

**Rother District Wide
Shopping Assessment
June 2008**

PREPARED BY

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Quality Standards Control

The signatories below verify that this document has been prepared in accordance with our quality control requirements. These procedures do not affect the content and views expressed by the originator. This document must only be treated as a draft unless it has been signed by the Originator and approved by a Director or Associate.

DATE
June 2008

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Limitations

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 GL Hearn was instructed by Rother District Council in October 2007 to undertake a District-wide Shopping Assessment. The purpose of this assessment is to inform and guide retail planning in the District and to form a robust evidential base for the preparation of the Council's Local Development Framework Core Strategy.

1.2 The main objectives of the Assessment were set out in the Council's Brief (**Appendix 1**) and these comprised:

- a) Current, and trends in (over the last 10 years), shopping rental levels in each town using published data;
- b) An assessment of the position of town shopping centres in Rother within the sub-regional retail hierarchy, drawing on comparative data on existing floorspace, catchments, accessibility, etc factors (to include Eastbourne, Hastings, Tunbridge Wells, Ashford and Folkestone);
- c) A residents survey for these catchment areas (a statistically representative 1% sample) on where they shop for convenience goods, comparison goods, and service trade services, on how often they shop in the various locations and their view of future provision for additional shopping in Rother District;
- d) The views of key stakeholders and the implications for the assessment of future shopping development;
- e) The extent of trade being 'lost' from Bexhill, Rye and Battle to other shopping centres outside the District, the reasons for this and potential to re-capture trade;
- f) The definition of the shopping catchment areas of Bexhill, Rye and Battle Town Centres;
- g) The need for additional shopping floorspace in the three towns, and an indication of type of suitable location, required to accommodate a realistic assessment of future market share in 5 year periods up to 2026 and then split by convenience, comparison and service trade sectors, in the context of policy objectives and sustainability considerations for Rother's town centres.

1.3 To address the requirements of the Brief, the Assessment incorporates a comprehensive up to date review of retailing within the District utilising a specifically commissioned Household Telephone Survey (**Appendix 2**) which provides an indication of the relative role of the Districts town centres and other shopping

facilities. The Household Telephone survey results have been supplemented by information gathered at retailer and town centre stakeholder meetings conducted in Bexhill, Battle and Rye town centres.

- 1.4 In addition, we have also reviewed the health of Rother's main town centres against the appropriate vitality and viability indicators set out in PPS6.
- 1.5 The District-Wide Shopping Assessment is structured as follows:
- 1.6 Section 2 provides a brief overview of national, strategic and local planning policies which are relevant to retail planning and town centres.
- 1.7 Section 3 provides commentary upon national trends in consumer spending and retailing
- 1.8 Section 4 reviews the sub regional context, considering in particular the influence of competing centres in the wider area on Rother's main town centres.
- 1.9 Section 5 describes the qualitative shopping provision and attraction of Rother's main town centres.
- 1.10 Section 6 sets out the methodology, assumptions and findings of our quantitative need assessment, providing estimates of capacity for new convenience and comparison goods shopping floorspace in the District over the period to 2026.
- 1.11 Section 7 provides our interpretation of the quantitative and qualitative assessment and suggest how this may be applied to the Districts main shopping locations.
- 1.12 Finally, Section 8 provides the conclusions to the District-wide Shopping Assessment.

2 RETAIL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

2.1 This section provides an overview of current national, regional and local planning policy guidance in relation to town centre development. This policy guidance sets the background to the shopping assessment.

National Planning Context

Planning Policy Statement 6: Planning for Town Centres (March 2005)

2.2 Planning Policy Statement 6: Planning for Town Centres (PPS6) was published on 21 March 2005. This document sets out Government guidance on retail planning policy and planning for town centres.

2.3 PPS6 replaces Planning Policy Guidance Note 6 which was published in June 1996.

2.4 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 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 (paragraph 1.3).

2.5 Other Government objectives which need to be taken account of in this context, include:

- Enhancing consumer choice by making provision for a range of shopping, leisure and local services, which allow genuine choice to meet the needs of the entire community, and particularly socially excluded groups;
- Supporting efficient, competitive and innovative retail, leisure, tourism and other sectors with improving productivity; and
- Improving accessibility, ensuring that existing or new development is, or will be, accessible and well served by a choice of means of transport (paragraph 1.4).

- 2.6 In addition, it is confirmed that wider policy aims are also relevant including the need;
- To promote social inclusion;
 - To regenerate deprived areas, creating new employment opportunities and an improved physical environment;
 - To promote economic growth of regional, sub-regional and local economies;
 - To deliver more sustainable patterns of development; and
 - To promote high quality and inclusive design (paragraph 1.5).
- 2.7 Paragraph 1.7 confirms that it is not the role of the planning system to restrict competition, preserve existing commercial interests or to prevent innovation.
- 2.8 The main town centre uses, to which PPS6 applies, are set out at paragraph 1.8 of the guidance. These include, retail (including warehouse clubs and factory outlet centres), leisure, entertainment facilities, the more intensive sport and recreation uses, offices, and arts, culture and tourism facilities.
- 2.9 Within a regional planning context, local planning authorities should actively plan for growth and manage change in town centres over the period of the plan by;
- Selecting appropriate existing centres to accommodate the identified need for growth by;
 - Making better use of existing land and buildings;
 - Where necessary, extending the centre.
 - Managing the role and function of existing centres; and
 - Planning for new centres of an appropriate scale in areas of significant growth or where there are deficiencies in the existing network of centres (paragraph 2.3).

- 2.10 Local planning authorities should aim to increase the density of development, where appropriate. Opportunities within existing centres should be identified for development or redevelopment. Local planning authorities should seek to ensure that the number and size of sites identified for development is sufficient to meet the scale and type of need identified (paragraph 2.4). Where growth cannot be accommodated in identified existing centres, local planning authorities should plan for the extension of the primary shopping area if there is a need for additional retail provision or, where appropriate, plan for the extension of the town centre to accommodate other main town centre uses (paragraph 2.5).
- 2.11 An extension of the primary shopping area or town centre may also be appropriate where a need for large developments has been identified and this cannot be accommodated within the centre. Larger stores may deliver benefits for consumers and local planning authorities should seek to make provision for them in this context. In such cases, the local planning authority should seek to identify, designate and assemble larger sites adjoining the primary shopping area (paragraph 2.6).
- 2.12 Paragraph 2.8 confirms that where existing centres are in decline, local planning authorities should assess the scope for consolidating and strengthening these centres by seeking to focus a wider range of services there, promote the diversification of uses and improve the environment. Where reversing decline is not possible, local planning authorities should recognise that these centres may need to be reclassified at a lower level within the hierarchy of centres, and reflect this revised status in the policies applied to the area.
- 2.13 Local planning authorities should adopt a positive and proactive approach to planning for the future of all types of centres within their areas (paragraph 2.15).
- 2.14 Local planning authorities should;
- Assess the need for new floorspace for retail, leisure and other main town centre uses, taking into account both quantitative and qualitative considerations;

- Identify deficiencies in provision, assess the capacity of existing centres to accommodate new development, and identify centres in decline where change needs to be managed;
- Identify the centres within their area where development will be focused, as well as the need for any new centres of importance, and develop strategies for developing and strengthening centres within their area;
- Define the extent of the primary shopping area and the town centre, for the centres in their area;
- Identify and allocate sites as required;
- Review all existing allocations and reallocate sites which do not comply with PPS6;
- Develop spatial policies and proposals to promote and secure investment in deprived areas; and
- Set out criteria based policies for assessing and locating new development proposals (paragraph 2.16).

