

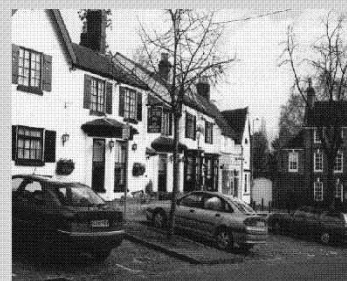
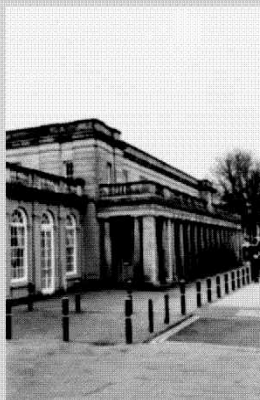


WARWICK DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN

Public Local Inquiry 2006

Core Topic Paper 8

Town Centres and Retail



1996 - 2011

February 2006

Warwick District Local Plan - Public Local Inquiry Core Topic Paper

Town Centres and Retailing

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This core topic paper gives information on town centre and retailing issues addressed within the Warwick District Local Plan. This is one of a total of 12 core topic papers that have been prepared for the Public Inquiry into the Local Plan. These core topic papers do not seek to respond to individual objections to the local plan, but to provide background information on various key topics. The Council is also preparing detailed proofs of evidence and written statements that will respond to the detailed comments of objectors to the Local Plan. These will refer back to these core topic papers as necessary.
- 1.2 This core topic paper is structured to provide background information on the following key areas:-
- The shopping centres of Warwick District
 - Context
 - National
 - Regional
 - Local: The challenges facing the town centres
 - The policies of the Local Plan

2. The shopping centres within Warwick District

- 2.1 Warwick District has a network of centres, each offering a range of shops and services to the local population. Each of these is described in turn.

The town centres

- 2.2 The District has four towns, but only three town centres Leamington, Warwick and Kenilworth. Each performs a different function for its local population and visitors to the area.

Leamington town centre

- 2.3 Leamington is the largest of the district's town centres containing some 563 shops and with a total retail floorspace of approximately 101,576 sq.m. (gross)¹. Today the town centre has two foci. To the north of the River Leam is the heart of today's town centre that developed as Leamington became a fashionable spa town in the 18th century. The centre follows a Regency gridiron street pattern with The Parade, Warwick Street and Regent Street at its heart. A large number of the major national fashion and other "multiples", together with department stores are represented in this part of the town centre, including Next, Waterstones, Boots, WH Smiths, Woolworths, Marks & Spencer, House of Fraser, River Island, and many more. Some of these are within the Royal Priors shopping centre which opened in 1987. This part of the town centre is also home to a large number of specialist shops and boutiques. Although scattered throughout the town centre, there is a concentration of these along Regent Street and Park Street.
- 2.4 The second focus is in the Old Town (sometimes called "South Town") area to the south of the river. This is the original heart of Leamington and the location where the first bath houses were built. Although close to the more recent centre north of the river, this part of the town centre has developed a distinctive character with smaller shops serving the local community and a wide range of restaurants. This area has seen considerable decline followed by regeneration in recent years as the focus of a successful Single Regeneration Bid in 2000. This has been the catalyst for major investment in the area to improve the environmental, economic and social fabric of this part of the town.
- 2.5 The town centre also contains a wide range of other uses. These include:-
- office accommodation;
 - civic and other public buildings (including the Town Hall, Magistrates Court, library and Police Station and several places of worship)
 - Leamington railway station;

¹ Source: Experian Goad Centres Summary Report, 1999.

- social and entertainment facilities (including two theatres, a cinema and art gallery)
- public parks;
- many restaurants, coffee shops, bars and clubs;
- many homes (both within and immediately adjacent to the town centre); and
- some limited traditional industrial buildings, particularly in Old Town.

2.6 A key feature of Leamington town centre is that almost the entire centre lies within a conservation area and the centre contains a large number of listed buildings.

2.7 There has been a continuous improvement in the retail offer within the town centre over recent years as table 1 shows.

Table1: Major investments/improvements within Leamington town centre since 1995	
Re-opening of Regent Arcade on Parade for Lee Longlands	1998
Redevelopment of shops at Satchwell Court (southern end of Royal Priors)	1999
Extension to northern end of Royal Priors Shopping Centre (space now occupied by Gap, Legend, Starbucks, etc)	2002
Development of Regent Court shopping centre (Livery Court) including re-opening of Regent Hotel (Travelodge)	2005
Enhancements to The Parade as part of Leamington Urban Mixed-Use Priority (LUMP) scheme.	2005
Forthcoming proposals	
Redevelopment of Woodward's Department store (corner of Regent St/Parade) and creation of 17,000 sq.m. of retail floorspace	2006

Warwick town centre

2.8 Warwick town centre is mediaeval in origin and fulfils a dual role as a local shopping centre for the people of Warwick and as a tourist centre drawing largely from its proximity to Warwick Castle. This latter role has seen it develop a reputation as a centre for antique and niche shopping. More recent years have seen a growth in cafes, bars and restaurants. The town centre also fulfils the role of the County town, home to the offices of Warwickshire County Council and the Crown Court.

2.9 The town centre can be broadly seen as comprising of several linked areas:

- *Swan Street, Market Street and Market Place.* This is the heart of the shopping centre and also home to many of the restaurants, cafes and bars. Those national multiple shops that are found in Warwick are located here including Woolworth's and W.H.Smiths. Warwick Market Place received a £1.1 million refurbishment by the Council in 1999.
- *Shire Hall and the Crown Court.* This is the principal office employment focus within the town centre.
- *Church Street/Jury Street.* This is an area of mixed retail, office and residential uses linking the main shopping area with Smith Street.
- *Eastern end.* This areas leads out towards Warwick railway station and then towards Leamington. It contains Smith Street a detached but important shopping street within the town centre containing a range of smaller shops and restaurants, many of which are independent.
- *High Street/Castle Lane.* This is a predominantly residential area between the commercial heart of the town centre and the Castle.
- *West of Theatre Street.* This is another predominantly residential area between the commercial heart of the town centre and Warwick Race Course. This area includes some areas of more modern housing and the Scheduled Hill Close Gardens. West Street contains the town centres third main cluster of shops, all of which are small and more local in character.
- *Saltisford.* This is the area at the northeastern most end of the town centre and leads out to the A46 to the northeast. It contains a mix of uses including some Victorian and more recent housing, areas of public car parking and the Sainsburys store.

2.10 As with Leamington town centre, a key feature of Warwick town centre is that a large part lies within a conservation area (including all the commercial heart of the town centre) and contains a large number of listed buildings. Also similar to Leamington town centre, a large number of people live within or immediately adjacent to the town centre.

