

and primary and secondary shopping frontages where it can be demonstrated that they would not undermine local character and the diverse range of uses required to make a town centre vibrant and viable.

Policy SD7 Town centres: development principles and Development Plan Documents

- A When considering development proposals, boroughs should take a town centres first approach, discouraging out-of-centre development of main town centre uses in accordance with Parts A1 - A3, with limited exceptions for existing viable office locations in outer London (see [Policy E1 Offices](#)). Boroughs should:
- 1) apply the sequential test to applications for main town centre uses, requiring them to be located in town centres. If no suitable town centre sites are available or expected to become available within a reasonable period, consideration should be given to sites on the edge-of-centres that are, or can be, well integrated with the existing centre, local walking and cycle networks, and public transport. Out-of-centre sites should only be considered if it is demonstrated that no suitable sites are (or are expected to become) available within town centre or edge of centre locations. Applications that fail the sequential test should be refused
 - 2) require an impact assessment on proposals for new, or extensions to existing, edge or out-of-centre development for retail, leisure and office uses that are not in accordance with the Development Plan. Applications that are likely to have a significant adverse impact should be refused
 - 3) realise the full potential of existing out-of-centre retail and leisure parks to deliver housing intensification through redevelopment and ensure such locations become more sustainable in transport terms, by securing improvements to public transport, cycling and walking. This should not result in a net increase in retail or leisure floorspace in an out-of-centre location unless the proposal is in accordance with the Development Plan or can be justified through the sequential test and impact assessment requirements in Parts A(1) and A(2) above.

- B Boroughs should support the town centres first approach in their Development Plans by:
- 1) assessing the need for main town centre uses, taking into account capacity and forecast future need
 - 2) allocating sites to accommodate identified need within town centres, considering site suitability, availability and viability, with limited exceptions for existing viable office locations in outer London (see [Policy E1 Offices](#)). If suitable and viable town centre sites are not available, boroughs should allocate appropriate edge-of-centre sites that are, or can be, well integrated with the existing centre, local walking and cycle networks, and public transport
 - 3) reviewing town centre boundaries where necessary
 - 4) setting out policies, boundaries and site allocations for future potential town centres to accommodate identified deficiencies in capacity (having regard to [Policy SD8 Town centre network](#) and the future potential town centre classifications in [Annex 1](#)).
- C In Development Plans, boroughs should:
- 1) define the detailed boundary of town centres in policy maps including the overall extent of the town centre (taking into consideration associated high streets which have particular economic or social value) along with specific policy-related designations such as primary shopping areas, primary and secondary frontages and night-time economy in light of demand/capacity assessments for town centre uses and housing
 - 2) consider the protection of out-of-centre high streets as local parades or business areas and develop appropriate policies to support and enhance the role of these high streets, subject to local evidence, recognising the capacity of low-density commercial sites, car parks and retail parks for housing intensification and mixed-use redevelopment (see [Policy H1 Increasing housing supply](#))
 - 3) develop policies through strategic and local partnership approaches ([Policy SD9 Town centres: Local partnerships and implementation](#)) to meet the objectives for town centres set out in [Policy SD6 Town centres and high streets](#) to support the development, intensification and enhancement of each centre, having regard to the current and potential future role of the centre in the network ([Policy SD8 Town centre network](#))

- 4) develop policies for edge-of-centre areas, revising the extent of shopping frontages where surplus to forecast demand and introducing greater flexibility, permitting a range of non-residential uses taking into account local circumstances
- 5) identify centres that have particular scope to accommodate new commercial development and higher density housing, having regard to the growth potential indicators for individual centres in [Annex 1](#). Criteria to consider in assessing the potential for intensification in town centres include:
 - a) assessments of demand for retail, office and other commercial uses
 - b) assessments of capacity for additional housing
 - c) public transport accessibility and capacity
 - d) planned or potential transport improvements – to indicate future capacity for intensification
 - e) capacity and proximity of social infrastructure
 - f) existing and potential level of density of development and activity
 - g) relationship with wider regeneration initiatives
 - h) vacant land and floorspace – as a further measure of demand and also of under-utilisation of the existing centre
 - i) potential to complement local character, existing heritage assets and improve the quality of the town centre environment
 - j) viability of development.
- 6) identify sites suitable for higher density mixed-use residential intensification capitalising on the availability of services within walking and cycling distance and current and future public transport provision including, for example:
 - a) comprehensive redevelopment of low-density supermarket sites, surface car parks, and edge-of-centre retail/leisure parks
 - b) redevelopment of town centre shopping frontages that are surplus to demand
 - c) redevelopment of other low-density town centre buildings that are not of heritage value, particularly where there is under-used space on upper floors, whilst re-providing non-residential uses

d) delivering residential above existing commercial, social infrastructure and transport infrastructure uses or re-providing these uses as part of a mixed-use development.

7) support flexibility for temporary or 'meanwhile' uses of vacant properties.

D Development proposals should:

1) ensure that commercial floorspace relates to the size and the role and function of a town centre and its catchment

2) ensure that commercial space is appropriately located having regard to Part A and B above, and is fit for purpose, with at least basic fit-out and not compromised in terms of layout, street frontage, floor to ceiling heights and servicing

3) support efficient delivery and servicing in town centres including the provision of collection points for business deliveries in a way that minimises negative impacts on the environment, public realm, the safety of all road users, and the amenity of neighbouring residents

4) support the diversity of town centres by providing a range of commercial unit sizes, particularly on larger-scale developments.

2.7.1 The London Plan takes a strong **town centres first** approach, in order to make the most of the agglomeration benefits and accessibility of town centres and to ensure sustainable patterns of development. Out-of-centre development can be particularly detrimental to town centres, undermining their economic performance, local character, and the accessibility they provide to a broad range of services, and encouraging increased trips by car. In order to support the vitality of town centres, it is important to take a sequential approach, focusing on sites within town centres before considering edge-of-centre sites. This ensures that town centre uses are not unnecessarily dispersed, maximises the overall growth potential of town centres and promotes investment in high streets and primary shopping frontages.

2.7.2 Borough's local Development Plan Documents should proactively plan to meet forecast need for main town centre uses by allocating sites within or (where justified) on the edge of town centres and through town centre boundary reviews, in order to support the town centres first approach. Where town centre and edge of centre sites are not available, local Development Plan Documents should identify future potential town centres that could accommodate the forecast additional need, and set appropriate policies, boundaries and site