2.15 In selecting sites for development, local planning authorities should;

- Assess the need for development;
- Identify the appropriate scale of development;
- Apply the sequential approach to site selection;
- Assess the impact of development on existing centres; and
- Ensure that locations are accessible (paragraph 2.28).

2.16 In assessing the need and capacity for additional retail and leisure development, local planning authorities should place greater weight on quantitative need for additional floorspace for specific types of retail and leisure development. However, local planning authorities should also take account of qualitative considerations (paragraph 2.33).

- 2.17 Additional benefits in respect of regeneration and employment do not constitute indicators of need for additional floorspace (albeit they may be material considerations in the site selection process) (paragraph 2.37).
- 2.18 Local planning authorities should require applicants to demonstrate;
- The need for development;
 - That the development is of an appropriate scale;
 - That there are no more central sites for the development;
 - That there are no unacceptable impacts on existing centres; and
 - That locations are accessible (paragraph 3.4).
- 2.19 Need must be demonstrated for any application for a main town centre use which will be in an edge of centre or out of centre location and which is not in accordance with an up-to-date Development Plan Document Strategy (paragraph 3.9).
- 2.20 The need for additional floorspace should normally be assessed no more than five years ahead (paragraph 3.10) and an indicative upper limit for the scale of a development likely to be acceptable in particular centres may be set out in the development plan. Where this is not the case, the scale of development should relate to the role and function of the centre within the wider hierarchy and the catchment served (paragraph 3.12).
- 2.21 Paragraph 3.13 confirms that the sequential approach to site selection should be applied to all development proposals for sites that are not in an existing centre nor allocated in an up to date development plan document. In applying this sequential approach developers and operators should be able to demonstrate that in seeking to find a site in or on the edge of existing centres they have been flexible about their proposed business model (paragraph 3.15). However, local planning authorities should take into account any genuine difficulties, which the applicant can demonstrate are likely to occur when operating the applicant's business model from the sequentially preferable site, in terms of scale, format, car parking provision and a scope for disaggregation, such as where a retailer would be required to provide a significantly reduced range of products (paragraph 3.16).

- 2.22 A single retailer or leisure operator should not be expected to split their proposed development into separate sites where flexibility in terms of scale, format, car parking and the scope for the disaggregation has been demonstrated (paragraph 3.18).
- 2.23 Applicants should provide clear evidence to demonstrate why sequentially preferable sites are not practical alternatives, in terms of;
- Availability;
 - Suitability; and
 - Viability.
- 2.24 Local planning authorities should consider the impact of the development on the centre or centres likely to be affected, taking account of:
- The extent to which the development would put at risk the spatial planning strategy for the area and the strategy for a particular centre or network of centres, or alter its role in the retail hierarchy;
 - The likely effect on future public or private sector investment;
 - The likely impact on the proposed development on trade/turnover and on the vitality and viability of existing centres within the catchment area of the proposed development;
 - Changes to the range of services provided by centres that could be affected;
 - Likely impact on the number of vacant properties in the primary shopping area; and
 - Potential changes to the quality, attractiveness, physical condition and character of the centre or centres and to its role in the economic and social life of the community centre (paragraph 3.22).
- 2.25 Furthermore, in considering proposed new developments, local planning authorities should consider whether developments are generally accessible by assessing the distance of proposed developments from existing or proposed transport facilities and

assessing the impact with the overall distance travelled by car and the effect on local traffic levels and congestion after public transport and traffic management measures have been secured (paragraph 3.25, and 3.27).

Regional Planning Context

Regional Planning Guidance for the South East (RPG9)

- 2.26 The relevant adopted regional planning guidance comprises Regional Planning Guidance for the South East (RPG9) published in March 2001.
- 2.27 **Policy Q5** confirms the region's existing network of larger town centres should be the focus for major retail, leisure and office developments, to support an urban renaissance, promote social inclusion and encourage more sustainable patterns of development.
- 2.28 The RPG confirms that local planning authorities should assess the need for new retail and leisure facilities in their area and identify which town and district centres should be the preferred locations for growth. Local authorities are required to apply the sequential approach in identifying any sites for development.

Draft Regional Spatial Strategy - The South East Plan

- 2.29 The South East Plan is a revision of the RPG9 and sets out a vision of the future of the South East region to 2026. The Plan was submitted to the Government on 31 March 2006. The Examination in Public commenced on the 28th November 2006 and the Panel Report was published in August 2007. The final publication of the South East Plan is expected in late 2008/early 2009.
- 2.30 Paragraph 1.5 of Section D9 (Town Centres) of the Plan contains a number of policies with the focus of distributing growth to the middle and lower order centres. This is to support a balanced network of centres that are not dominated by larger centres. Local centres are also anticipated to be the focal point for some development.

2.31 **Policy TC1** (Development of Town Centres) confirms that town centres are fundamental to the sustainable development of the Region and will continue to be a focal point for development of mixed uses. The policy further confirms that to help create a sustainable distribution of facilities across the South East region a network of town centres will be promoted. The policy confirms that Local Development Documents will:

- Seek to promote good quality development where it is desirable to regenerate and renew town centres; and
- Ensure that centres are accessible by public transport.

2.32 **Policy TC2** (Strategic Network of Town Centres) lists the strategic network of town centres (Primary Regional Centre, and Secondary Regional Centres) across the region that will be the focus for:

- Major retail developments;
- Uses that attract large numbers of people;
- Employment; and
- A range of housing.

2.33 The strategic centres identified within this policy do not include any centres located within Rother District (the closest strategic centres being Hastings and Eastbourne). The policy does however further identify that a number of other centres are located within the region, and Local Development Documents should identify policies for centres within their area.

2.34 Paragraph 1.11 of Section D9 (Town Centres) of the Plan confirms that growth will not be restricted to the Primary and Secondary Regional Centres identified in **Policy TC2**. Other towns, villages and local centres located within the South East region provide the main retail and other services to a local area. To complete the network of town centres, the Plan states that local authorities should set out the other towns, villages and local centres in their area and should review their needs to provide a strategy for future development.

- 2.35 Paragraph 1.19 of Section D9 (Town Centres) of the Plan states that residual expenditure for new comparison retail floorspace, should be, in accordance with PPS6, be directed towards town centre and edge of centre locations in the first instance.
- 2.36 Paragraph 1.27 of Section D9 (Town Centres) of the Plan identifies that most of the centres in the Sussex Coast region (including Hastings and Eastbourne) have little room for retail expansion, except in Eastbourne where a major town centre scheme is being sought to increase the retail floor space.
- 2.37 **Policy TC3** (New Development and Redevelopment of Town Centre) states that the strategic network of town centres identified within **Policy TC2** will be the prime focus for large scale leisure, office, culture and retail development.
- 2.38 No need has been identified for any further large scale extensions to existing centres or any new out of centre regional or sub-regional shopping centres (**Policy TC4**). Furthermore, the upgrading of an existing out of centre site should be considered only in exceptional cases.
- 2.39 The Plan supports the sequential approach set out in PPS6 for identifying the preferred location for new development. Town centre sites should be considered prior to the consideration of edge of centre and out of centre sites, and an assessment of the capacity of each town centre to accommodate additional development should be carried out by local authorities subject to major developments in their area.
- 2.40 Rother District is identified within the Plan as located within the Sussex Coast sub-region. This area is in need of extensive regeneration, and the RSS identifies that development is constrained by extensive environmental designations, fluvial flooding, coastal management issues, and poor transport infrastructure and services. **Policy SCT1** states that sustainable economic growth and regeneration of the Sussex Coast should be a priority, and should be proactively sought and promoted by local authorities and other agencies.

