

Centres and Retailing

- 4.7.1 This policy aims to support a network of accessible centres in Bristol as key focuses for development and as the principal locations for shopping and community facilities as well as local entertainment, art and cultural facilities. All the centres are essential to the vitality of the city, the diversity of its shopping provision and to social inclusion, helping to reduce car dependency by providing services close to homes.
- 4.7.2 The policy addresses objectives 1, 2, 3, 5 and 8 of the Core Strategy and responds to issues 1, 2, 5, 7 and 8.

Context

- 4.7.3 Bristol is served by a diverse network of town, district and local centres of varying size. In addition to providing facilities like shops, cafés, pubs, post offices and banks, centres also include varying levels of community facilities, work places and leisure facilities. Many centres are a focus for transport services and all offer a chance to access essential facilities close to people's homes. Centres are therefore well placed to be a focus for a range of developments, including residential developments of a higher density which can both benefit from the services provided and help to sustain the viability of those services. This builds on the current pattern of development in Bristol and offers potential for suburban renaissance around existing centres.
- 4.7.4 The Bristol Citywide Retail Study indicates that there is likely to be capacity for further retail provision after 2012, with projections of future comparison retail capacity of up to 310,000m² by 2026. However, the study recommended that the effects of the major new development at Cabot Circus in Bristol City Centre would need to be assessed before any additional provision is planned. The council aims to undertake a further retail assessment in 2010 to inform the future planning of all retail provision in the city. Therefore, this policy sets the framework for retail development but does not propose specific levels of retail development.
- 4.7.5 The retail study found that most centres were performing strongly but identified a few as at risk, poor or under-performing. Some of those centres have not been retained in the hierarchy. Although identified as poorly performing in the study, Symes Avenue, Hartcliffe has now been redeveloped as Symes district centre and includes a superstore, smaller retail units and community facilities.
- 4.7.6 The high level of independent stores operating in Bristol was identified in the retail study which showed that over 70% of units were occupied by independent businesses.
- 4.7.7 Consistent with government policy, this policy seeks to promote the vitality of centres. There are several existing large out of centre retail developments in Bristol, some forming retail parks. The retail study did not recommend that any of these should be identified as part of the network of centres.

Policy BCS7

Retail development, offices, leisure and entertainment uses, arts, culture and tourism uses will be primarily located within or, where appropriate, adjoining the centres in the identified network and hierarchy serving Bristol.

Town, District and Local Centres will also be focuses for the development of:

- Community facilities;
- Higher density forms of residential development provided the centre is suitable for such development and has a high level of accessibility by public transport, cycling and walking; and
- Smaller scale office developments providing local office floorspace provision.

Development will be of a scale and intensity appropriate to the position of the centre in the hierarchy and to the character of the centre. Where proposed developments would be significantly larger in scale than existing uses, it should be clearly demonstrated that the catchment the development will serve is in keeping with the role of the centre.

Mixed-use development at accessible centres will be particularly promoted where it takes advantage of under-used land.

Uses which contribute to maintaining the vitality, viability and diversity of centres will be encouraged. Active ground floor uses will be maintained and enhanced throughout the centres.

Retail shop uses will predominate in the designated primary shopping areas of the City and Town Centres, supported by a wider range of appropriate uses in the other parts of these centres. The role of District and Local Centres in meeting the day-to-day shopping needs of their catchments will be maintained. Developments in all centres should include provision for a mix of units including opportunities for small shops and independent traders.

Local shopping and service provision in smaller frontages or single shops away from the identified centres should be retained where it remains viable and provides an important service to the local community. The provision of new small scale retail facilities will be encouraged where they would provide for local needs and would not be harmful to the viability and diversity of any nearby centres.

Hierarchy of Centres:

City Centre		
Bristol City Centre, incorporating the retail areas of:		
Broadmead, Cabot Circus	Harbourside	Queen's Road, Park Street
Christmas Steps, St Michael's	Old City, Baldwin Street, Victoria Street	Stokes Croft
	Old Market	
Town Centres		
Bedminster	Henleaze	Wells Road/Broadwalk (Knowle)
Clifton	Shirehampton	Westbury-on-Trym
Fishponds	St George (Church Road)	Whiteladies Road
Gloucester Road	Two Mile Hill Road (part of Kingswood town centre)*	
District Centres		
Arneside Road (Southmead)	North Street, Southville	Stapleton Road
Crow Lane (Henbury)	North View (Westbury Park)	Symes (Hartcliffe)
Lodge Causeway	Ridingleaze (Lawrence Weston)	Whitchurch (Oatlands Avenue)
Local Centres		
Ashley Road/Grosvenor Road	Filwood Broadway	Southmead Road
Avonmouth Village	Gilda Parade	St Anne's Village
Bishopsworth	Lawrence Hill	St Marks Road
Brislington	Lockleaze (Gainsborough Square)	St Michaels Hill
Broomhill Road/ Fermaine Avenue	Mina Road	Stockwood
Chandos Road	Picton Street	Stoke Lane
Coldharbour Road	Queen's Road, Withywood	Totterdown
Druid Hill, Stoke Bishop	Sandy Park Road	Wellington Hill West/ Southmead Road
Filton Avenue	Shirehampton Road	
Filton Road		
* Kingswood town centre is located adjacent to the city's eastern boundary in South Gloucestershire. Two Mile Hill Road in Bristol forms part of that centre.		
There are also town and local centres at Staple Hill, Gloucester Road North, Filton Avenue, Soundwell Road and Hanham High Street just outside the city's northern and eastern boundaries in South Gloucestershire.		

