s trade draw pattern, it is clear from the table below that the in-centre and out-of-centre provision pulls trade in from the survey area in a similar pattern, with the bulk of

turnover being drawn from people residing in Zone 1; a third of all turnover originates in Zone 2, while approximately 20% is drawn from Zone 3.

Table 9: Buckingham Convenience Provision – Trade Draw Pattern (Survey Area)

	Z1	Z2	Z3	Z4	Z5	Z6	Z7	Total
In-Centre	45%	29%	23%	0 %	0%	0%	3%	100%
Out-of-Centre	46%	36%	18%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Combined Urban Area	46%	34%	19%	0%	0%	0%	1%	100%

Haddenham, Wendover and Winslow

6.21 Market shares for Haddenham and Wendover are very low, with Haddenham only drawing trade from Zone 6 (0.3% market share from Zone 6). Wendover has minor market share of expenditure from Zones 6 and 7. The turnover figures for these centres are likely to be less accurate due to the low number of respondents referencing these centres but the survey data clearly indicates low penetration rates for Haddenham and Wendover.

6.22 Winslow on the other hand has a 13.1% market share from Zone 3, which amounts to a total turnover of £4.4 million and a high sales density of £6,015/sqm for the 731 sqm of identified net convenience floorspace in the centre, this is quite high for a centre of this size and considered well above the benchmark. A full breakdown of the market shares for these stores is set out on Table 4.1 or Annex C.

Convenience Trade Retention and Leakage

6.23 Centres in Aylesbury Vale enjoy high rates of trade retention as indicated by Table 4 of Annex C. The retention and leakage rates are reproduced in the table below which shows that 89.9% of spend from Zone 1, 81.5% from Zone 2 and 96.9% from Zone 5 is retained within Aylesbury Vale. It is shown that Milton Keynes draws 6.4% of the available convenience expenditure from Zone 1 and as high as 30.9% of spend from Zone 3, although this latter figure is largely expected due to the proximity of Zone 3 to Milton Keynes.

6.24 Thame has an 8.6% market share of convenience spend in Zone 6; this is due to the geographical extent of Zone 6 and the fact that a proportion of Zone 6 is closer to Thame than Aylesbury. The pattern of expenditure clearly shows high levels of trade retention demonstrating that grocery shopping choices are largely determined by the proximity of centres and how conveniently they can be reached.

Table 10: Trade Retention and Leakage

	Z1	Z2	Z3	Z4	Z5	Z6	Z7
Spend retained within Aylesbury Vale	89.9%	81.5%	52.5%	12.0%	96.9%	60.0%	12.7%
Bicester	0.0%	3.4%	2.6%	0.0%	0.0%	7.0%	0.0%
Hemel Hempstead	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.1%
High Wycombe	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.2%
Leighton Buzzard	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	72.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%
Milton Keynes	6.4%	5.7%	30.9%	4.2%	0.0%	0.2%	1.7%
Princes Risborough	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	2.4%	14.0%
Thame	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	8.6%	9.2%
Tring	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.1%	0.0%	1.3%	25.7%
Internet	2.6%	5.6%	5.1%	6.6%	3.0%	10.3%	6.7%

Comparison Market Share, Turnover and Trade-Draw

Aylesbury

- 6.25 With respect to comparison shopping patterns, it is clear from Table 4.1 of Annex D that shops in Aylesbury draw 23.1% of the total comparison spend available in the survey area which equates to £192.0 million in 2014. The majority of this spend is turnover drawn from Zones 5, 6 and 7 at 39.3%, 25.7% and 20.1% market shares respectively. However the influence of Aylesbury town centre's comparison provision is felt throughout the survey area with smaller percentages of market share registered from Zones 1-4 (0.6%, 1.4%, 8.2% and 9.7% respectively).
- 6.26 Interestingly, Aylesbury achieves the highest penetration rates from outer-lying zones with clothing & footwear, 'household textiles', 'DIY/hardware' and 'china & glassware' subcategories of comparison goods. 10.8% of people in Zone 2, for example, undertake their shopping for household textiles and soft furnishings in Aylesbury town centre.
- 6.27 The Aylesbury Shopping Park enjoys a 9.3% market share from the survey area (amounting to a turnover of £77.5 million) and attracts people from across the survey area (with the exception of Zone 1) for domestic appliances/electronic equipment and DIY/hardware goods. This retail park destination also exerts market share influence in the furniture and floorcovering sector but only in Zones 4-7.