Local Planning Context

- 2.41 The relevant development plan for Rother District comprises the saved policies of the East Sussex and Brighton and Hove Structure Plan (1991 - 2011) (Structure Plan), and the Rother District Local Plan (Local Plan), adopted in July 2006.

East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Structure Plan 1991–2011

- 2.42 Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Structure Plan is being replaced by Regional Spatial Strategies (the South East Plan) and the Local Development Framework (LDF). The change over arrangements of the Act ensured the complete Structure Plan was saved until September 2007. To avoid gaps before being replaced by the South East Plan and the LDF, some policies of the Structure Plan were saved by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. Only these policies remain in force as part of the Development Plan.

- 2.43 Saved **Policy S4** (Strategic Pattern of Development) of the Structure Plan outlines a number of factors by which the broad pattern and timing of change and development within the area will be guided. These include:

- Focusing most development and change on existing towns, particularly the main coastal towns, through regeneration;
- Supporting early implementation of commitments to major high quality business development at north Bexhill, Eastbourne, and Maresfield;
- Making new allocations for employment use as close to Hastings urban areas as practicable; and
- Implementation of the existing allocation for the new community at north Bexhill.

- 2.44 Saved **Policy S6** further specifies that the existing settlement pattern of the area will be broadly maintained and no new settlements will be developed. The policy further specifies that town centres are to be developed and regenerated as lively and multi-

purpose centres, and an integrated approach to the regeneration of existing towns is to be pursued.

Rother District Local Plan

- 2.45 Chapter 9 of the Local Plan recognises the need to foster an appropriate scale of business development in both towns and villages, on retaining existing employment sites, and promoting mixed use developments. **Policy EM1** further confirms that large scale business development will be focused upon established and allocated business areas within development boundaries. The large development allocations at Bexhill, and the other employment allocations at Rye, Hastings fringe, Westfield, Robertsbridge, Ticehurst and Marley Lane are also recognised.
- 2.46 Town Centres are identified within the Local Plan as the first preference for new shopping development. The Local Plan further specifies that should this not be possible, a sequential approach for other locations should be followed looking at edge of centre sites, district and local centres, and lastly out of centre sites in accessible locations. The existing town centres in Rother District include Bexhill, Battle, and Rye. The provision and retention of shops and services which meet the day to day needs located outside of town centres, in particular in villages, are also recognised as important within the Local Plan.
- 2.47 **Policies EM13 to EM15** of the Local Plan provide a framework for shopping development. The town centres of Bexhill, Battle, and Rye are recognised as the focus of shopping and related commercial development. Significant retail development outside of the town centres of district centres will only be permitted where a qualitative and quantitative need for the development can be demonstrated, the location is justified and the sequential test in PPS6 is met.
- 2.48 The Local Plan identifies the Council's wish for the town centre of Bexhill to strengthen its role as the commercial and cultural centre of Bexhill. The Local Plan further identifies land allocated for significant retail/mixed use development, while also identifying that there is sufficient opportunity in the town centres 'main shopping area' to accommodate the anticipated need for additional retail floorspace to 2011. This is expected to be achieved by:

- The expansion/redevelopment of Sainsbury and related development along Western Road;
 - The expansion of existing space; and
 - Increased turnover within existing shops.
- 2.49 **Policy BX6** of the Local Plan specifies that mixed retail, residential, office and car parking development is allocated in the town centre, and includes the Sainsbury store and other properties on either side of the railway. This includes the potential for over-sailing over the railway line.
- 2.50 Offices are also recognised within the Local Plan as making a significant contribution to the economic activity of a town and are seen as being vital to the mixed use character of the town centre. Offices are therefore considered appropriate to promote their retention within the predominantly office areas in the town centre.
- 2.51 Relating to Battle town centre, paragraph 11.27 of the Local Plan specifies that during the life of the Local Plan, there is no need for significant new retail floorspace, and therefore no shopping allocation was made. The 'main shopping area' is considered to contain any further retail development.
- 2.52 The Local Plan identifies the Council's wish for the town centre of Rye to strengthen its role with retail activity to be concentrated within the established 'main shopping area'. The retail floorspace needs of Rye are to be assessed.

Local Development Framework

- 2.53 Rother District Council is currently preparing the Local Development Framework (LDF) for the District that will guide future development and change. The LDF will be comprised of a number of planning documents that together with the South East Plan will replace the Local Plan and will provide the policy context for planning decisions for the District.
- 2.54 The draft North East Bexhill Master Plan Supplementary Planning Document was prepared by Council and placed on public consultation in mid 2007. The draft SPD provides further guidance on the form and layout of development and implementation

arrangements. The SPD refines and elaborates the two mixed use development allocations identified within **Policies BX3** and **BX3** of the Local Plan.

2.55 The Rock Channel Rye SPD was placed on public consultation in July 2007.

Other Material Policy Considerations

2.56 The Governments future intentions with regard to retailing and town centres were broadly signalled within the 'Planning for a Sustainable Future' White Paper published in May 2007.

2.57 In considering retailing and town centres the White Paper stated:

"A crucially important aspect of creating places where people want to live and communities can flourish is to maintain and nurture the vitality of our town centres. Local planning authorities need to be supported in their strategies for achieving this. We are fully committed to promoting the vitality and viability of town centres and to ensuring that the planning system supports the growth and development of our town centres." (para 7.50)

"Our town centre policies are showing real signs of success. In 1994 only a quarter of new development was in or around our town centres. By 2004 it was up to 41 per cent. We want this trend to continue and we want investors to continue to have the confidence to locate in town centres. But we also need local authorities to proactively manage the role and function of their town centres, including by extending the boundary where that makes sense, and to promote the growth and development of their town centres by facilitating a wide range of shopping, leisure and local services that enhance consumer choice." (para 7.51)

"To achieve this it is essential that local authorities have robust, evidence-based plans and strategies that are up to date and which set out a clear and proactive vision for town centres, based on a sound understanding of both the need and demand for new facilities. Where development outside the town centre would not impact detrimentally on the town centre, and it is otherwise acceptable in planning terms, both plans and planning decisions should reflect this." (para 7.52)

"We recognise that there are issues around the practical effect of the current policy requirement on applicants to demonstrate the need for proposals outside town

centres, where these are not supported by an up-to-date development plan. This 'need test' has proved in some respects a blunt instrument, and can have the unintended effect of restricting competition and limiting consumer choice. For example, it is possible under current policy for a new retail development on the edge of the town centre to be refused because there is an existing or proposed out-of-town development which meets the identified 'need' even though the new retail development would bring wider benefits and help support the town centre." (para 7.53)

"In addressing this issue, we have two clear objectives. First, we must support current and prospective town centre investment, which contributes to economic prosperity, and to our social and environmental goals. Simply to remove the 'needs test' could put this at risk. Second, we must ensure that planning promotes competition and consumer choice and does not unduly or disproportionately constrain the market." (para 7.54)

"We therefore intend to review the current approach in PPS6 to assessing the impact of proposals outside town centres. We will replace the need and impact tests with a new test which has a strong focus on our town centre first policy, and which promotes competition and improves consumer choice avoiding the unintended effects of the current need test." (para 7.55)

- 2.58 The review of the current PPS6 suggested by the White Paper has yet to be published.
- 2.59 A further relevant material policy consideration is the findings of the Competition Commission's investigation into the Grocery Market which were published on 30 April 2008. The Grocery Market investigation has in part picked up on the White Paper themes and the Commission's Final Report has introduced a 'Competition Test' to avoid any potential for over dominance by a single grocery retailer within local markets. The 'Competition Test' is to apply to all grocery store proposals over 1,000sqm net sales area and will be based upon an examination of stores within a 10 minute drive time from the proposal. It is understood that the test is to be administered by the Office for Fair Trading (OFT) and they are to become a statutory consultee on grocery retail planning applications for stores over 1,000sqm including extension proposals.

