

H6 Guidance

The following guidance note has been prepared to aid with the interpretation of Policy H6, specifically around the interpretation of thoroughfares and mixed use areas.

Policy H6 states that;

... exceptions may be made where the application site is located...

On a main thoroughfare in a mixed use area where the proposal would not lead to an increase in activity along nearby residential streets (for example, by way of pedestrian movements between the application site and the town centre or car parking)

And, at para 4.65 that;

“main thoroughfares will normally be defined as A and B roads and mixed use areas are defined as those with a predominance of non-residential uses”

However, it is apparent that further clarification regarding definitions of “main thoroughfares” and “mixed use areas” would aid with the consideration of planning applications. These will be presented as a checklist of considerations that officers should take into account in considering whether a proposal is located on a main thoroughfare within a mixed use area.

Main Thoroughfares

A thoroughfare is, by definition, a public road from one place to another, and so we need to consider what constitutes a “main” thoroughfare. The following principles should be used to assist in that consideration. Officers should assess where the road in question sits in the local street hierarchy, and an on-site comparative assessment of adjoining road might also be made.

Is it an A or B road?	<i>Such roads tend to carry increased levels of traffic and perhaps pedestrians through built up areas and beyond and are therefore likely to usually comprise a main thoroughfare.</i>
Does it connect strategically to other thoroughfares and/or other settlements	<i>Connectivity is an important indicator. All lower order streets, whether in a grid, loop or cul-de-sac link back to these routes</i>
Are there regular bus stops, servicing several or principal bus routes?	<i>Regular stops for busy bus routes indicate that it sits at or close to the top of the street hierarchy</i>
Does it handle significant throughput of traffic?	<i>Are there significant volumes of traffic observable? Are there signalised junctions?</i>
Is the road narrow and minor in nature, or wider to cope with heavier traffic flows?	<i>The width and design of the road will help indicate the hierarchy intention</i>
What is the character and nature of the surrounding built form?	<i>Is the surrounding built form one of quiet residential or are there greater level of pedestrian activities? Regularity of street furniture and lighting will indicate a main thoroughfare</i>

Mixed Use Areas

In para 4.65 of the LP we define mixed use areas as those with a predominance of non-residential uses. In order for the non-residential uses to be predominant they would need to be greater in number than the residential uses within a recognisable area (see note). This assessment therefore needs a judgement to be made on two aspects

- a) What is the correct extent of the “area” in question?
- b) Should that area be considered to be mixed use (e.g. a predominance of non-residential uses)

To address these two aspects, the following should be considered

a) Extent of area:	
<p>The extent of the area should be defined by a clear understanding of what can be seen from the development and where there are recognisable physical boundaries.</p> <p>It is not possible to provide generic guidance on the extent of the area as this will depend on local circumstances. However account should be taken of an assessment to the questions in the adjacent column</p>	<p><i>Is there a clear spatial delineation (e.g. some kind of clear physical boundary) between this area and adjoining ones? This would not usually include the road on which the development is located, as the nature of properties on both sides of that road will define the character of the area.</i></p> <p><i>What is the extent of area that can be seen from the development at a street level (this applies to all elevations with an access to the development)?</i></p> <p><i>What are the likely routes from the development to access public transport, and are there any substantial changes in the use of the area between the two points?</i></p> <p><i>Where adjoining streets that may not be visible from the development have a different mix of uses, to what extent is that difference perceivable from the development or in the immediate vicinity of the development (e.g. from neighbouring properties or from the various accesses to the development)</i></p>

b) Mix of uses	
<p>To decide whether the mix of uses in the defined area can be considered to be “Mixed Use”, there needs to be a predominance a non-residential uses.</p>	<p><i>Is there a height or massing difference between this area and adjoining areas? Are there noticeable changes in the vernacular?</i></p>

<p>Usually this would mean that at least 50% of ground floor uses within the defined area are non-residential, although a judgement will need to be made on the ground regarding the physical impact of these of non-residential uses in comparison with the residential uses. It should be noted that the Council would usually consider existing student accommodation to be residential uses within this assessment (see note).</p> <p>Other factors which need to be taken in to account in assessing whether there should be any variation from the 50% guideline are set out in the adjacent column</p>	<p><i>Street scene: What is the nature of the street scene, such as street furniture (public bins, phone boxes) or pavement width? Do these indicate residential or mixed uses?</i></p> <p><i>Footfall: Is there a perceivable difference in footfall in this area compared to adjoining areas?</i></p> <p><i>Crossing points: It might reasonably be expected that pedestrian crossing points will be in close proximity to a mixed use area, along with tactile paving</i></p> <p><i>Connectivity: What will be the primary access and egress points from/to the proposed development, and how do these connect it to the street hierarchy?</i></p> <p><i>Views: What can be seen from the development at a street level (both access and egress, from all such points)? Does it have a residential or mixed use outlook?</i></p>
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Note:

Existing student accommodation will be taken into account when assessing amenity impact caused by the introduction of further student accommodation. It is appropriate to ensure that all existing residents amenity should be considered, whomever they are.

Conclusions

The preceding criteria should be considered holistically in making a balanced decision regarding whether the site should be considered a main thoroughfare in a mixed use area, along with other material considerations that may present themselves through the planning application assessment.