6.28 Broadfields Retail Park is less popular and only has a 2.8% market share from the survey area with a turnover of £23.3 million, and most of this trade originates in Zone 5.

Table 11: Aylesbury Comparison Provision – Market Shares

	Z1	Z2	Z3	Z4	Z5	Z6	Z7	Total
Aylesbury Town Centre	0.6%	1.4%	8.2%	9.7%	39.3%	25.7%	20.1%	23.1%
Cambridge Close RP	0.0%	3.5%	1.1%	5.1%	18.3%	7.1%	8.5%	9.3%
Broadfields RP	0.0%	0.3%	0.3%	1.8%	5.8%	1.9%	2.5%	2.8%
Combined Urban Area	0.6%	5.2%	10.1%	16.7%	63.7%	34.8%	31.1%	35.3%

Table 12: Aylesbury Comparison Provision – Turnover (£Ms)

	Z1	Z2	Z3	Z4	Z5	Z6	Z7	Total
Aylesbury Town Centre	£0.3	£0.6	£4.3	£3.9	£84.8	£52.6	£45.5	£192.0
Cambridge Close RP	£0.0	£1.6	£0.6	£2.0	£39.6	£14.4	£19.3	£77.5
Broadfields RP	£0.0	£0.1	£0.2	£0.7	£12.6	£4.0	£5.6	£23.3
Combined Urban Area	£0.3	£2.3	£5.1	£6.6	£137.0	£71.0	£70.4	£292.8

6.29 In terms of the pattern of trade draw, comparison floorspace in Aylesbury town centre draws most of its turnover from Zone 5 (44% trade draw), and draws almost equally from Zones 6 and 7 with 27% and 24% of all turnover originating from these zones respectively.

6.30 The retail warehouse provision draws a larger proportion of its turnover from Zone 5 (51% trade draw for Cambridge Close Retail Park and 54% for Broadfields Retail Park). Very little of the turnover is derived from Zones 1-4.

Table 13: Aylesbury Comparison Provision – Trade Draw Pattern (from Survey Area)

	Z1	Z2	Z3	Z4	Z5	Z6	Z7	Total
Aylesbury Town Centre	0%	0%	2%	2%	44%	27%	24%	100 %
Cambridge Close RP	0%	2%	1%	3%	51%	19%	25%	100%
Broadfields RP	0%	1%	1%	3%	54%	17%	24%	100%
Combined Urban Area	0%	1%	2%	2%	47%	24%	24%	100%

Buckingham

- 6.31 Buckingham town centre only attracts 8.9% of spend from Zones 1 and 2 (its core catchment as far as comparison shopping is concerned), with the dominant category being chemist, cosmetic and beauty products. This amounts to turnover of £8.3 million from Zones 1 and 2, making up 73% of Buckingham's total comparison turnover.
- 6.32 Other notably popular subcategories in Buckingham include domestic appliances/electrical goods, DIY/hardware and jewellery, silverware & watches, as is evident from Table 4.2 of Annex D. Buckingham has very little market share of expenditure from beyond Zones 1 and 2.

Table 14: Buckingham Town Centre Comparison Provision

	Z1	Z2	Z3	Z4	Z5	Z6	Z7	Total
Market Share	10.3%	7.4%	1.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.8%	0.1%	1.3%
Turnover (£Ms)	£4.8	£3.5	£1.0	£0.0	£0.0	£1.7	£0.3	£11.2
Trade Draw	42%	31%	9%	0%	0%	15%	2%	100%

Comparison Trade Retention and Leakage

- 6.33 Unlike convenience expenditure patterns, which is very well retained within Aylesbury Vale, much comparison spend is leaking out to destinations beyond the survey area. Half of the available expenditure from Zones 5 and 6 (Aylesbury's core catchment) is being retained within Aylesbury's Urban Area (33% in the town centre and 17% in assorted retail parks out-of-centre). 20% is being spent on-line, 16% is leaking out to Milton Keynes, 4% to Bicester (including Bicester Village), and 4% is being leaked to High Wycombe town centre and associated retail parks (including the John Lewis department store). Total leakage from this core catchment to locations beyond Aylesbury Vale (including on-line spend) amounts to £280 million.