3 NATIONAL RETAIL TRENDS

- 3.1 This section briefly considers the main drivers and trends in retailing in the UK. The analysis draws upon a number of published data sources including Datamonitor, Mintel, Experian, Pitney Bowes Mapinfo and ONS.
- 3.2 An assessment of future retail or leisure demand or “need” should have regard to emerging trends within the industry, as these may influence the conclusions of the assessment. The retail sector is one of the most dynamic sectors of the UK economy and is constantly evolving and adapting in response to consumers and lifestyle trends and other market influences which could alter the face of domestic retailing during the course of the Local Development Framework for Rother District through to 2026. These projected changes in shopping and leisure patterns could have fundamental implications for the way in which town centres are used and how they will need to adapt and respond.

National Trends in Expenditure

- 3.3 Over the past 25-30 years there have been significant changes to the retail sector which have intrinsically changed the way the UK shops. A primary driver of this change has been in the growth in both income and consumer spending, consumer retail expenditure per head over this period has grown at an average of 3% per annum (compound rate) in real terms.
- 3.4 Within this overall consumer expenditure growth, the main increase is attributable to comparison goods spending. Over the last 25-30 years annual growth in consumer spending on comparison goods has averaged nearly 5% in real terms, this is equivalent to an overall increase of around 200%. Over the same period convenience goods expenditure growth per head has been lower at around 1% per annum in real terms.
- 3.5 Looking at consumer expenditure per head levels over a shorter period there has been stronger growth, for example over the last 10 years the growth in comparison goods spending per head per annum was around 9%. This recent very strong expenditure growth is not considered sustainable, as household savings rates are at very low levels and household indebtedness is extremely high. As a consequence and in response to a number of factors, including the ‘credit crunch’, uncertainty over

the housing market, interest rates/mortgage costs, disparity between borrowings and income, rising food prices and utility bills, the recent high levels of consumer spending growth will slow; bringing a return to the longer term trend growth in consumer spending per head.

- 3.6 Whilst strong retail spending over the last 30 years has driven retailing, it has also contributed indirectly to changing the structure of retailing in the UK, particularly through car ownership and mobility generally. The number of car owning households has risen significantly and equally those households with two or more cars has risen even more substantially. As a consequence households are now much more mobile than they used to be and choices for where to shop and the distances they can travel are much greater.

National Trends in Retail Trading Formats/Investment

- 3.7 The growing trend towards increased centralisation of services, whereby larger stores serving an extensive catchment are replacing a number of smaller stores, as experienced in the DIY and Grocery retail sectors particularly, is likely to continue throughout all retail sectors. This is in response to the desire to achieve increasing economies of scale and also the increasing mobility of customers. New and innovative forms of retailing will continue to require new sites, and not all retailers preferred formats are likely to be accommodated in existing shopping centres. There is also likely to be an increasing pressure as a result of active asset management by retail park owners and retailer demand to release existing retail parks from “*bulky goods*” restrictions to accommodate specialist retailers selling traditional high street goods, particularly sports, toys and clothing. However, any such applications for amendments of Planning Conditions must be treated in the same way as proposals for new floorspace.
- 3.8 Retail planning policies town centre first approach has acted to substantially reduce out of centre development in recent years. The amount of retail warehouse floorspace in the development pipeline has substantially reduced although demand for out of town retail space remains strong. However, as planning for new development space is becoming increasingly restricted, opportunities for out of town retail warehousing has become limited and a general trend is towards smaller retail parks (i.e. 4,645-6,967sq.m/50,000-75,000sq.ft.) in smaller towns.

- 3.9 As demand for retail warehouse units continues to be strong, supply however remains constrained by restrictive and protracted planning procedures. Proposed new sites are taking longer to secure permission, with developers encouraged to regenerate the more complicated edge of centre and in town sites. In terms of in-town schemes, there has been a recent increase in the number of shopping centres being developed in town centre locations.
- 3.10 Some growth in retail warehousing (and large foodstores) was experienced with the rush by the landlords to install floor mezzanine floors or, at the very least to make a material start on site in respect of this construction. However amendments to permitted development rights introduced in 2006 now require that mezzanine floors in retail stores (Class A1) over 200 sqm require planning consent.
- 3.11 With the sustained fall in out of town retail development, there has been a corresponding increase in development activity mainly focused upon a few large schemes in dominant regional/sub regional centres. Research suggests that the top 70 centres in the UK now attract over 50% of the population for comparison goods shopping and as over half of the proposed and committed new retail floorspace is focused upon these centres, their market dominance will be reinforced.
- 3.12 Coupled with the increasing dominance of larger centres, there has been an increased dominance by multiple retailers with requirements for larger shop units (typically 500 to 2,000 sqm). Multiples have become concentrated within the larger centres which can provide the larger space units these retailers seek, which in turn makes these centres more attractive to shoppers leading to a polarisation of the retail hierarchy. Increased mobility coupled with consumer spending growth has led to shoppers travelling greater distances to shop in larger centres with the strongest retail (multiple) offer.
- 3.13 This polarisation is likely to threaten smaller towns unless they are able to secure new development of sufficient critical mass and quality to retain expenditure, generate new customer inflow and attract key retailers.

Grocery Sector

- 3.14 A combination of factors, but most notably a tightened planning regime restricting the opportunity to build further large superstores, has resulted in a high level of volatility

within the grocery sector with the biggest four players in the domestic market (Tesco, ASDA, Sainsbury's, Morrison's) being involved in intense competition to retain or expand market shares. Most notable, recent changes in the market are the Morrison's acquisition of Safeway, recent acquisitions of Iceland and Somerfield by private equity and the subsequent disposal of some of the Somerfield portfolio.

3.15 With the introduction of the test of "need" and the sequential approach to site selection, new sites for food retailing have become increasingly scarce. In order to retain and enhance existing market shares, during the course of the Local Development Framework period, national multiple grocery retailers are likely to continue to adopt the following practices:

- Extend existing premises. There will be pressure for large out-of-centre stores to upgrade to more modern formats, including an increased element of non-food goods and associated services in order to create a one-stop-shop destination;
- Expand into niche markets such as the local convenience store sector. Most national convenience multiples now have a format which is associated either with petrol filling stations or local shopping facilities which are becoming increasingly common and successful; and
- Pursuit of mixed use (retail, residential, car parking, civic, leisure mixes) redevelopment schemes in town centre and edge of centre locations to reasonably high density on smaller footprint sites requiring multi level development.

3.16 There has been considerable expansion by the "deep discount" food retail sector in the UK over the last decade or so. It is likely that there will remain pressure for further such development over the forthcoming LDF period since the preferred mode of expansion by such operators (in order to ensure maximum operational efficiency) is to provide a number of identical small stores serving relatively small population catchment areas (relative to the major supermarket operators), rather than large format stores serving a wide area and seeking to meet all consumer needs under one roof.

- 3.17 Food discounters such as Aldi, Netto and Lidl have traditionally focused on the “*value for money*” food sector. These continental retailers are achieving improved sales growth and collectively now account for around 5% of the grocery market. Recently, discounters have been attempting to move up-market, improving their customer offer and enhancing shopping environments thereby seeking to change the perception that the weekly shop is not possible at a discount operation. However, the strength of competition and stated expansion plans of the main grocery retailers suggest that the continental discounters will remain peripheral to the UK grocery market.
- 3.18 Consumer choices are changing with regard to convenience shopping and health issues and healthy eating is rising up the consumer agenda. Retailers are responding by removing unhealthy and unnatural ingredients from products and fresh and organic produce is a growing sub-market. Similarly, the environment and ethical issues have become a greater concern for consumers with retailers keen to present their ‘green credentials’.