Kenilworth

- 2.11 Kenilworth town centre has a smaller amount of retail floorspace (23,150 sq.m gross)² than either Leamington or Warwick. It also appears less diverse than either Leamington or Warwick in character. Its primary retail area lies outside of any conservation area, however it adjoins the main Kenilworth conservation area.
- 2.12 The majority of the town centre lies along Warwick Road. The centre contains a number of national multiples including Boots, Co-Op Electrical and Woolworth. The Centre also includes a number of food stores including Sainsburys, Somerfield and (until recently) Budgens.
- 2.13 Two areas within the town centre in particular have been the subject of planning applications and development interest in recent years.
- **Talisman Square.** Two planning application were submitted here in 2003 for the erection of a new 4,400 sq.m. food store, extension of the existing car park, refurbishment of some of the units within Talisman Square and the redevelopment of other units to provide a further 2,200 sq.m. of additional retail floorspace and environmental enhancements and improved pedestrian access. These have been approved subject to the completion of a legal agreement. Waitrose have recently been named as the occupier of the food store.
 - **Abbey End.** In 1999 the Council granted outline planning approval at Abbey End that provided for the demolition of the buildings at either end and the erection of new buildings to provide additional retail (A1) and food and drink (A3) premises. Subsequent to this the District Council carried out an environmental enhancement of the paved area in front of the shops. Since that time applications have been granted to part demolish the car showroom at the southern end of the centre and rebuild the site to include an A3 use, 3 new A1 shops and a new office at first floor level, and to demolish an existing building at the northern end and replace this with a new retail unit and 24 flats above. This second permission is now under construction.
- 2.14 The town centre contains a range of other uses including the library and Police Station.

² Source: Experian Goad – Centre Summary Report 1999.

Major out of centre shopping

2.15 Outside of the town centres there are a number of major retail outlets. The main ones are:-

- *The Shires Retail Park.* This was opened in 1989 and now provides 17,838sq.m. of net retail floor space of which 3,999sq.m. (net) is for food sales. The site now contains a Sainsburys store and a number of bulky goods and comparison outlets including Halfords and Focus. In 1994 the Council lost an appeal to permit an open A1 use of one of the non food units and since that time, Boots has opened a unit within the Retail Park.
- *Shires Gate.* This lies adjacent to the Retail Park and contains two units, currently operated by MothercareWorld and Currys. This site was granted on appeal in 1993.
- *Retail warehouses on Myton Road, Leamington.* These lie approximately 500 metres from the Shires Retail Park. The main occupier is Homebase, however there are also other smaller units including Blockbuster Video, Pets at Home and Dreams Bed Superstore.
- *Focus, Emscote Road, Warwick.*
- *Tesco store, Emscote Road, Warwick*
- *Asda store, Chesterton Drive, Sydenham.*

2.16 Over the last few years there have been a number of planning applications for increasing levels of retail floor space on these and other out of centre sites. These are summarised in table 2.

Table 2: Major planning applications for out-of-town retailing in Warwick District since 2000			
Site	Proposal	Date	Current status
Land adj. Superbowl, Leamington Spa (adj. to Shires Retail Park)	New 1,334 sq.m. retail warehouse (for Halfords)	2001	Refused. Appeal dismissed.
Homebase, Myton Road	Extension of 5,388 sq.m. to existing store	2000	Refused. Appeal dismissed
Land at Queensway, Leamington Spa	New 4,829 sq.m. food store	2003	Application withdrawn (2005)
Sainsburys, Shires Retail Park	Extension to provide 2031 sq.m. of additional (mainly) comparison floorspace	2003	Refused
	Extension to provide 2031 sq.m. of additional (mainly)	2004	Application outstanding

	comparison floorspace		
Tesco, Emscote Road, Warwick	Extension to provide 902 sq.m. of additional convenience floorspace	2004	Refused. Appeal outstanding.
	Application to vary conditions to permit 20% of store to be used for sale of comparison goods	2005	Application outstanding
	Extension to provide 1,575 sq.m. of additional comparison floorspace	2005	Application outstanding

Local centres and local shops

- 2.17 Outside of the town centres and aside from the major out of centre stores outlined above, Warwick District has a large number of smaller local centres, shopping parades and isolated shops. These include small clusters of shops in historic parts of the towns (such as at Coten End in Warwick or the High Street in Kenilworth) and planned shopping parades developed as the towns have expanded (such as at Crown Way in Lillington and Othello Avenue in Warwick Gates). All these local centres play an important role in providing shops and services within easy walking distance of many people.

Shops in rural areas

- 2.18 Although the vast majority of shops are within the urban areas, a number of the District's villages contain local shops and services. Most, although not all, of the larger villages within the District contain at least one shop, with Lapworth and Hampton Magna having the largest concentration outside of the towns.
- 2.19 In recent years a number of Farm Shops have become established including the very successful one at Hill Top Farm in Hunningham.
- 2.20 The largest concentration of shops in the rural area is at Hatton Country World. Here approximately 40 businesses operate, most of which are either retailers or crafts people making and selling their produce on-site. The site has become a major tourist attraction in this part of the district and attracts people from a wide area. The shops operate alongside a restaurant and farm park as part of a wider visitor attraction.

3. Context

National

- 3.1 The main sources of Government guidance on planning policy for retailing and town centres come from PPS6: Planning for Town Centres, PPS7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas and PPG13: Transport.

PPS6: Planning for Town Centres (CD/1106)

- 3.2 This new Planning Policy Statement, published in 2005, builds upon previous Government guidance on retailing and town centres. It provides comprehensive guidance on a wide range of matters regarding a range of town centre uses; specifically retail, leisure, entertainment facilities and more intensive sport and recreation uses, offices, the arts, culture and tourism.
- 3.3 The Government's key objective for town centres is to promote their vitality and viability by planning for the growth and development of existing centres, and by promoting and enhancing existing centres, by focusing development in such centres and encouraging a wide range of services in a good environment, accessible to all.
- 3.4 In the context of the above objectives, the Government also wishes to enhance consumer choice, support efficient retail, leisure and other sectors, and improve accessibility by a choice of means of transport.
- 3.5 Regional planning bodies³ and local authorities are required to help achieve these objectives in a number of ways including:
- developing a hierarchy and network of centres;
 - assessing the need for further main town centre uses and ensuring there is a capacity to accommodate them
 - focusing development in, and planning for the expansion of, existing centres, identifying sites for new retail development where appropriate
 - promoting town centre management and creating partnerships to develop, maintain and improve town centres.

³ In the case of the West Midlands region this is the West Midlands Regional Assembly.