6.34 Trade retention in Buckingham is far less at just 9%, although the pool of available expenditure in the core catchment (Zones 1 and 2) is only £93.1 million (just 22% of the volume of spend available in Aylesbury’s core catchment). Milton Keynes exerts considerable influence over expenditure in Buckingham’s core catchment with two thirds of available comparison spend leaking out to Milton Keynes town centre mainly, and to peripheral retail parks to a lesser extent. Bicester absorbs 4% of available spend and Bletchley gets 2%. 12% of all comparison expenditure in Zones 1 and 2 is spent on-line.

Table 15: Trade Retention and Leakage

	Aylesbury Core Catchment Z5 & Z6	Buckingham Core Catchment Z1 & Z2
Retained Spend	50%	9%
Bicester	4%	4%
Hemel Hempstead	0.4%	0%
High Wycombe	4%	0%
Leighton Buzzard	0%	0%
Milton Keynes	16%	66%
Princes Risborough	0.2%	0%
Thame	1%	0%
Tring	0%	0%
Oxford	2%	0%
Bletchley	0%	2%
Banbury	0%	1%
Internet	20%	12%
Other	6.4%	6%

Internet Spend

6.35 17.5% of all comparison expenditure available in the survey area is spent on-line; this amounts to £145.2 million in 2014. Almost all of which (99%) is in the form of home delivery (store-to-door), as opposed to ‘click and collect’ (1%): meaning that the vast bulk of this expenditure leaves the district, and supports the turnover and balance sheets of businesses at remote locations or possibly even abroad. The full list of individual ‘on-line’ spend responses is set out in the survey results, questions 6 - 14 (Annex A).

- 6.36 The table below is reproduced from Table 4.4 of Annex D, and shows that Internet spend is attaining higher market shares in specific sub-categories of comparison shopping, most notably ‘sporting goods, camping equipment, toys, movies and music’ (36% market share from the survey area as a whole), as well as ‘domestic appliances and electronic equipment’ (21.6% market share).
- 6.37 Interestingly internet spend across the survey area has an equal market share of spend in the following sub-categories: ‘clothing and footwear’, ‘furniture and floor coverings’, ‘household textiles’ and ‘jewellery, silverware and watches’; all at approximately 10%.
- 6.38 Very few people seem to be shopping on-line for ‘DIY & hardware goods’, or for ‘chemist goods, cosmetics & beauty products’, with market shares of only 0.3% and 1.9% respectively.
- 6.39 The table below also shows that the market penetration of internet-spend differs widely by zone, ranging from as low as 8.9% in Zone 1 to as high as 23.7% in Zone 6. This means that people in urbanised areas are more likely to do a greater proportion of their shopping on-line and results in a greater percentage of expenditure being lost to on-line trade in Zones 3 and 6.

Table 16: Market Share of Internet Spend by Zone per Sub-Category

	Z1	Z2	Z3	Z4	Z5	Z6	Z7	Total
Clothes & footwear	4.3%	9.0%	12.5%	6.4%	11.8%	15.1%	5.9%	10.2%
Furniture & floor coverings	6.5%	4.0%	4.4%	3.8%	9.1%	11.4%	10.5%	9.0%
Household textiles & soft furnishings	2.0%	9.7%	3.7%	5.2%	11.2%	9.6%	14.7%	10.4%
Domestic appliances /electronic equipment?	14.7%	25.7%	26.9%	15.2%	17.9%	30.3%	17.7%	21.6%
China glassware	1.8%	6.3%	2.2%	6.5%	6.3%	6.0%	8.2%	6.2%
DIY, hardware and decorator supplies	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%	0.0%	0.4%	0.0%	0.5%	0.3%
Chemist, cosmetics & beauty products	0.6%	1.0%	1.6%	0.0%	0.9%	3.9%	2.0%	1.9%
Jewellery, silverware and watches	1.2%	7.0%	7.6%	1.7%	15.5%	8.4%	6.7%	8.9%
Sporting goods, camping equipment, toys, DVDs and CDs	15.1%	27.5%	41.2%	37.4%	30.6%	48.8%	35.2%	36.3%
Composite Market Share	8.9%	16.0%	19.7%	13.9%	16.1%	23.7%	15.3%	17.5%

Leisure Participation Patterns

- 6.40 The household telephone survey asked people about a range of leisure activities. The most popular such activity proved to be ‘eating out’ with three quarters of all respondents claiming to visit restaurants, compared with 54% who visit pubs, bars, nightclubs or social clubs. One third of all

people in the survey area who say they eat out at restaurants cited Aylesbury town centre as the last place they undertook this activity, this was the most popular destination referenced in the 'eating out' category. 9% of people last dined out in Milton Keynes, while Tring, London, High Wycombe and Buckingham were the next most popular destinations with 8%, 7%, 6% and 5% of the population respectively visiting restaurants in these centres.