Comparison Goods Shopping

- 3.19 Competition in the comparison sector remains intense. This is reflected in a number of high profile retailers recently going into administration including Courts, Littlewoods, Alders, Dolcis, Kookai, Elvi, Music Zone, and Fopp.
- 3.20 The DIY sector experienced significant growth over the last few years, aided to a considerable extent by the proliferation of home and garden DIY television programmes and rising house prices. This sector whilst continuing to grow has slowed down in pace as consolidation has taken place with a move towards operators building larger format stores and differentiation in offer between heavy-side offer (Wickes) and light-side/interiors led provision offered by Focus and Homebase. More savvy DIYers are also utilising builders merchants for the project based purchases.
- 3.21 Department stores attract more affluent customers whose numbers are growing as a result of demographic change. With improved trading potential, the major store operators are keen to obtain additional sales space. However, stand alone department store developments are rarely viable; consequently, new store openings are restricted to shopping centre developments, where landlords/developers are prepared to contribute to the fit out costs or to pay a premium to the tenant in order to

secure an “*anchor*” trader that will enhance the profile and “*letability*” of a development.

- 3.22 The electrical goods sector has continued to grow expenditure share as consumers seek to keep pace with new technologies replacing existing household entertainment systems such as digital and widescreen televisions and recordable DVDs as well as personal gaming/entertainment machines and mobile communication technology etc. Personal computer demand has experienced steady growth through innovations in hardware/software and the availability of cheaper broadband access and greater bandwidth/download speeds. Whilst expenditure on the electrical sector would have traditionally been through retail stores, the fastest growth has been experienced through e-Retail channels.
- 3.23 There has been a discernable growth trend in the discount clothes sector with renewed consumer interest in value for money. Key beneficiaries of this trend have been discount retailers such as Matalan, Primark, TK Maxx and Peacocks, as well as supermarket based clothing lines such as George at ASDA, Cherokee and Florence and Fred at Tesco. The clothing sector is led by Marks & Spencer which has the largest market share of the sector (circa 16% in 2005) followed by Next which had a share approaching 10%. Overall, the top 5 clothing retailers (including M&S, Next, Arcadia Group, Matalan and BHS) had a market share of around 40% in 2005.

Home Shopping & Electronic Commerce

- 3.24 The home shopping sector includes a number of retailing channels including catalogue sales, direct retailing (which includes media adverts, mail/phone ordering and subscription services such as book and music clubs), TV shopping and internet shopping. The home shopping sector has been experiencing change in recent years with the growth in internet shopping replacing catalogue/mail order shopping which is in decline, this has caused a shift by some current catalogue retailers into e-retailing and running concurrent catalogue and internet site offer.
- 3.25 Recent Mintel estimates suggested that nationally internet/e-retail shopping constituted around 40% of sales within the home shopping sector and only recently had internet shopping overtake the more traditional home shopping channels.

- 3.26 The growth in e-retailing has been dramatic over the last few years albeit from a low base and there is no sign that the e-retail era is going to end particularly as there has been an increasing number of retailers operating transactional web-sites. New transactional web-sites have been launched by the likes of IKEA, Oasis, Superdrug, Waterstones and all of the Arcadia brands. Some retailers already selling on the internet have significantly improved their offering including Asda, Tesco, M&S, B&Q and Woolworths.
- 3.27 Electrical retailing is the largest e-retail sector, where price is a key determinant of choice in a relatively homogenous product/brand/manufacturer market place. The ease of price comparison on line has made the internet an ideal shopfront for retailers including Comet, Dixons Stores Group, non specialists such as Argos, Woolworths and grocery retailers (Tesco, Asda, Sainsbury).
- 3.28 Food retailing online is dominated by Tesco although rivals are making inroads having initially misjudged the potential of the internet for grocery retailing. Sainsbury and Asda have put investment into on line sales and Ocado (selling Waitrose products) continues to improve. However for Tesco, Sainsbury and Asda, the internet is equally a showcase for their non food retail offer and other financial services offerings. Although one of the longest established e-retail sectors, the food and grocery segment still has opportunity to grow as latest estimates suggest that it has yet to achieve 2.5% of the total food and grocery market.
- 3.29 Clothing and footwear retailing is becoming more accepted through internet sales, following the launch of Arcadia and Rubicon fashion brands on line and upgrading of both Debenhams and M&S's web selling offer. This has been further fuelled by the transference of traditional mail order catalogue offerings onto web site based selling and newer aspirational fashion retailers such as Boden, Lands End and ASOS fuelling the market.
- 3.30 Latest research by Datamonitor on e-retail suggest that one in three of the adult population is now an online shopper, with men out spending women online. The 35 to 44 age group is the most significant for shopper numbers for both, total spend and spend per head as a consequence of food and electrical shopping. Additionally, the over 55 spend more online than the 15-24 age group. On line shopping is also considered to be strongly biased toward more affluent social classifications.

- 3.31 Datamonitor, in assessing the market potential of the on line sector advise that:

“Over the next five years, the online sector is set to almost triple in volume – in 2011 we expect on line spending to reach £28.06m (equivalent to 8.9% of all retail spending), as the shopper medium becomes more integral to consumers’ lives. The growth in spending will be driven by consumers shopping online more often, rather than the result of further expansion of the on line shopping population which we expect to grow much more over the forecast period. Over the period the typical spend of an online shopper will grow from £606 to £1,056 per year with spending on clothing and footwear, DIY and gardening and food and grocery posting the fastest growth rates.”

Conclusions on National Trends

- 3.32 The national retail trends analysis illustrates how adaptive and innovative the retail sector has been in response to changing market conditions and how quickly new formats are introduced to capitalise on opportunities. The retail market generally is entering a period of significant change, where the potential of the internet and e-Retailing will be realised, where if unchecked, the larger centres will become more dominant at the expense of smaller town centres and consumers in the face of the ‘credit crunch’ will be reviewing their spending.
- 3.33 These macro level changes and trends will all have implications for shopping within Rother’s main town centres and it is clear that as retailing is a dynamic sector, this study will need to be reviewed and updated on a regular basis in order to reflect macro as well as micro changes.

4 SUB REGIONAL CONTEXT

- 4.1 This section describes the role and function of Rother's main town centres in the wider regional network of centres. The household survey identifies that the larger centres of Eastbourne, Hastings and Tunbridge Wells attract shopping visits from across Rother District. An overview of the status, scale and location of these competing shopping destinations and other sub-regional status centres is provided in Table 4.1 below. An analysis of the results of the household survey is provided in **Appendix 3**.