PPS7: Sustainable development in rural areas (CD/ 1107)

- 3.6 With regard to shops in rural areas, PPS7 seeks to ensure that people who live or work in rural areas have reasonable access to a range of services and facilities. Local planning authorities should adopt a positive approach to proposals designed to improve the vitality, accessibility or community value of existing facilities (including village shops) and should support their retention.

PPG13: Transport (CD1113)

- 3.7 Within its overall objectives of (1) promoting sustainable transport choices, (2) promoting accessibility to jobs, shops, leisure facilities and services by public transport, walking and cycling and (3) reducing the need to travel, PPG13 sets out specific guidance on jobs, shopping, leisure and services. The key planning objective here is that such uses should be accessible by public transport, walking and cycling. Guidance is that local authority strategies on parking, traffic and demand management are consistent with overall objectives on planning and transport. A key principle here is that land uses which are major generators of travel demand should be located in town and district centres and near to major public transport interchanges. Day to day facilities which need to be close to clients should be located in local and rural services centres.

Regional and sub regionalRegional Spatial Strategy (CD /1106)

- 3.8 The Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) was issued by the Secretary of State in 2004. Although a key role of the RSS is to achieve an urban renaissance within the Major Urban Areas (Birmingham/Solihull, the Black Country, Coventry and the North Staffordshire conurbation) it is keen to establish a role for each place in the region. The role of each of the major shire towns beyond the MUAs is to continue to act as a focus for new investment to support wider regeneration and help meet the needs of surrounding rural areas. Warwick/Leamington is identified as an “*other large settlement*”. For other parts of the region, particularly other main towns (such as Kenilworth), these should build upon their locational and other strengths to deliver improved local services and develop their own distinctive role and character (paragraph 3.11).
- 3.9 **Policy UR3** supports the enhancement of city, town and district centres and in particular those identified in **policy PA11**. **Policy PA11** identifies a network of

town and city centres which will be the focus of major retail development (identified as being greater than 10,000 sq.m. gross floorspace) and other uses which attract a large number of people including major cultural, tourist, social and community venues. The policy also recognises that there are many other centres within the Region that meet local needs and development plans should identify and develop policies for such centres which best meet local needs.

Regional Centres Study

- 3.10 In late 2004, the West Midlands Regional Assembly (WMRA) commissioned Roger Tym and Partners to prepare a study to inform a review of the Regional Spatial Strategy. The final report of the study was accepted by the project steering group in December 2005 subject to final editing. Its purpose was to assist the WMRA in identifying investment priorities within the strategic network of centres in the region where major new retail, leisure and office floorspace should be focused in order to support urban regeneration, to achieve a balanced network of centres to assist the most vulnerable centres and to support sustainable planning objectives.
- 3.11 The report has identified 25 strategic centres and developed a five tier Regional hierarchy based on a range of factors including: levels of annual comparison goods turnover the role of each centre the degree of competition that exists with other centres and other qualitative factors. Leamington Spa is highlighted as a third tier strategic centre, below Birmingham City Centre (in its own highest tier) and five Major Urban Area centres that form a secondary level. The study concludes that Leamington is a healthy centre currently '*performing well*' in terms of its vitality and viability. Whilst any future retail expansion may be affected by constraints it concludes that these are 'not insurmountable'.
- 3.12 The study has also considered a number of scenarios as part of a process to quantify comparison goods floorspace requirements for each of the Region's main centres to 2021. The best performing scenarios (in terms of delivering strategic planning objectives for the region) have indicated that, depending on the underlying population and expenditure projections, Leamington town centre should seek to realise between 6,000 and 22,000 sq.m. of new comparison goods floorspace to 2021.

- 3.13 It should be noted that the recommendations in the Regional Centres Study represent the independent advice of the consultants and are not endorsed by the WMRA as formal policy at the present time. The final report has yet to be completed and published but will be available before the inquiry.

Warwickshire Structure Plan

- 3.14 The Structure Plan, which was adopted in 2001, sets a clear context within which the Local Plan policies have been formulated. It seeks to ensure that town centres are the focus for a balanced mix of retail, office, entertainment, leisure and recreational developments in order to improve their attractiveness and vitality (**policy TC.1**).
- 3.15 The Structure Plan also establishes a hierarchy of town centres in **policy TC.2**. All new major shopping, entertainment and leisure developments should be planned to be located within these town centres. Within any individual town centre, proposals should be compatible with the scale, nature and character of that centre and the policy identifies a broad scale of development that should be located within different centres within the hierarchy.

<i>Classification in policy TC.2</i>	<i>Town centres included</i>	<i>Scale of development</i>
Main town centres	Leamington	2,500 sq.m. or greater
Other town centres	Warwick, Kenilworth	1,000 – 2,500 sq.m.

- 3.16 **Policy TC.2** also requires Local Plans to define district, local neighbourhood and village centres as appropriate.
- 3.17 The Structure Plan identifies a growth in the personal services sector (including retailing, business services, tourism, leisure, education and health) and states that Local Plans should provide for town centre offices and shop development and redevelopment (**policy TC.3**). It also supports the establishment of strategic management of town centres to ensure there is progress towards greater use of public transport and economic viability of all town centres in Warwickshire (**policy TC.4**).

Local: The Challenges facing the town centres

- 3.18 The Council has regularly monitored the health of the town centres within Warwick District and has commissioned consultants where necessary to provide an independent perspective. Previous retail health check studies have been carried out in 1994 and 1998.
- 3.19 In 2002, to assist the preparation of this Local Plan, the Council commissioned retail consultants DTZ Pinda Consulting to prepare a report. The purpose of this report was to assess the health of all of the town centres within the District and to look at the future direction which planning policy should take to ensure the town centres' continued vitality and viability. This work involved the following:
- a householder telephone survey of 1,000 homes within the District
 - a review of the large amount of information available at the time on the town centres, including economic indicators, pedestrian footfall counts, retail floorspace figures, information from appeals, the previous town centre health checks, and more.
 - a stakeholder workshop including chambers of trade, residents groups and others.
 - a retail capacity assessment of Leamington town centre.
- 3.20 The DTZ Retail Study (CD/503 paragraph 1.4) concluded that:-
- Leamington, Warwick and Kenilworth town centres all face uncertain futures and will need proactive planning, management and investment to meet the challenges of increased competition from other towns and shopping destinations across the region.*
- 3.21 It recommended that the Council should develop an Action Plan incorporating the following key elements (see paragraphs 5.21 – 5.25 of the Study).
- The District Council, in partnership with other stakeholders, needs to develop a comprehensive vision for all three town centres.
 - There is a qualitative gap for more food retailing within the District's three main centres. Town centre food stores can act as a catalyst for regeneration, particularly within Leamington Old Town, Warwick and Kenilworth.