- 6.41 The pattern for visiting public houses is very similar and Aylesbury comes out on top being mentioned by just over a third of all respondents, followed by Tring (9%), Buckingham (6%), London (4%) and Wendover (4%), being the next most popular spots. Interestingly Milton Keynes does not feature prominently amongst the responses with only 3% of people last visiting pubs or bars at this location.
- 6.42 60% of people say they attend the theatre, concerts, museums or galleries. Aylesbury town centre and London account for the vast majority of all responses in this regard with 56% and 34% of the market share respectively. Milton Keynes was the third most popular cultural destination with just 10% of people from the survey area who undertake this activity choosing this centre to do so. In fourth place came High Wycombe with 3% market share. This demonstrates that centres of a certain size are better placed to support the accommodation of such cultural facilities, although individual cultural attractions may be significant trip generators with the potential to direct activity to even small centres.
- 6.43 58% of respondents stated that they go to the cinema, and over half of these people (53%) last attended the movies at the Odeon in Exchange Street in Aylesbury. The second most popular cinema destination is the Cineworld at Xscape in Milton Keynes, which has a considerable penetration in Zones 1-4. High Wycombe is also a popular spot with 17% of people last visiting either the Cineworld or the Empire Cinema in this centre (mostly from Zones 6 and 7). The only other destinations of note are the Empire Cinema at Hemel Hempstead (3%) and the Vue at Bure Place in Bicester (4%).
- 6.44 The number of people who visit health & fitness / leisure centres is just at 35% of all respondents. The catchments of Aylesbury town centre and Buckingham are quite loyal with people living in or near Aylesbury tending to use facilities in Aylesbury and people in Buckingham using facilities in Buckingham. The much higher concentration of people around Aylesbury means that 43% of gym-going people from the entire survey area cited Aylesbury as the last place they visited for such facilities, while Buckingham secured only 12% market share (despite the high proportion of gym-going people from Buckingham's core catchment using this centre). 6% of the gym-going population travel out to Tring, the majority of these people reside in Zone 7. 4% go to Thame (mostly from Zones 6 and 7).

- 6.45 Bingo is not very popular in Aylesbury Vale with only 4% of respondents participating in this activity. Facilities in Aylesbury town centre (Gala Bingo) are the most popular, being the closest, while Milton Keynes and Hemel Hempstead attract some custom.

Summary

- 6.46 Convenience floorspace within the wider urban area of Aylesbury retains almost all of the available expenditure in the core catchment, although the strongest performers are out-of-centre stores followed by those edge-of-centre stores. The in-centre foodstore provision is faring worst, trading below benchmarks primarily due to the mainly top-up shopping role that town centre stores fill, and the pattern of expenditure that favours out/edge-of-centres stores for main food shopping. Budget/value operators appear to be trading very well, and small independent operators are performing strongly in Aylesbury town centre.
- 6.47 Convenience retailing in Buckingham is dominated by the out-of-centre Tesco Supermarket at London Road. The in-centre Waitrose store draws trade from far afield but supermarkets in Buckingham, and those out-of-centre, are all trading slightly below benchmarks, with the exception of the small-format in-centre Tesco Express store that is trading well in excess of its company average.
- 6.48 With respect to comparison shopping: Aylesbury town centre had a turnover of £192 million in 2014, while the out-of-centre provision had a turnover of £100.8 million. Much expenditure is leaking out to Milton Keynes (£149 million), although Aylesbury seems to be holding its own against other centres in the wider sub-region. High Wycombe exerts some influence over Zones 5-7 (mostly Zone 7), and Bicester/Bicester Village takes £15 million from Zone 6.
- 6.49 Leisure facilities in Aylesbury seem to be adequately catering to the leisure needs of the population with a good levels of spend retention and no apparent need for people to travel further distances to satisfy their leisure-based requirements. Buckingham also has a good level of retention but given the lower population levels around Buckingham these facilities are less in demand. Buckingham is lacking cultural facilities or at least the results of the survey show that respondents are choosing to satisfy their cultural requirements at other locations (either London or Aylesbury) but this may be understandable given the size of Buckingham town centre and the ability of its resident population to support such leisure facilities.