Table 4.1 Competing Centres, Sub Regional Context				
Centre	The South East Plan Designation	Floorspace sq m gross (2004)*	Miles from Bexhill**	Drive time from Bexhill (mins)**
Bexhill	-	59,200	-	-
Battle	-	11,000	7.87	18
Rye	-	19,000	17.47	24
Ashford	Primary Regional	93,700	37.24	53
Eastbourne	Primary Regional	186,400	12.62	22
Folkestone	Secondary Regional	84,100	40.80	58
Hastings	Secondary Regional	109,800	5.36	7
Tunbridge Wells	Primary Regional	175,700	33.17	48
<i>*Source: Communities and Local Government, 2004, State of the Cities Database</i>				
<i>**Source: The Automobile Association Limited, 2007, Route Planner</i>				

- 4.2 The shopping rankings produced by DTZ on behalf of the South East England Regional Assembly in the production of the South East Plan have been used to show the relative strengths of the competing sub regional centres, and are provided in Table 4.2 below. The ranking was published within Technical Note 2 – Town Centres and was used to inform the strategic network of town centres within the South East Plan. The ranking used a variety of performance indicators including Management Horizon's Shopping Index and floorspace and outlet counts from Experian Goad in order to identify the main town centres within the South East Region. Overall ten key indicators were utilised in compiling the Technical Note on Town Centres. The work identified the 50 main centres within the South East Region. The top ranked 23 centres were classified Primary Regional centres and the rest (27) were classified as Secondary Regional Centres:

Table 4.2 South East Plan Centre Ranking	
Centres	2006 Ranking
Bexhill	Not Ranked
Battle	Not Ranked
Rye	Not Ranked
Ashford	33 rd
Eastbourne	17 th
Folkestone	40 th
Hastings	35 th
Tunbridge Wells	15 th
<i>Source: South East Regional Assembly Technical Note 2 – Town Centres, March 2006</i>	

4.3 The changes in Prime Zone A retail rental levels in the main competing shopping centres between 1999 and 2007 are provided in Table 4.3 below. Tunbridge Wells achieved the highest rent followed by, Hastings and Eastbourne, then Ashford, and Folkestone. There is no published data for either Battle or Rye Town Centres.

4.4 Prime retail rents in Bexhill have increased since 1999 by £54 per sq m, which follows a decrease in retail rents in 2002/2003 (that is, retail rents have increase by £108 per sq m since 2003). They are significantly behind the rents achieved in the higher ordered centres

Table 4.3 Comparison of Prime Retail Rents (£ per sq m)									
Centre	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Bexhill	376.7	376.7	376.7	322.9	322.9	376.7	430.5	430.5	430.5
Battle	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rye	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ashford	753.5	753.5	753.5	753.5	807.3	807.3	807.3	807.3	861.1
Eastbourne	968.7	1022.6	968.7	1022.6	1022.6	1076.4	1184	1184	1184
Folkestone	592	592	538.2	592	592	645.8	645.8	753.5	753.5
Hastings	914.9	914.9	861.1	914.9	914.9	914.9	1022.6	1130.2	1184
Tunbridge Wells	1237.8	1237.8	1237.8	1237.8	1291.7	1291.7	1237.8	1506.9	1614.6
<i>Source: Focus, 2007, Town Report</i>									

4.5 A comparison of prime retail yields in Bexhill to the main competing centres between 2001 and 2007 is provided in Table 4.4 below. Bexhill's retail yield has remained relatively constant over the past seven years, with a marginal improvement in 2007. In comparison to the main competing centres listed within the table, the yields in Bexhill are higher. This is to be expected as the competing main centres with lower

yields provide greater retail floorspace and will be more attractive investment propositions than Bexhill. Tunbridge Wells exhibits the strongest yield.

Table 4.4 Comparison of Prime Retail Yields							
Centre	April 2001 (%)	April 2002 (%)	April 2003 (%)	July 2004 (%)	July 2005 (%)	July 2006 (%)	July 2007 (%)
Bexhill	9.5	9.5	9.5	9.5	9.5	9.5	9
Battle	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rye	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ashford	7.5	7.5	7.5	6.5	6.5	5.5	5.25
Eastbourne	6	6	6	6	6.5	6.5	6
Folkestone	7.75	7.75	7.75	7	7	6.25	6
Hastings - Priors Meadows	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5
Tunbridge Wells	5.5	5.5	5.75	5.5	5.5	5.5	4.75

Source: Valuation Office Agency, July 2007, Property Market Report: Shopping Centre Yields

Ashford

- 4.6 Ashford is designated as a Primary Regional Centre in the South East Plan and is located in the Borough of Ashford, in Kent. The town is situated north east of Rother District and provides key services for a wide catchment. The East Kent and Ashford Sub Region is a key gateway to mainland Europe, performing a nationally significant role.
- 4.7 Ashford has been identified within the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's Sustainable Communities Plan as a growth area with potential for redevelopment of its town centre. County Square, the main shopping centre in Ashford, is currently under redevelopment (expansion by twice its size) and is expected to be completed in the first half of 2008. In addition, Ashford also has an out-of-centre Factory Outlet shopping centre and is served by a number of retail warehousing developments.
- 4.8 The household survey undertaken for this Assessment indicates that Ashford town centre and the Outlet Centre are not a particularly significant attraction for residents in Rother District for comparison goods shopping.

Eastbourne

- 4.9 Eastbourne is designated as a Primary Regional Centre in the South East Plan and is located in the Borough of Eastbourne, in East Sussex. The town is situated south west of the Rother District.
- 4.10 Retailing in Eastbourne town centre is focused along Terminus Road and upon the Arndale Centre a covered shopping centre anchored by M&S and BHS. There is a very strong comparison goods shopping offer within the town centre including a Debenhams department store and a large number of other national multiple retailers.
- 4.11 Eastbourne Borough Council is supporting a major extension to Eastbourne's Arndale Centre and in 2005 published the Town Centre Regeneration Brief which outlined this as a major regeneration project. The Planning/Regeneration Brief refers to a preferred first phase of approximately 24,000 sq m gross floorspace anticipated for completion in 2011-2012, with a further phase of circa. 17,000 sq m gross floorspace for completion in about 2016. The planning application for phase one of the regeneration of the town centre is anticipated to be submitted in early 2008.
- 4.12 A planning application for the mixed use redevelopment of the Co-op Department Store at Terminus Road, Eastbourne town centre has recently been refused consent because of the unacceptability of its 'housing' content. The planning application is now at Appeal.
- 4.13 The Langney Shopping Centre which is a district centre located approximately 3 miles north east of Eastbourne town centre has planning consent for an extension of approximately 7,500sqm. The shopping centre is anchored by Tesco.
- 4.14 Planning consent has recently been granted for a new out-of-centre Boots store at the Sovereign Retail Park on the eastern out skirts of Eastbourne approximately 3 miles from the town centre. Boots will be occupying the former Dreams bedstore unit and works on the conversion have commenced.
- 4.15 The household survey of Rother residents indicates that Eastbourne town centre does attract a reasonable proportion of residents within the Rother District for comparison goods shopping. That draw is greatest from the two Bexhill Zones and is

particularly strong for clothing and footwear, china, glass and home textiles, furniture and carpets and recreation and leisure goods.

Tunbridge Wells

- 4.16 Tunbridge Wells is designated as a Primary Regional Centre in the South East Plan and is located in Tunbridge Wells Borough, in Kent. The town is situated north of Rother District.
- 4.17 Tunbridge Wells town centre's shopping provision is extensive and primarily focused upon the Royal Victoria Place Shopping Centre, Caverley Road, Camden Road and Grosvenor Road. There are extensive shopping facilities within the town including two department store (Fenwicks and Hoopers) and a number of national multiple retailers. Outside the town centre there is a concentration of retail warehousing located at the Longfield Road Retail Park.
- 4.18 Revitalisation plans for Tunbridge Wells town centre are currently being prepared and a developer has been chosen by the Council to create a town centre master plan.
- 4.19 The household survey undertaken for this Assessment indicates that Tunbridge Wells draws some custom from Rother District, particularly from the North West Rother Zone and the Battle Zone. Typically this is for clothing and footwear and recreation and leisure goods. But the Longfield Retail Park does attract visits from the District for more bulky comparison goods items.

Folkestone

- 4.20 Folkestone is designated as a Secondary Regional Centre in the South East Plan, and is located in Kent. The town is situated some distance north east of the Rother District.
- 4.21 The household survey results did not indicate that Rother's residents visit Folkestone for any of their convenience or comparison shopping needs.