- The District Council should undertake a more detailed study of the out-of-centre market to identify trends, demand and capacity as part of the Local Plan review.
- Improvements should be made to the linkages between Warwick town centre and Warwick Castle.
- An appraisal of other funding opportunities should be undertaken.

3.22 These recommendations can be considered in turn.

Developing a comprehensive vision for the town centres

3.23 This is the single most important of all the recommendations made by DTZ. The Council, in partnership with other agencies, has undertaken considerable work in each of the town centres to develop a vision and bring this into being. This has included the following:

- **Town Centre managers.** The Council has worked alongside other local agencies to appoint a Town Centre Manager for each of the town centres. These posts were established in 1998. Although employees of the District Council, each of the Town Centre Managers is based within their town centre.
- **Corporate leadership from Warwick District Council.** To ensure that town centre matters are considered holistically, the Council restructured its town centre management function two years ago to create a new Amenities section. This section brings together each of the Town Centre Managers, together with the car parks management and CCTV team within a single management team.
- **Town Centre Management Initiatives.** In 1998, Town Centre Management Initiatives (TCMI) were established in each of the town centres. These were initially formed in close co-operation with the respective Town Councils, but also drawing on support from the Chambers of Trade, local retailers, local civic societies and others. More recently, both Leamington (in 2004) and Kenilworth (in 2005) restructured their TCMI's to become a more public/private sector partnership operating outside of the local authority committee structure. Each TCMI has a board (including representatives from the District Council) and is serviced by the Town Centre Managers (see above). This new structure has been an important precursor to a membership scheme and a possible move to Business Improvement District status (see below). As an example, the largest of the TCMI's is in

Leamington. This is supported by the County, District and Town Councils, Marks & Spencer, Boots, Wilson Bowden (developers of Regent Court), the Royal Priors Shopping Centre and the Chambers of Commerce and Trade. The TCMI has developed a strategic vision (“...for Royal Leamington Spa to be the first choice destination in South Warwickshire for speciality and independent retailing, eating, living and leisure...”) and a mission statement (“...to preserve and enhance a prosperous retail and business economy, in Leamington town centre. Make the town centre safer, more accessible and provide a more attractive managed environment and promote it to those who work, live or visit the town...”)

- **Town Centre Action Plan** Each of the TCMI's has developed an Action Plan (CD/ 501/502) and is responsible for overseeing the implementation of these. These Action Plans contain a wide range of initiatives including promoting environmental improvements, safety measures and the promotion of the town centres. Each town centre now has its own web site.

3.24 These structures and Action Plans have borne fruit in a number of successful initiatives within the town centres.

3.25 In all three town centres, significant investment has been made in **making the centres more secure** with CCTV installed and close working between different agencies. This has resulted in a recorded reduction in crime (and fear of crime) in the town centres and the awarding of “Safer Business Award”⁴ to all three town centre in 2005.

3.26 Much work on **publicity and promotion** has been undertaken in all town centres with web sites and new leaflets produced. In Warwick, a collaborative approach has led to the development of an “Eating Out” guide to the town and a leaflet promoting Smith Street.

3.27 A number of **special events** have been organised to promote the town centres including regular traditional and farmers markets and occasional themed markets. In Warwick, the Victorian Christmas evening was organized again in 2005, visited by over 4000 people (despite appalling weather conditions) and was generally considered to be a great success.

⁴ This award is given by the organization “Action Against Business Crime”. Warwick District is the only authority in the country where all of its town centres have been given this award.

3.28 Major **environmental enhancement** schemes have taken place in all three town centres. These include the following:-

- *Leamington*: refurbishment of the Pump Rooms (1998-2000), refurbishment of Jephson Gardens (2000-2003), enhancement of the Parade as part of the Leamington Mixed Use Priority safety scheme in 2005.
- *Warwick*: £1.1 million refurbishment of Warwick Market Place in 2000, enhancement to Old Square and Church Street (2003).
- *Kenilworth*: enhancement to Abbey End (2000).

3.29 In **Kenilworth**, significant work has been undertaken to develop a town centre framework. In April 2004, a public consultation was undertaken to consider a wide range of develop options for Kenilworth town centre. This generated almost 1,000 responses along with a petition of over 1,000 signatures. In July 2004, a Joint Town Centre Steering Group of Town, District and County Councillors was set up to oversee the development and implementation of the town centre framework. A catalyst to this was the planning application to redevelop Talisman Square (see para 2.13). This group has a wide brief which includes traffic management, car parking and the possible creation of a public service centre for Kenilworth. The District Council itself has made a significant investment in terms of both staff and capital resources to help bring these proposals to their current state. The current situation (as at February 2006) is as follows:

- The planning application for the redevelopment of Talisman Square and the erection of the new food store has been approved subject to the completion of a legal agreement. The agreement is expected to be completed before summer 2006.
- Waitrose has been named as the occupier of this store.
- A new application has been submitted for the food store (in December 2005). This would see the existing approved store (see above) repositioned within the car park to bring it closer to Talisman Square and further from houses on Bertie Road. This application has not yet been determined.
- A planning application has been submitted (also in December 2005) to re-site the existing County Council Youth Centre (the land for which is required for the new food store) to an alternative site within the town centre.

- 3.30 In addition to all of the above, the Council has worked actively to explore opportunities to improve the retail offer within Leamington town centre. This is discussed further in paragraph 3.34 below.

Meeting the need for more food retailing within the town centres

- 3.31 The Council has undertaken further work to assess the need for further convenience retail floorspace across the district. This is discussed in paragraph 3.33 below.
- 3.32 Within the three town centres, additional retail floorspace has been created to encourage new retailers to invest within the town centres. These are set out in paragraphs 2.7 and 2.13. In Kenilworth in particular, the planning permission for a new Waitrose store will significantly enhance the provision of food retailing within the town centre and the District.

Assessing the need for further retail floor space within the district

- 3.33 As part of their 2002 Retail Study, DTZ assessed the potential capacity for further comparison goods floorspace within Leamington town centre. It should be noted that the study only looked at Leamington town centre and only for the period 2001 to 2008. It estimated a potential (gross) capacity for comparison goods retailing of between 15,000 - 25,000⁵ sq.m by 2008 based on different market share assumptions across the town's defined catchment area.
- 3.34 Since 2002 a number of significant planning applications for further convenience floorspace have been received within Leamington, Warwick and Kenilworth (see paragraphs 2.16 above).
- 3.35 In 2004 the Council re-commissioned DTZ to provide a quantitative assessment update of the likely future capacity for both comparison and convenience retail floorspace in the District. This aimed to provide more information to support the initial assessment made in the 2002 Retail Study and also to provide information to help the Council consider the new planning applications.