7 FLOORSPACE CAPACITY

Introduction

- 7.1 This section sets out the quantitative retail capacity for convenience and comparison floorspace to be accommodated across the district by 2019, 2024, 2029 and 2033 in accordance with the methodology set out in Section 4 above. It is advisable that floorspace capacity projections beyond 2024 to be treated with a significant degree of caution due to the increasing propensity for longer range forecasts to be less accurate.
- 7.2 The calculations of existing turnover figures for all retail destinations have been derived from the survey results taking account of estimated population and expenditure levels. Care should be taken in interpreting the capacity projections for the smaller centres of Haddenham, Winslow and Wendover as the numbers in the survey sampling using such centres was small and the data derived is therefore less statistically reliable. Greater reliance can be placed on the larger stores and centres but only as a general guide as to the likely levels of turnover being achieved.

Convenience Capacity Modelling

- 7.3 The projections show that the population in the survey area is expected to grow by 10.9% between 2014 and 2024 (see Table 1 of Annex C) and by a total of 15% by 2033. When a combination of spend per capita and forecast growth rates is applied to these population figures it is calculated that the total pool of available convenience expenditure in the survey area will grow from £482 million in 2014 to £524 million by 2024 (an increase of £85 million or 17.7%); and to £640 million by 2033 (an increase from the 2014 level of £158 million or 32.7%).

Table 17: Population and Expenditure

	2014	2019	2024	2029	2033
Population	223,921	236,369	248,345	258,452	265,444
Spend	£482.0m	£524.1m	£567.2m	£608.2m	£639.8m

- 7.4 The survey results reveal that the 3,595 sqm of net convenience floorspace in Aylesbury town centre has a 4.1% market share from the survey area and a total turnover £19.9 million in 2014, which amounts to a sales density with an index of just 0.57 (where the benchmark is 1.0).
- 7.5 Similarly, the combined 18,183 sqm of net convenience floorspace in Aylesbury’s urban area (including the edge and out-of-centre provision) has a 45.2% market share and a total turnover of £217.9 million.

7.6 On the basis of constant market shares it is anticipated that the turnovers of this floorspace will increase proportionately in line with the uplift in available expenditure. Table 18 below shows the total turnover of these areas (in-centre, edge and out-of-centre) at future stages, accounting for inflow.

Table 18: Anticipated Turnovers in Aylesbury (Constant Market Shares)

	2019	2024	2029	2033
In-Centre	£22.5m	£24.4m	£26.1m	£27.5m
Edge-of-Centre	£96.6m	£104.6m	£112.1m	£118.0m
Out-of-Centre	£134.2m	£145.3m	£155.8m	£163.9m
Aylesbury Urban Area Total	£253.3m	£274.3m	£294.0m	£309.4m

7.7 One can calculate the volume of headroom (i.e. the expenditure that could support new retail floorspace) by comparing these anticipated turnover levels against the potential turnovers at benchmark sales densities.

Table 19: Potential Turnovers in Aylesbury (Benchmark Sales Densities)

	Benchmark
In-Centre	£36.5m
Edge-of-Centre	£71.0m
Out-of-Centre	£109.9m
Aylesbury Urban Area Total	£217.4m

Table 20: Potential Headroom in Aylesbury

	2019	2024	2029	2033
Total Turnover	£253.3m	£274.3m	£294.0m	£309.4m
Benchmark Turnover	£217.4m	£217.4m	£217.4m	£217.4m
Headroom	£36.0m	£56.9m	£76.7m	£91.9m

7.8 There are listed a number of convenience commitments at Table 8 of Annex C, these include

- The proposed Aldi at Rimington Way (764 sqm net of convenience floorspace) which is expected to have a turnover £10 million.
- The Asda superstore at Mandeville Road (application to increase size of tradable floorspace by 250 sqm, producing an additional 145 sqm of net convenience floorspace and a turnover of £2.1 million).
- The proposed Sainsbury’s at Gatehouse Quarter (2,617 sqm of net convenience floorspace and a turnover of £56.6 million).

7.9 These combined commitments will deliver 4,812 sqm of net convenience floorspace with a total convenience turnover of £68.8 million. This turnover needs to be subtracted from the identified headroom to reveal the final total amount of residual expenditure that is available to support additional retail floorspace.