Hastings

- 4.22 Hastings is designated as a Secondary Regional Centre in the South East Plan and is located in the Borough of Hastings, in East Sussex. The town is enveloped by Rother District.
- 4.23 Hastings town centres mainstream retailing is focused upon the Priory Meadow Shopping Centre which is anchored by M&S and BHS. Hastings Old Town is the historic core of Hastings and has a number of specialist and independent retailers.
- 4.24 The only notable change to shopping provision serving Hastings is a planning permission for the replacement of the existing Tesco store at Churchwood Drive. The permission allows a new store of 10,996 sq m gross, resulting in an increase of 1,783 sq m gross on the existing store. The new store would have a sales area of 7,512 sq m net comprising 3,364 sq m net convenience floorspace, and 2,834 sq m net comparison floorspace. The scheme also provides new undercroft car parking, new access arrangements, new petrol station and a new public transport interchange. The development is expected to commence in early 2008.
- 4.25 The results of the household survey indicate that Hastings town centre attracts a significant proportion of residents within the Rother District for comparison goods shopping. The household survey also indicated that a significant number of people located within the Battle (50%), Rye (19.1%) and Westfield, Guestling, Fairlight (35.3%) Zones undertake their main food shopping at the Sainsbury at John Macadam Way in Hastings. The Tesco store at Churchwood Drive, Hastings is also another popular destination for main food shopping for residents within the North West Rother and Battle Zones, while the Morrison at Queens Road, Hastings is popular to residents within the Westfield, Guestling, Fairlight Zone.

Conclusions on Sub-Regional Context

- 4.26 Rother Districts main town centres are subject to the attraction and influence of shopping provision within the higher order centres which surround the District. The centres with the greatest attraction for Rother's residents are Hastings, Eastbourne and Tunbridge Wells.



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- 4.27 Planned expansion in Eastbourne includes the potential extension to the Arndale Centre in the town centre and an expansion of the retail offer at the Langney Shopping Centre. These developments coming forward will increase Eastbourne's relative attraction.
- 4.28 Hastings town centre has undergone recent upgrading and improvement which will have boosted its attraction and the replacement of the Tesco at Church Wood Drive with a large store will have an impact upon existing food shopping patterns and may potentially attract some more custom away from food shopping facilities in Rother District.
- 4.29 There is potential also for further retail expansion and improvement of Tunbridge Wells during the study period and this too would prove attractive to some of Rother Districts residents, particularly in the northern part of Rother District.
- 4.30 This brief analysis shows that retail hierarchies are dynamic and centres are competing continually with each other for market share. Changes and improvements to town centres effect the market shares and lead to rebalancing of the retail system. Within this context, it is important that Rother's main town centres evolve and where appropriate expand in order to remain competitive.

5 ROTHER DISTRICTS QUALITATIVE SHOPPING PROVISION

Introduction

- 5.1 In this section we briefly review the qualitative shopping provision within Rother's main town centres and the Ravenside Retail Park. More detailed analysis of Bexhill, Battle and Rye town centres is provided by way of town centre health checks at **Appendix 4**.

Bexhill Town Centre

- 5.2 Bexhill town centre is the largest of Rother's retail centres and is comprised of approximately 59,200 sq m of retail floorspace (*Communities and Local Government, 2004, State of the Cities Database*).
- 5.3 Experian Goad's Town Centre Report (August 2006) for Bexhill town centre shows the retail composition of the Centre as approximately 12% convenience shopping, 48% comparison shopping, 28% service uses, and 11% vacant premises. More detail on the retail composition for Bexhill town centre is provided in **Appendix 4**. It is noteworthy from the Goad Centre Report analysis in the Appendix that when compared to national average composition, in floorspace terms both convenience and comparison goods provision in Bexhill is below the national average rate by 30% and 7% respectively.
- 5.4 Qualitatively, Bexhill has a distinctive local identity and individuality with a high proportion of smaller independent and specialist retailers and a relatively modest number of national multiple retailers.
- 5.5 The floorspace provision within the town centre is dominated by a large number of smaller units and floorspace provision of this nature suits local independent traders and retail service providers, whereas national multiples typically seek larger units to accommodate their trading formats.
- 5.6 National comparison goods traders in Bexhill town centre include Woolworths, Boots, New Look, M & Co, W H Smith, Clintons Cards and Sussex Stationers. This level of multiple trader representation is considered low for a centre of Bexhill's size and none of these retailers are considered key attractors or motivators of shopping trips;

instead they generally cater for every day shopping. Whilst the town centre has a number of quality independents which provide a local distinctiveness, shopper attraction to a town is generally motivated by national multiple traders and a range and depth of comparative shopping offer.

- 5.7 The household survey undertaken as part of this Assessment showed that of those respondent who regularly used Bexhill town centre, over a quarter would like the town to have a wider range of non food retailers and 20% indicated that more national multiples would increase the attraction of the town centre.
- 5.8 Analysis of the household survey results show that Bexhill town centres market share for all comparison goods shopping is 16% across the whole study area. Within the home zones, 'Bexhill East' retains around 36% of its trade and in 'Bexhill West' trade retention is 28%. The two Bexhill zones combined have a retention level of 31%. These are relatively low levels of retention for what is an area focused primarily upon Bexhill's urban area. There is trade out flow to Eastbourne and Hastings, but more significant is the trade attraction of the out-of-centre Ravenside Retail Park which is within the Bexhill East Zone.
- 5.9 Convenience goods shopping provision within Bexhill is focused upon Sainsbury at Buckhurst Place. This store has a sales area of around 1,490 sqm sales, and opened in 1976. Whilst the store is used for main food shopping, it is considered to fall short of customer expectations of a modern supermarket/superstore in terms of range of goods, in store services, layout and overall store size. Other opportunities for convenience goods shopping include small Somerfield and Co-Op stores which provide day to day and top up convenience goods. Bexhill town centre has also retained a number of traditional independent convenience goods traders.
- 5.10 In terms of food shopping visits, the Sainsbury in the town centre attracts around 34% of main food shopping visits within the Bexhill Zones. With a greater proportion of residents in these Zones preferring Tesco at Ravenside Retail Park. Improved main food shopping offer within Bexhill town centre should encourage greater convenience trade retention.
- 5.11 Qualitatively, Bexhill town centre has scope to improve both its convenience and comparison goods retail offer in order to more fully satisfy local residents shopping needs, to improve upon the current market share and stem trade leakage to

Eastbourne and Hastings. This will be important in capturing trade, given the planned growth for Bexhill's population over the next 10 years.

Rye Town Centre

- 5.12 Rye is an attractive and historically important centre. The town is positioned below Bexhill in the retail hierarchy and is relatively isolated from other shopping locations. The town centre is comprised of approximately 19,000 sq m of retail floorspace (*Communities and Local Government, 2004, State of the Cities Database*).
- 5.13 Experian Goad's Town Centre Report (August 2006) for Rye shows the retail composition of the town centre as approximately 7% convenience shopping units, 56% comparison shopping units, 28% service units, and 8% vacant units. More detail on the retail composition for Rye town centre is provided in **Appendix 4**. The Goad Centre Report analysis show that there is a significantly lower proportion of convenience goods floorspace in Rye town centre (9%) compared to the national average of 17%, this is approximately 30% below the national composition rate.
- 5.14 Qualitatively Rye town centre has a distinct and predominate tourist orientation in its comparison goods shopping offer and is characterised by local independent retailers selling gifts, crafts, jewellery, antiques and boutique goods. Opportunities for undertaking everyday comparison goods shopping and purchasing mainstream clothing, electrical and household goods within Rye town centre are relatively limited. The national multiple comparison goods traders in Rye are Boots, Woolworths and Edinburgh Woollen Mill.
- 5.15 As a consequence of the limited everyday comparison goods shopping opportunities residents in Rye are travelling some distance to shop for these goods, in particular at Hastings but also Ashford, Tunbridge Wells, Tenterden and the Ravenside Retail Park.
- 5.16 Convenience shopping provision in Rye town centre is focused upon the Budgens/Jempson store which has an existing sales area of 805 sqm and planning permission for an extension which will when implemented provide a store of 1,471 sqm sales. The existing store is relatively small and whilst it holds a reasonable range of goods, it does not fully provide Rye residents with a comprehensive main food shop. Other convenience shopping opportunities are provided by traditional

local independents and the weekly farmers market. These facilities bolster Rye's convenience shopping provision and through visiting a number of stores a weekly food shop could be undertaken. However the convenience of shopping at a single large foodstore where a bulk main food shop can be undertaken is attracting Rye's residents away from the town centre.