⁵ It should be noted that this estimate of retail capacity is based upon growth in population and spending within the catchment area and not necessarily in the physical capacity of the town centre and its infrastructure to absorb this growth.

- 3.36 DTZ's revised capacity assessment was published in June 2004 (CD/504). Following subsequent updates to the existing convenience goods retail floorspace stock in the District, the estimates for convenience floorspace were revised in DTZ's February 2005 report (CD/505).
- 3.37 The revised capacity forecasts for both convenience and comparison goods retailing set out below are dependent on a variety of key inputs and growth assumptions. They should therefore only be used as a broad guide to future allocations and development. It should also be noted that the revised 2004 and 2005 capacity assessments both preceded the publication of PPS6. DTZ advise that these forecasts will need to be carefully monitored and could be subject to further update and revision to take into account new and emerging policy advice and market trends. This includes, for example, the Regional Centres Study, the Government's forthcoming supplementary guidance on undertaking assessments of need and impact, along with the potential impact of internet retailing on expenditure growth and retail capacity forecasts.
- 3.38 For **convenience goods** retailing the revised 2005 study forecast a residual convenience goods spend of c.£34m at 2011, rising to c.£51m by 2016. After allowing for the anticipated opening of the new (4,377 sq.m gross) Waitrose store to the rear of the Talisman Square redevelopment by 2007/08, the broad potential gross floorspace capacity forecasts for convenience goods retailing in the District up to 2016 are as follows:

Table 3: Potential capacity for new convenience goods retailing in Warwick District up to 2016 (all figures in gross sq.m.)				
Year:	2004	2008	2011	2016
Convenience Goods	1,800	600	2,000	4,400
Source: DTZ Revised Convenience Goods Retail Capacity February 2005, Table 2.9(CD/ 505)				

- 3.39 The forecasts show that there is limited capacity for new convenience goods retailing across the District up to 2011. This is explained by the anticipated opening of the new Waitrose store in Kenilworth and the more limited projected average growth in annual convenience goods spend.

- 3.40 In contrast, the revised comparison goods assessment set out in DTZ's 2004 study forecasts a more significant growth in residual spend across the District of c.£164m by 2011, rising to c.£271m by 2016. Although these forecasts should be subject to further revision, the broad potential capacity for new (gross) comparison goods floorspace in the District is as follows:

Table 4: Potential capacity for new comparison goods retailing in Warwick District up to 2016 (all figures in gross sq.m.)				
Year:	2004	2008	2011	2016
Floorspace Capacity	10,600	29,100	44,900	74,600
Source: DTZ Revised Retail Study June 2004, Appendix 9, Scenario 1b (CD/504)				

- 3.41 In the context of PPS6, and specifically the sequential assessment, all forecast residual spend and floorspace capacity should be directed to town centres first. PPS6 (paragraph 2.44) states that all options and potential opportunity sites in the centre should be thoroughly assessed (including the potential extension of the centre and conversion of existing buildings) before less central sites are considered for development for main town centre uses.
- 3.42 Although these forecasts should only be taken as a guide to future allocations and development, they nevertheless indicate the significant potential capacity for comparison goods retailing across the District up to 2016. It should be noted that these figures should be read alongside those of the Regional Centres Study commissioned by the West Midlands Regional Assembly and prepared by Roger Tym & Partners in late 2005 (see paragraphs 3.10 to 3.13 above). This Study indicated that Leamington should continue to grow, but at a lower level (between 6,000 and 22,000 sq.m up to 2021) than that concluded by DTZ.
- 3.43 In response to these capacity forecasts, and the advice set out in PPS6, the Council has been pro-active in exploring new opportunities for retail investment and development within Leamington town centre. In 2004 it affirmed that positive steps need to be taken to explore further retail development opportunities in Leamington town centre, and that work should focus on the potential of Chandos Street as the first priority.

- 3.44 Chandos Street car park is a Council-owned surface car park lying to the north of Warwick Street with excellent links to Warwick Street, the Parade and the Royal Priors shopping centre. The Council has commissioned consultants to prepare a feasibility study of development potential for this area. The report has concluded that a scheme would be viable and that it could deliver up to 20,000sq.m of new retail floorspace. This would include the capacity for a new “anchor” department store within the town centre.
- 3.45 It is recognised that to optimise the potential for this scheme, some site assembly would be involved to incorporate land and buildings in third party ownership. Furthermore, the Council is committed to engage in full public consultation before any scheme is finalised. Nevertheless, the Council is committed to working with partner organisations to fully explore the opportunities created by this site.
- 3.46 As part of a restructuring of town centre car parking (see paras 3.40 - 3.42 of the Transport Core Topic Paper - CD/23) and in parallel with the Chandos Street feasibility work, the Council has allocated resources to provide 300 new short stay parking places in Leamington town centre at Covent Garden car park in Russell Street. It is intended that these will be available by April 2008. This will be essential to facilitate the successful development of Chandos Street car park by providing compensation for the temporary loss of spaces during the construction period. It is envisaged that the existing 150 spaces at Chandos Street will be doubled as part of any retail led development proposals.

Improving linkages between Warwick Castle and the town centre

- 3.47 The adopted Local Plan contains a policy to create a circular walk between the castle and the town centre and improve the environment in this area (policies **(WTC) ENV1 and TR2**). Since this time, a number of initiatives have taken place to achieve this including:-
- refurbishment of Swan Street in 1998
 - refurbishment of Warwick Market Place in 1999
 - enhancement works to Old Square and Church Street in 2002.
 - provision of improved signage between the Castle and town
 - improved publicity and promotional links between the Castle and town.
- greater publicity about the town is now available to visitors to the Castle

- changes to car park management and tariffs to enable visitors to visit both the Castle and the town.

Appraising funding opportunities

3.48 The Council and its partners have sought to consider how funding opportunities can be maximised to help regenerate town centres in a number of ways:

1. Town Centre Management Initiatives. A key element of the restructuring of the TCMI's is the opportunity to attract greater levels of private sector funding. All three town centres are currently looking at the feasibility of applying for status as "*Business Improvement Districts*" (BIDs)⁶.
2. Opportunities to achieve wider town centre enhancements and benefits through planning conditions and section 106 agreements are being secured on key sites. Examples include highway improvements, cycle parking provision, improvements to Council managed car parks and affordable housing.
3. The Single Regeneration Budget 5 (SRB5) project in Old Town between 2000 and 2006 has accessed outside and partnership funding to bring about significant improvement to the Old Town area. Of particular relevance have been the following:
 - environmental enhancement and traffic calming in Clemens Street
 - shop front grants (jointly funded by Advantage West Midlands and the District Council) which have seen over 40 shop fronts within the conservation area in Old Town being replaced and restored.
 - funding (to a total of 9 %) to repaint most of the buildings along Clemens Street within the conservation area; and
 - environmental enhancement of the Althorpe Street Industrial Area.
4. A number of public sector agencies have been working together and have pooled their resources to bring about improvements within the town centres.