7.10 Table 21 below shows that the turnover of commitments will absorb more than the headroom delivered in 2019 and 2024, with residual expenditure not materialising until 2029 when there will be £7.9 million available to support new retail floorspace. This figure will grow to £23.2 million by 2033.

Table 21: Residual Available Convenience Expenditure and Capacity in Aylesbury

	2019	2024	2029	2033
Headroom	£36.0m	£56.9m	£76.7m	£91.9m
Turnover of Commitments	£68.8m	£68.8m	£68.8m	£68.8m
Residual Spend	-£32.8m	-£11.9m	£7.9m	£23.2m
Generic Sales Density	£10,000/sqm	£10,000/sqm	£10,000/sqm	£10,000/sqm
Capacity	-	-	790 sqm	2,317 sqm

- 7.11 If an assumed sales density of £10,000/sqm of new convenience floorspace is applied to these residual figures the forecast expenditure growth will be in a position to support 790 sqm (net) by 2029, growing to 2,317 sqm (net) by 2033.
- 7.12 Convenience floorspace in Buckingham is currently undertrading (i.e. on balance existing turnovers are less than should be expected when compared with benchmark sales densities for the respective operators in Buckingham town centre and out-of-centre). A combination of forecast expenditure and population growth will allow this floorspace provision to trade in line with company averages by 2024 when headroom is expected to amount to £1.6 million (see Table 10 of Annex C). However the list of commitments (including the Sainsbury's store off London Road, the Tesco Extension and a proposed Aldi at Osier Way) will absorb all expenditure growth in Buckingham over the plan period, leaving no residual capacity to support additional new floorspace.
- 7.13 The convenience provision in Winslow is currently overtrading, and the lack of commitments affecting this area means that there is currently capacity to support a small amount of new floorspace. This capacity is expected to grow from 222 sqm in 2019 to 328 sqm by 2033, as Table 22 below demonstrates.

Table 22: Residual Available Expenditure and Floorspace Capacity in Winslow

	2019	2024	2029	2033
Residual Spend	£2.22m	£2.62m	£2.99m	£3.28m
Capacity	222 sqm	262 sqm	299 sqm	328 sqm

7.14 See tables 9-12 of Annex C for a detailed account of retail capacity for convenience floorspace.

Convenience Capacity Summary

7.15 We have looked at capacity on a centre by centre basis, due to the locational demands of convenience retailing, and the disparity in supply across the district.

7.16 Development commitments and pipeline development prospects are such that there will not be any residual floorspace capacity within the catchment area of Aylesbury town centre until 2029 when there will be sufficient available expenditure to support an additional 790 sqm of convenience floorspace, rising to 2,317 sqm by 2033.

7.17 There will be no capacity for new convenience floorspace in the Buckingham area (over and above commitments) at any time within the plan period.

7.18 There is currently some small capacity for additional convenience floorspace in Winslow, in the order of 222 sqm by 2019, rising to 328 sqm by 2033.

Comparison Capacity Modelling

7.19 The combination of population and expenditure growth is expected to produce a £443.2 million uplift in total available comparison expenditure across the survey area between 2014 and 2024 (53.3% growth). By 2033 the uplift from the 2014 base will amount to £993.1 million, which is more than double the current volume of available expenditure in the survey area.

Table 23: Population and Expenditure

	2014	2019	2024	2029	2033
Population	223,921	236,369	248,345	258,452	265,444
Spend	£831.5m	£1,031.9m	£1,274.7m	£1,560.2m	£1,824.6m

- 7.20 Aylesbury town centre’s 22,058 sqm of net comparison floorspace has a 23.1% market share of available expenditure and a total turnover (accounting for inflow of 5%) of £202.1 million in 2014, meaning that comparison shops in Aylesbury are trading at a sales density of £9,160/sqm.
- 7.21 Comparison floorspace in Aylesbury urban area as a whole (in-centre, edge and out-of-centre provision) has a combined sales area of 51,934 sqm, with a 35.3% market share and a turnover of £309 million amounting to a sales density of £5,951/sqm.
- 7.22 The district as a whole has 59,465 sqm of net comparison floorspace, with a market share of 37.2% and a total turnover of £314.0 million, which equates to a sales density of £5,280/sqm. As the pool of available expenditure is expected to increase dramatically over the plan period, one could expect the turnover of existing comparison floorspace to increase on the basis of constant market shares, in line with Table 24 below.

