

Item 3c) SOUTH HAMPSHIRE TOWN CENTRES POLICY

Attachment: Proposed Policy and Supporting Text for insertion to SE Plan

Large office, retail and leisure developments are well suited to city and town centres and other locations which have good public transport accessibility. Their presence within the heart of the urban area can also help create vitality and underpin regeneration. With significant pressure to develop these facilities outside existing centres, a sub-regional policy is required to ensure that all Local Development Documents treat them in the same way. At the same time, the capacity of existing centres is limited. In order to compete effectively for potential investment by major retailers, corporations and international firms seeking a presence in the sub-region, a sub-regional strategy is required to address the full range of potential requirements.

The main centres in South Hampshire are the regional city centres of Southampton and Portsmouth (with Southsea), the sub-regional town centres of Fareham and Eastleigh and the network of local town centres, including Gosport and Havant.

The estimated need and capacity to cater for growth in town and city centre uses in South Hampshire is summarised below:

Net floor space capacity, Thousand m²	Comparison Retail (High Street format)	Leisure – Food and Drink (A3, A4, A5)	Offices
2005/06 - 2011	57 – 86	11 – 26	241 – 301
2005/06 - 2016	137 – 206	27 – 62	449 – 561
2005/06 - 2021	231 – 346	46 – 104	654 – 817
2005/06 - 2026	340 - 511	68 - 153	851 – 1,063

These are robust mid-range estimates for long-term, sub-regional planning purposes. More detailed appraisals should be carried out as part of the LDF process. These forecasts, and the availability of appropriate opportunity sites within the main centres, will need to be updated at least every five years.

There are additional opportunities for:

- commercial leisure in the two city centres and within mixed-use schemes in the town centres of Southsea, Eastleigh, Havant, Gosport and Fareham;
- one or two major new strategic leisure destinations within South Hampshire over the next 15–20 years;
- a major tourist attraction and events facility, to develop the attractiveness of the area for business and conference tourism; and
- hotel representation in the two cities, including upper tier/luxury hotels as part of a wider leisure and destination strategy.

The sequential approach to site selection, as defined in PPS6 Planning for Town Centres, will apply to all these main town centre uses.

Although much of the current development pipeline for business growth is out-of-town, the main centres have the capacity and potential to accommodate most of the forecast growth requirements over the plan period. There is, therefore, a unique opportunity to rebalance the provision of new floorspace back to South Hampshire's city and town centres.

POLICY SH8: STRATEGY FOR MAIN TOWN CENTRE USES

Development Strategy for Main Centres

The strategy for the main centres of South Hampshire is to develop their individual character and complementary roles through: a proactive programme of high quality mixed-use development; improvements to the public realm and conservation initiatives within town centres; and improved access from central areas to parks, open spaces and waterfront destinations for business and leisure. Accessibility of the main centres will be improved through implementation of the sub-regional transport strategy in policy SH10.

For each main centre, the relevant LDF will define the future identity and growth of the centre, as follows:

- 1. In Southampton, expansion of retail, leisure, office employment and cultural facilities to enhance the city's role as a regional centre serving south west Hampshire and areas to the west and north of the sub-region. Over the short term (to 2011) there is potential to consolidate the existing primary shopping area, mainly through redevelopment of existing buildings. In the medium term (to 2016) there is potential for integrated redevelopment of the major city centre sites to the west of the existing primary shopping area and to generate stronger linkages between a renewed central station area and the rest of the city centre. Longer term (to 2026), there is additional capacity for expansion of the existing city centre towards the waterfront.**
- 2. In Portsmouth and Southsea, expansion of the role of the city centre as a regional destination for shopping, leisure, office employment and culture serving south east Hampshire and areas to the north and east of South Hampshire and the city's national role as a leisure destination. There are opportunities to enhance the complementary roles of Southsea and Gunwharf Quays, intensifying town centre uses in and around these locations and designating the Hard/Gunwharf Quays area as a town centre. There are a number of additional opportunity sites, including the Station Square area, with the potential for high density development over the short to medium term for a variety of city centre uses. This provides a strategic opportunity to reverse the recent trend of declining office employment in Portsmouth city centre.**
- 3. In Fareham, limited expansion of the centre, with new mixed-use schemes in the enlarged town centre to improve retail, leisure and office employment provision and support further development of the leisure and evening economy. Excellent accessibility to the North of Fareham SDA is to be secured in advance of development, to ensure that Fareham town centre is the main sub-regional facility to serve the population of the SDA.**
- 4. In Eastleigh, developing town centre capacity through redevelopment to provide high density, high quality retail, leisure and office employment schemes which address its growing potential market demand. This will require a proactive action plan to deliver new strategic town centre opportunities. In addition, a highly accessible strategic employment area is to be developed to the north of Southampton International Airport and to the east of Eastleigh town centre (Eastleigh Opportunity Area). This has the potential to include a significant office component and also provides an opportunity to extend the range of facilities within Eastleigh town centre.**

5. In Havant and Gosport, developing opportunity sites to provide for appropriate retail and leisure growth and more substantial growth in office employment.
6. In other town centres, providing for the continued expansion of facilities to cater for their expanding population or to meet current local needs, as appropriate.

New Centres and Out of Centre Development

Over the period 2011-2016, new district centres may be provided within the larger urban extensions.

Later in the plan period (2016 onwards), two new centres will be required within the proposed SDAs. These will complement the roles of the established town centres within the sub-region and it is not envisaged that they will have full town centre status. In retailing and leisure terms, the new centres will serve as district centres. In terms of office employment, however, the new centres have the potential to serve a wider sub-regional role by providing new employment opportunities, with excellent accessibility and public transport provision.

Out of centre development for town centre uses will be limited to existing allocations up to 2016.