⁶ A Business Improvement District (BID) is a defined area in which local businesses can agree the levying of an additional business rate which is then ring-fenced to provide additional services within that area. Following successful national pilots in 2005, a number of local authorities are now exploring the opportunities that BIDs may offer. Within Leamington a BID feasibility study is presently underway. Warwick and Kenilworth town centres are also actively exploring the possibilities that BID status may bring.

Within Kenilworth and Warwick, the libraries and District Council “one stop” shops (offering a range of District Council services) have merged to offer improved services from a single point. Within Kenilworth this has been part of a major refurbishment of the library. Also within Kenilworth, a major project is being investigated to create a Public Service Centre within the town centre that may contain a new library, District Council one-stop shop, Police station, Town Council offices and other services. This project, upon which public consultation has already taken place, would, if it came to fruition, see a significant new public investment in the town.

5. Significant funds have been provided on major projects within each of the town centres. As mentioned earlier in this paper, major projects have included the Warwick Market Place refurbishment (1999), Pump Rooms redevelopment (2000), Jephson Gardens refurbishment (2004) and Abbey End enhancement (2000).

4. The Strategy of the Local Plan

- 4.1 In accordance with the strategic guidance, the spatial strategy of the Local Plan identifies the three town centres of Leamington, Warwick and Kenilworth as the main shopping and service centres of the district (paragraph 3.6C).
- 4.2 In terms of the core strategy objectives, a number contribute to maintaining the town centres and the retail sector generally. Three objectives are of particular relevance:
 - **Objective 1A** seeks to maintain high and stable levels of economic growth. Whilst this objective is principally concerned with meeting the strategic requirement for employment land (within use classes B1, B2, B8) it is recognised that other sources of employment (such as retailing and in the service sector which are concentrated in town centres) contribute towards high and stable economic growth.
 - **Objective 1D** seeks to enhance the vitality of town centres. This includes support for both a vibrant retail sector and encouraging proposals that diversify the range of uses within the town centres.

- **Objective 1E** promotes the regeneration of deprived areas. The District's principal regeneration area is Old Town in Leamington Spa. Part of this area, to the south of the River Leam, lies within Leamington town centre.

4.3 Other objectives also contribute towards supporting the town centres including those to promote sustainable tourism (**objective 1F**), protect the historic environment (**objective 2C**), maintain and enhance the quality of landscapes and townscapes (**objective 2D**), promote excellence in sustainable design and enhancement of the built environment (**objective 2E**), reduce the need to travel(**objective 3A**), promote more sustainable travel options (**objective 3B**), and protect, improve and enhance accessibility to local services (**objective 4E**).

5. The policies of the Local Plan

5.1 The policies of the Local Plan, insofar as they relate to the issues covered by this topic paper, are now considered in turn under the following headings:

- A. Directing retail development;
- B. Supporting small scale retail development outside of town centres;
- C. Supporting retail development in town centres;
- D. Ensuring a mix of uses in town centres;
- E. Supporting regeneration in town centres.

A. Directing retail development

5.2 In accordance with PPS6 and the strategic context to the Local Plan discussed above, **policy UAP3** seeks to direct retail development into town centres. Where proposals come forward outside of town centres, the policy follows the approach taken by PPS6 to ensure that (a) there is a need for the development, (b) there are no sequentially preferable sites and (c) locations are accessible.

5.3 The policy also requires that retail proposals of greater than 1,000 sq.m outside of town centres demonstrate how they meet the requirements of the policy by way of a retail needs assessment. PPS6 (para. 3.23) recommends that impact assessments which cover a specific list of points (listed in PPS6 para. 3.22) are carried out for all retail (and leisure) developments over 2,500 sq.m. PPS6 does,

however, state that such assessments may be required for smaller developments such as those likely to have a significant impact on smaller centres. In the case of Warwick District, the lower figure of 1,000 sq.m is considered to be appropriate for two reasons.

- 5.4 Firstly, PPS6 is clear that any application for a main town centre use proposed in an edge-of-centre or out-of-centre location must demonstrate need (PPS6: para. 3.9), that a sequential approach to site selection has been applied (para. 3.13) and that the impact of the proposal has been assessed (para. 3.20). This is no more than the policy requires. The policy recognises that smaller proposals (of less than 1,000 sq.m) will need to be assessed against the same broad criteria, however the level of detail that may be required may be less in appropriate circumstances.
- 5.5 Secondly, the Structure Plan directs all shopping (and entertainment and leisure) development over 1,000 sq.m. to town centres. Setting a minimum threshold of 1,000 sq.m. for a Retail Impact Assessment ensures that any retail (or other relevant) proposal that should be directed towards town centres is fully assessed if an edge or out-of-centre location is proposed as an alternative.
- 5.6 In addition to directing retail investment into town centres, it is important that the scale and nature of this development is appropriate to the centre and its place within the retail hierarchy as set out in the Regional Spatial Strategy (see paragraphs 3.8-9 above) and the Structure Plan (see 3.14 above). This control is provided through **policy TCP1**. The policy supports the principle that “*proposals for development within the defined centres should be compatible with the scale, nature and character of the centre*” (as required by **policy TC.2** in the Structure Plan). The Structure Plan policy also, as noted in paragraph 3.11 above, identifies a broad maximum scale of any proposal within any of the “other” town centres (including Warwick and Kenilworth) of 2,500 sq.m. The Council considers that there may be instances within Warwick and Kenilworth town centres where development is “*compatible with the scale, nature and character of the centre*” and yet may be in excess of this threshold. Paragraph 7.11 of the Structure plan accordingly sets out the requirements for any proposal greater than 2,500 sq.m. to ensure that it is appropriate in all respects. In responding to objections to the Revised Deposit Version of the Local Plan, the Council proposes that this paragraph be strengthened to reinforce these requirements.