Table 24: Anticipated Comparison Turnover (Constant Market Shares)

	2019	2024	2029	2033
Turnover	£384.3m	£474.7m	£581.0m	£679.5m
Inflow	£5.3m	£6.6m	£8.0m	£9.4m
Total Turnover	£389.6m	£481.3m	£589.0m	£688.9m

- 7.23 To assess the level of headroom potentially available to support new floorspace these anticipated turnover figures (calculated on the basis of constant market shares) are compared against an estimate of the potential turnover of the same floorspace calculated by allowing the existing sales density to grow annually by a floorspace efficiency rate (using an efficiency rate of 2% as derived from the Experian Retail Planner Briefing Note 12.1 Addendum, October 2014).

Table 25: Potential Headroom in Aylesbury Vale

	2019	2024	2029	2033
Total Turnover	£384.3m	£474.7m	£581.0m	£679.5m
Benchmark Turnover	£353.8m	£392.9m	£438.1m	£477.9m
Headroom	£35.8m	£88.4m	£151.0m	£211.0m

7.24 The apparent divergence between anticipated turnovers reveals a large volume of expenditure (headroom) available to support new floorspace. However a number of committed developments need to be factored into the equation. A full list of these commitments is set out in Table 9 of Annex D, and the main items include the following:

- The development at Aylesbury Shopping Park (Units 1 and 2) which will produce a net addition of 1,898 sqm
- The comparison floorspace that is to be delivered as part of the numerous supermarket developments: most notably the permitted Sainsbury's store at Gatehouse Quarter in Aylesbury, a second Sainsbury's store off London Road near Buckingham, and the Tesco store extension at London Road, also in Buckingham.
- The Council maintains a detailed list of retail related planning applications and while proposals for new retail floorspace may be off-set by other applications that result in the loss of A1 floorspace, on balance the planning register records permission for a net addition of 975 sqm of retail floorspace.

7.25 With a total of 16,856 sqm of planned new comparison retail floorspace, these commitments are set to exert a combined turnover of £60.7 million by 2019, growth to £67.4 million by 2024 and £82 million by 2033. Subtracting the turnover of these commitments from the apparent headroom at assessment years allows us to determine the residual expenditure available to support new retail floorspace.

Comparison Capacity Summary

7.26 Unlike the convenience capacity modelling exercise, capacity has not been examined on a centre by centre basis but instead overall capacity has been modelled on a district-wide basis. A decision as to where any capacity would best be allocated should take into consideration the aspirations for the growth and development of individual centres.

7.27 Floorspace capacity in a given year has been calculated by dividing the residual expenditure figure by the existing comparison sales density, allowing for efficiency growth of 2% per annum. The table below clearly shows that the turnover of commitments will outweigh projected growth in available expenditure until 2024 when £21 million of residual expenditure will be in a position to support 3,137 sqm of additional net comparison floorspace.

7.28 This capacity will grow to 10,292 sqm by 2029 and to as much as 16,048 sqm by 2033. However, it is advisable that capacity figures beyond 2024 be treated with a high degree of caution, and that the retail capacity modelling exercise be revisited in 2019, in line with planning policy guidance.

Table 26: Residual Available Comparison Expenditure and Capacity in Aylesbury

	2019	2024	2029	2033
Headroom	£35.8m	£88.4m	£151.0m	£211.0m
Turnover of Commitments	£60.7m	£67.4m	£75.2m	£82.0m
Residual Spend	-£24.9m	£21.0m	£75.8m	£129.0m
Benchmark Sales Density	£5,949/sqm	£6,607/sqm	£7,367/sqm	£8,037/sqm
Capacity	-4,180 sqm	3,137 sqm	10,292 sqm	16,048 sqm