Explanation

- 4.7.8 The centres hierarchy set out in this policy is based on the recommendations of the Bristol Citywide Retail Study (June 2007). Bristol City Centre is at the head of the hierarchy. It will remain the principal destination for shopping and leisure in the city and in the South West region. Policy BCS2 sets out the approach to the city centre.
- 4.7.9 Bristol's 10 Town Centres cater to a wide catchment in the city (Two Mile Hill Road forms a part of Kingswood town centre which is located in South Gloucestershire). Some are destinations drawing custom from across and beyond the city. Typically they are locations for national chain stores as well as independents. These centres are also characterised by the presence of restaurants, cafés and bars, and a wide range of associated services. Larger community facilities and employment uses are also represented.
- 4.7.10 The 9 District Centres in the hierarchy cater to a more localised catchment meeting convenience needs but may include community facilities and supermarkets.
- 4.7.11 The 27 Local Centres provide mainly local shopping and services catering to day-to-day needs. They mainly serve a catchment within walking distance but may experience some passing trade.
- 4.7.12 Policy BCS1 provides for a potential new centre in South Bristol which would be likely to perform as a District Centre.
- 4.7.13 There remain parts of Bristol which are less well served with a good local network of accessible shopping provision. Therefore, the policy encourages new local provision where it would help address local needs and would not harm existing centres.
- 4.7.14 Whilst the policy directs retail, leisure and entertainment, offices, arts, culture and tourism to the centres in general, they will not necessarily all be appropriate in all centres.
- 4.7.15 Retail shop uses referred to in this policy refer to those in Class A1 of the Use Classes Order. Active ground floor uses are generally those falling within Use Classes A1 to A5 but can also include other town centre uses which are visited by large numbers of people. Residential uses and offices (Use Class B1) would not normally be considered as active uses for ground floors in this context.

Policy Delivery

This policy is supported by Policy BCS20, which directs higher intensities of development to accessible centres.

Policy BCS2 sets out the approach to Bristol City Centre.

Policy BCS1 sets out the approach to the potential new centre in South Bristol

Policy BCS8 addresses the delivery of smaller scale office development in centres.

Policy BCS10 addresses the delivery of transport improvements which will enhance transport provision at several of the centres in the network.

The Site Allocations & Development Management DPD will identify boundaries for centres in the hierarchy (based on the evidence in the Bristol Citywide Retail Study (June 2007)). The Site Allocations & Development Management DPD will also identify sites for development. In areas within close proximity to centres, any proposed site allocations will consider the potential for higher density forms of development, consistent with Policy BCS20 of this strategy.

The Site Allocations & Development Management DPD will define the primary shopping areas in the larger centres. Retail frontages may also be defined to assist in guiding decisions on the appropriate balance of uses in those centres (the proposed Bristol Central Area Action Plan will perform the same function in Bristol City Centre). These designations will be supported by criteria-based policies to guide decisions on individual planning applications. Criteria-based policies will also be included to guide decisions regarding the appropriate balance of uses within centres which do not have defined primary shopping areas or retail frontage designations.

PPS4 'Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth' (2009) contains national planning policies towards development in town centres and for economic development in general. These will inform decisions on specific proposals, including any proposed development falling outside the network and hierarchy of centres.

An updated retail study will be undertaken during 2010 to support future planning decisions and guide the production of the Bristol Central Area Action Plan.

Measures will be undertaken to support retail centres, particularly those which were identified as being at risk or poor performing in the Bristol Citywide Retail Study (June 2007). A pilot project for Place Management was set up in 2008 focused on improving seven retail centres of varying size across the city: Ashley Road/Grosvenor Road, Avonmouth Village, Bedminster, Lockleaze (Gainsborough Square), Ridingleaze (Lawrence Weston) and Shirehampton. Action plans for each of the areas have been developed addressing a range of themes.

The future role of Filwood Broadway local centre will be reviewed as part of the Knowle West Regeneration Framework. This is dealt with in Policy BCS1.

Targets	Indicators
Maintain or improve health of the city's identified centres	Centre health checks to be carried out at 2010, 2016 and 2020
	Total amount of additional space for town centre uses(Core Output Indicator BD4)