B. Supporting small scale retail development outside of town centres

- 5.7 Both strategic plans and PPS6 recognise the role of different types of centres within a retail hierarchy. Annex A of PPS6 identifies this hierarchy as comprising city, town, district and local centres.
- 5.8 Warwick District contains a large number of local centres and shopping parades that serve a small catchment area and play an important role in meeting the day-to-day needs of people in a local area. The adopted Local Plan identified a number of these, mostly under **policy (DW) S7**. The new Local Plan carries forward the protection given to these centres under **policy UAP4**. In doing so, it allocates one further new local centre that has been built since the previous Local Plan was adopted (Othello Avenue in Warwick Gates) and identifies a local centre that is due to be built during the lifetime of the Local Plan (at South West Warwick). As a result of the objections to the Revised Deposit Version of the Local Plan, a further local centre is now supported by the Council at Albion Street in Kenilworth.
- 5.9 Since the adoption of the present Local Plan in 1995, the local centres of the District have been under threat as a number of retail businesses have closed down. **Policy (DW) S7** in the adopted Local Plan does not “normally” permit changes of use from retail (A1) to other uses. There has been pressure to allow a wider range of uses in these centres, particularly hot food take-aways within use class A5 (formerly A3). The Council has recognised that there has to be a balance struck between protecting the viability of the centres primarily for local shopping and avoiding un-lettable units remaining vacant for long periods of time with the consequential impact this has upon the vitality of the local centre overall. Over recent years the Council has permitted hot food take-aways to open in limited instances and **policy UAP4** gives a framework for considering such proposals.
- 5.10 The adopted Local Plan gives no protection for other local shops; however the Council recognises that these also play an important role in providing a service for local people. It is appropriate that not all local shops should be identified as local centres, and **policy UAP4** (as now proposed to be amended by the Council following objections to the Revised Deposit Version) suggests that the minimum
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size of a local centre should be “a cluster of six or more units (normally in a continuous elevation) usually comprising a newsagents, general grocery store, post office and other small shops of a local nature” (para. 6.22). Whilst it may not always be appropriate to protect all other local shops, **policy UAP5** ensures that changes of use of general shops (Class A1) to other uses within “A” class will not be permitted. This is to ensure that such uses are located within town and local centres where they may best support the vitality and viability of these centres.

- 5.11 Outside of urban areas, the Local Plan also has policies to give support to shops in rural areas (**policy RAP11**) and farm shops (**policy RAP12**). More information is given on these in the Rural Areas Core Topic Paper (CD/24).

C. Supporting retail development in town centres

- 5.12 As described in paragraphs 2.2 -2.14 above, the town centres within the District are different in character. Their boundaries for the purposes of the Local Plan have been drawn to reflect this. Within Leamington, the boundary has been drawn to recognise:

- the range of uses that make up the town centre, including retail, offices and public buildings;
- the key public transport interchange of the railway station;
- the employment and other areas within Old Town that have been defined as “opportunity sites” for regeneration.
- the open parkland (the Jephson, Pump Room and Victoria Gardens) that runs through the town centre giving it both a “green lung” and also helping to define its structure.

- 5.13 Within Warwick, the town centre boundary recognises:

- Four distinctive retail areas separated by other uses;
- An office area dominated by public buildings (the Crown Courts and the offices of the County Council);
- Some pockets of parkland that are surrounded by buildings.

- 5.14 In both cases, the town centre boundary incorporates some significant residential areas, recognising the sensitive relationship between these homes and the different uses that exist around them. Both town centres also contain parts of the towns' respective conservation areas.
- 5.15 Kenilworth town centre boundary is smaller, reflecting the linear structure of the town centre, dominated by retail, service and public buildings, surrounded by almost exclusively by residential areas.
- 5.16 **Policy TCP2** directs retail development within the three town centres. It is important to note that within the town centres retail development is directed to specific areas. These are
1. the defined retail areas (on which more detail is provided in policies **TCP4 and 5**),
 2. the area of search for major retail development within Leamington town centre (see **policy TCP3**) and
 3. the "mixed use" area within Warwick town centre⁷.
- 5.17 Retail development is not directed to other locations within the town centres because these areas have alternative designations or are controlled by other policies of the Local Plan⁸. As noted in paragraphs 2.2 – 2.14 above, with the exception of Kenilworth, the boundaries of the town centres have been specifically drawn to include wider areas than just the retail "heart" of the towns to give protection to other important town centre uses and to protect the character of these areas.
- 5.18 Within the town centre, the retail areas (identified in **policy TCP2** and shown as blue notations on the proposals map) are the "*primary shopping areas*" of the town centres as defined by PPS6 (paragraph 2.16 and annex A). Within these areas, the Local Plan defines both primary retail frontages (**policy TCP4**) and secondary retail areas (**policy TCP5**). These are, respectively, the "*primary frontages*" and "*secondary frontages*" proposed by PPS6 (annex A, table 2).

⁷ This third criterion was only added following representations to the Revised Deposit Version of the Local Plan when it was pointed out that there was an inconsistency between policies TCP2 and TCP9.

⁸ It should be noted that this only applies within Leamington and Warwick town centres. Within Kenilworth town centre, the entire town centre is within a retail area covered by policy TCP2.

- 5.19 Within the primary retail frontages, **policy TCP4** seeks to ensure that, in accordance with PPS6, a high proportion of retail uses are retained. The 2002 DTZ Retail Study confirmed that all the town centres needed to strengthen their roles as shopping centres, and maintaining a strong retail core area is an important part of this. This approach builds upon that contained within **policy (DW) S5** in the adopted Local Plan which sought to ensure that within primary retail frontages any change of use to A2 or A3 uses would “*not detract from the vitality and character of the frontage and its primary retail role*”. The new Local Plan places a maximum level of non A1 use along any single frontage of 25% and also requires that no frontage contains a continuous frontage of more than 16 metres. This is a higher threshold than that included within the adopted Local Plan, and consequently some frontages have already exceeded this limit. In such cases, the policy would not permit the loss of any further A1 uses along that frontage.
- 5.20 Within the secondary retail areas, **policy TCP5** seeks to ensure that, in accordance with PPS6, whilst such areas clearly have a retail character and are locations where retail development is concentrated, there exists greater opportunities for a diversity of uses. Accordingly, whilst the policy does place a restriction on the number of non A1 uses along any frontage, this is set at 50%. Furthermore, the policy also requires that normally no frontage contains a continuous non-A1 frontage of more than 16 metres (this is considered to represent the typical width of 2 – 3 traditional independent retailer shop fronts).
- 5.21 In accordance with Government guidance, it is important to ensure that town centres remain the preferred focus for new retail development in order to maintain their continued success (vitality and viability). The purpose of **Policy TCP1** is to protect and enhance the District's town centres by ensuring that the County wide hierarchy of centres, as identified by the Warwickshire Structure Plan is not compromised. **Policy TCP1** affords protection to the environmental qualities of the District's town centres by requiring that development proposals ensure that development proposals are of an appropriate scale to be compatible with the objectives of Structure Plan **policy TC2**.
- 5.22 It is important for both the social and economic well being of the District to protect the role of Leamington Town Centre as the District's main focus for retail activity.