8 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 Aylesbury town centre is by far the dominant retail destination in the District; the town centre has many strengths and appears to be vital and viable with encouragingly low vacancy rates. However the recent economic downturn has forced the closure of a number of operators which seems to have been particularly damaging to the town's comparison offer. Reducing numbers of comparison shopping units could threaten the wider appeal of Aylesbury and increase the levels of leakage. In the context of certain challenges to the traditional high street it is becoming increasingly important for robust town centre strategies to protect and support town centres and the high street. The Council will need to closely monitor the health of Aylesbury town centre and provide a strong policy basis to support and enhance the role of the centre as a focal point for the community, positively responding to identified trends with policies that support adaptability will be the key to successfully driving footfall and vitality in the nation's town centres.
- 8.2 Aylesbury's catering offer could be improved, and there is limited choice in the quality end of the market. The food and drink offer would benefit from more choice across all categories, and there is much room for accommodating a broader range of high street multiple retailers. Qualitative improvements and investment will be needed to retain Aylesbury's credibility as a sub-regional centre and ensure the town centres can increasingly be seen as a place for social interaction.
- 8.3 The pace of economic recovery has been slow and the town centre vitality and viability will need to be supported and closely monitored. Investment in the centre and public realm improvements will help retain the centre's competitiveness. Action plans that are in place should be supported and both planning policies and development management decisions should be coordinated to protect and enhance the health of the town centre.
- 8.4 The continued engagement with and support of the Town Centre Partnership represents a good opportunity to progress the action plans devised for specific areas in the town. This could be carried forward in a variety of ways, potentially by organising goal-oriented focus meetings, and empanelling sounding boards with key stakeholders to discuss ideas and monitor feedback on the success of action plans as they are progressed.
- 8.5 This study has reviewed the existing shopping frontages in Aylesbury town centre as defined on the proposals map and makes some suggested alterations for how these might be refined to better reflect the existing layout of shopping streets (see Annex F, Maps 2 and 3).
- 8.6 Whilst there is good connectivity between the two shopping centres and Market Square, which makes up the central axis the primary retail frontage; generally the existing layout of the retail units

in Aylesbury town centre sees shopping streets radiating out from the centre, with pedestrian activity and quality dissipating towards the periphery.

- 8.7 An potential opportunity exists to channel footfall around the centre in a pedestrian/retail circuit encompassing (clockwise from Market Square) Friars Square, Bourbon Street, Temple Street, Kingsbury Square (via George Street), Buckingham Street and back to Market Square (see Annex G, Map 4,). Portions of this circuit are currently secondary or even tertiary in character and retail offer, with some stretches of inactive frontage. There is, however, the potential to improve the attractiveness of these secondary frontages, and encourage small independents and specialist shops and services to create a continuity of active frontage, promoting connectivity between Market Square and Kingsbury Square. This circuit could be enlarged in future, with the benefit of a detailed master-planning exercise, by opening up connectivity between High Street and Cambridge Street (particularly along the southern side of southern end of Cambridge Street near its junction with Buckingham Street) incorporating Hale Leys Shopping Centre into a wider retail circuit (See Annex G, Map 5).
- 8.8 Leisure facilities in Aylesbury seem to be adequately catering to the needs of the population. There is no apparent evidence of people having to travel long distances to satisfy their leisure-based requirements. It is suggested that leisure needs should be addressed organically by operators responding to market demand and opportunities. The Council should ensure that appropriately flexible policies are in place to allow the existing building stock to be put to such uses if so required.
- 8.9 Convenience floorspace within the wider urban areas of Aylesbury and Buckingham retain almost all of their respective available expenditure in each core catchment. Budget/value operators appear to be trading very well, and small independent operators are performing strongly in Aylesbury town centre. However in general in-centre stores are performing below benchmarks while out-of-centre stores are trading strongly, this pattern of trade demonstrates the preference of Aylesbury shoppers to undertake their main food shopping at out-of-centre locations.
- 8.10 The turnover of commitments will absorb more than the growth in expenditure in Aylesbury forecast for 2019 and 2024, with residual convenience expenditure not materialising until 2029 when there will be £7.9 million available to support 790 sqm new retail floorspace. There is some existing capacity for new small convenience store in Winslow which should be in a position to accommodate 222 sqm of convenience floorspace by 2019.
- 8.11 With respect to comparison shopping, much expenditure is leaking out to Milton Keynes although Aylesbury seems to be holding its own against other centres in the wider sub-region. The turnover of commitments will outweigh projected growth in available expenditure until 2024 when £21 million of residual expenditure will be in a position to support 3,137 sqm of additional net comparison

floorspace across the district. This capacity will grow to 10,292 sqm by 2029 and to as much as 16,048 sqm by 2033.

- 8.12 There is limited quantitative capacity for retail floorspace growth in the short term and investment/development should concentrate on consolidating and improving the quality of the existing offer. Both Buckingham and Aylesbury have good levels of trade retention befitting their roles in the retail hierarchy; however continued investment in the quality of the public realm will help maintain the attractiveness of these town centres.