The DTZ Retail Study (2004) has identified that Leamington town centre could support a substantive amount of new floorspace capacity (up to 37,700 sq.m of comparison goods floorspace to 2016). Whilst it is recognised that these figures are dependent upon a variety of factors and should only be taken as a guide, in land use planning terms this represents a significant challenge. **Policy TCP3** recognises that in order to consolidate the role of Leamington town centre as an important shopping destination it will be necessary to facilitate a significant level of growth during the plan period.

- 5.23 **Policy TCP3** identifies an area of search for new retail development, the boundary of which is considered well related to the existing (**policyTCP2**) retail area. The policy also responds to the Council's concern that it is important that the environmental quality and physical capacity of the town centre are not compromised by new growth. As a consequence it sets out a range of criteria that should be addressed by any future proposals.

Ensuring a mix of uses in Town Centres.

- 5.24 It is accepted that a diversity of uses in town centres makes an important contribution to their vitality and viability. This is recognised within the Review of the Local Plan that has responded by putting in place a framework of policies intended to protect and promote a successful balance / mix of town centre land uses.
- 5.25 **Policy TCP6** (Cafe Quarters) is a response to an identified need and an opportunity highlighted by the DTZ Retail Study (2002). It aims to create stronger physical links between the retail focus of the town centre of Warwick and the Castle. It is intended to achieve this by enabling the creation of more attractions within the town centre and making visitors aware of them. **Policy TCP6** recognises the opportunity to capitalise on improvements made to the Market Square in 1999 that removed traffic/parking conflict and created a meaningful, open and pedestrian friendly area for public events. In creating a policy environment where further A3 and A4 uses will be encouraged it is intended to create a destination that will attract more visitors from the Castle. In doing so, it will compliment the town's shopping function and provide a focus for leisure uses and the promotion of the evening economy.

- 5.26 **Policy TCP8** is also concerned with Warwick town centre and maintaining an appropriate mix of uses in the vicinity of Jury Street/High Street area. This area is identified an area of the town that is important as a link between the two defined retail destinations of Swan Street/Market Place and Smith Street/St Johns. This policy sets out a range of uses that will be acceptable within this area that currently has no one predominant land use.
- 5.27 **Policy TCP9** recognises the importance of maintaining a successful employment sector within the District's town centres. In order to ensure a continuing supply of employment opportunities and to ensure an appropriate mix of town centre uses TCP9 has identified the most significant town centre employment areas and afforded them protection from change of use proposals. Outside of these areas, it has been considered appropriate to allow employment uses the ability to change to other uses to provide the development opportunities required within the dynamics of a town centre environment. This policy is deliberately more flexible than **Policy SC2** of the Plan which protects all existing employment land and buildings outside of town centres (see Core Proof CD/21 Employment).
- 5.28 Warwick and Leamington's town centres have a large number of houses and apartments within the defined town centre boundaries. As noted above, this housing is important as part of the overall diversity of uses within the town centres, but can also bring pressures as different uses seek to co-exist. **Policy TCP10** protects the residential role of the town centres by identifying the predominantly residential locations and ensuring that their residential character and amenity is not prejudiced by the introduction of uses that conflict with these aims.
- 5.29 The continued occupation of flats above the ground floor of town centre premises has an important role to play in maintaining diverse and active town centres. As a response, **Policy TCP11** has been put in place to protect existing residential uses on upper floors by preventing their loss by change of use applications. Upper floor uses in town centres, for example housing and offices, can contribute considerably to the provision of a successful mix of land uses and the vitality of such centres.
- 5.30 There are also positive environmental benefits from ensuring that upper floors are well utilised. Where upper floors are occupied it is normally the case that the
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entire building fabric is maintained in good order for the aesthetic benefit of the immediate locality and the overall townscape quality. **Policy TCP12** ensures that the upper floor accommodation of buildings is not sterilised by ground floor proposals that fail to provide appropriate access to upper floors.

Supporting regeneration in Leamington Spa town centre

- 5.31 As identified earlier in this core topic paper, Leamington Spa town centre includes areas both north and south of the River Leam. The area to the south of the river is part of a wider area known locally as “Old Town” or “South Town”. Whilst areas within Old Town share the characteristics of areas to the north of the River in terms of affluence, other parts of Old Town have suffered from deprivation and a poor environment. As response to this, the Council together with partner organisations mounted a successful Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) bid in 1999, and the area has benefited greatly in recent years from the regeneration activity that has since taken place there. This work has been co-ordinated by the Regeneration agency “Regenesis”. More information on this can be found in the core topic papers on employment (CD/21) and historic environment (CD/20).
- 5.32 The need to see improvements in this area was identified in the adopted Local Plan, with **policies (LTC) ENV5** and the identification of three “key sites” within the Old Town area⁹. These all predated the SRB bid. Subsequent to the adoption of the Local Plan, and as part of the Council’s response to the regeneration needs of the area, the Council commissioned consultants to prepare four planning briefs for the area. All these documents were subsequently approved by supplementary planning guidance (SPG) by the Council. The documents were:
- Development principles for Court Street/Althorpe Street area (CD/203);
 - Development principles for Wise Street area (CD/204);
 - Development principles for Station area (CD/205);
 - Urban coding exercise – High Street/Clemens Street/Tachbrook road (CD/206).

⁹ These were key sites A (at Ranelagh Terrace), B (centring on Wise Street) and C (at Spencer Street/High Street/Lower Avenue).

- 5.33 These documents have remained in place since that time, however further work has been carried out on the “Development principles for Court Street/Althorpe Street area” document. It was hoped that the SPG would provide a catalyst for regeneration of this area and particularly the Council owned Court Street car park. In 2003, with no development having taken place in this area, it was decided to prepare a fresh planning brief for the car park land. Again the council commissioned consultants to help complete this study, and this work resulted in the preparation of the “Development Brief for the Court Street site, Leamington” (CD/207) that was approved by the Council as SPG in September 2003.
- 5.34 The preparation of the Local Plan has provided an opportunity to include the principles set out in these planning briefs within the Local Plan and this is done in **policy TCP7**. In this policy, the three area-wide briefs are now covered by designations as “opportunity sites” (A to C). As with the planning briefs, these designations are recognised as aspirational and therefore it is appropriate that they are suitably flexible to respond to the uncertainties over whether certain sites will come forward.
- 5.35 A further opportunity site identified in this policy is site D at Spencer’s Yard. This site has been identified by the Council and Regeneration as offering an opportunity to provide a focus for arts and cultural activities in Old Town. The Council is presently working with partner organisations to explore how these proposals can be brought to fruition.