- 5.17 The survey results show that Rye town centre (Budgens/Jempson and local stores) retains only 10.5% of main food shopping trips within the Rye zone, the Jempsons store to the north of Rye at Peasmarsh attracts around 19% of visitors and the remaining 70% is leaking to larger stores including Sainsbury, St Leonards; Tesco, St Leonards; Tesco, Ashford; Tesco, Tenterden; and Waitrose, Tenterden.
- 5.18 Responses by the Rye zones residents to qualitative questions posed in the household survey indicated that 43% of respondents were happy with Rye town centre as it exists, 17% would like enhanced food shopping and 10.5% would like improvements to non food shopping opportunities.
- 5.19 Overall, in qualitative terms we consider there is scope for improvement in Rye town centres convenience and comparison goods retail offer. However this needs to be carefully assessed in the context of conservation and historical importance.

Battle Town Centre

- 5.20 Battle is an attractive and historic town. The town is the smallest of Rother's main retail centres and is comprised of 11,000 sq m of retail floorspace (*Communities and Local Government, 2004, State of the Cities Database*).
- 5.21 Experian Goad's Town Centre Report (August 2006) for Battle shows the retail composition of the town centre as approximately 12% convenience, 48% comparison, 36% service and 2% vacant. More detail on the retail composition for Battle town centre is provided in **Appendix 4**. In composition terms, compared to the national average, Battle town centre has above average convenience floorspace, and below average comparison floorspace
- 5.22 While the town centre is relatively small, it offers a good balance of uses comprising convenience and comparison goods shopping and services. Comparison goods floorspace occupies around 44% of the total floorspace within the town centre and is dominated by local independent retailers. Convenience shopping in the town centre

is primarily provided by Budgens/Jempsons and Co-Op and occupies some 19% of the total floorspace in the town centre. Reflective of the town's tourist nature, there is a particularly high proportion of service uses.

- 5.23 Qualitatively, like Rye, Battle town centre has a distinct niche retailer and tourist orientated comparison goods shopping offer, characterised by local independent retailers. National and regional multiples represented in Battle include Boots and Steamer Trading (kitchenware), the remainder of the provision is provided by quality independent traders. The town centre has limited mainstream clothing, electrical and household goods provision. However for a centre of its size and given Battle's close proximity with Hastings, Battle's residents, as evidenced by the household survey results use Hastings predominantly to shop for these goods. Tunbridge Wells also attracts a reasonable proportion of comparison shopping visits from Battle's residents.
- 5.24 Convenience goods shopping in Battle town centre is provided by a Budgens/Jempson supermarket with a sales area of 650 sqm and a small Co-Op supermarket of 190 sqm sales. This provision is bolstered by traditional convenience sector stores. Whilst no individual store can satisfy a main weekly food shop, in combination there is a good range of convenience goods available in Battle, although the results of the household survey indicate that Battle town centre is little used for main food shopping, with residents choosing to travel to the large food stores in St Leonards/Hastings to satisfy their bulk main food shopping.
- 5.25 Qualitatively there is scope for Battle town centres retail provision to be improved, but this needs to be relative to the scale of the centre, its constrained historic nature and its juxtaposition with Hastings.

Ravenside Retail Park

- 5.26 Ravenside Retail Park is located within Rother District and lies between Bexhill and Hastings. There is a substantial quantum of retail and leisure floorspace at Ravenside and this is in the form of an out-of-centre retail park.
- 5.27 The retail park is occupied by Boots, Next, Currys, PC World, B & Q, Comet, Wickes, Halfords and Tesco. In addition there are two fast food restaurants, a bowling alley, leisure pool and a large surface level car park.

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- 5.28 The household survey indicates that the Tesco store at Ravenside Retail Park is a popular main food and top-up shopping destination for residents within the Bexhill East and Bexhill West Zones with a combined attraction within those zones of around 40%. The retail park is also a popular destination for residents within the study area as a whole for comparison goods shopping. Ravenside Retail Park's proximity with Hastings means that the Park also attracts trade from residents living within Hastings Borough.

6 ROTHER DISTRICTS QUANTITATIVE RETAIL CAPACITY

Introduction

- 6.1 In this section we consider the quantitative need for additional floorspace in Rother District up to 2026.
- 6.2 The detailed retail capacity calculations are provided within **Appendix 5**. The methodology, data inputs and results of the analysis are explained and summarised below.
- 6.3 The quantitative retail need work has considered the following matters:
- Consumer retail expenditure per head and the total available retail expenditure within the defined study area (see **Map 1**).
 - Analysis of the shopping market shares claimed by centres and facilities within the District (and outside the District) based upon the household survey shopping patterns (2007). (**Appendices 2 and 3**).
 - An estimate of available consumer expenditure on convenience and comparison goods and the growth in expenditure up to 2026 (and for the years 2011, 2016, 2021) within the study area.
 - Quantification of the convenience and comparison goods expenditure which is claimed by town centres and retail facilities within Rother District.
 - A comparison between the expenditure claimed by centres and facilities within the District and the estimated 'benchmark' turnover of these facilities.
 - The retail capacity (quantitative need) results are expressed as both expenditure surplus and floorspace requirements for additional convenience and comparison goods shopping.
- 6.4 The retail floorspace capacity forecasts within the study are provided on the basis of information and evidence available to us. The data adopted and assumptions made do, we consider, provide a robust basis for the preparation of medium term forecasting. Whilst the Development Plan Documents which the Council are currently preparing have an end date of 2026 and our capacity forecast run to this year, we consider that the quantitative retail floorspace need estimates for 2021 and in particular 2026 should be regarded as providing only a very broad indication of

potential growth and floorspace need. In accordance with best practice and to ensure that the Council have accurate and robust estimates and projections upon which to make policy and development decisions, we consider that the calculations should be monitored and updated periodically over the Local Development Framework period.

- 6.5 The Study Brief also requires a review of the need for additional floorspace to satisfy the requirements of the service trade sectors over the Study period. Service traders are not usually considered in terms of their turnover, market share and trading density so conventional capacity analysis for this sector has not been undertaken. Service trades tend to be demand led and operators are generally attracted in proportionate terms to town centres with good levels of footfall and shopper attraction.
- 6.6 To provide the Council with an understanding of the level of future floorspace provision that is likely to be required by the retail service sector we have analysed the existing proportions of service traders within Bexhill, Battle and Rye town centres relative to existing convenience and comparison shopping provision. These calculated proportions are then applied to the identified convenience and comparison goods floorspace requirements in each of the town centres to establish a broad estimate for future service trade floorspace. The service trade sector analysis is provided in **Appendix 6**.

Data Inputs

Study Area & Zones

- 6.7 In preparing this quantitative retail need assessment for Rother District Council's administrative area we have adopted a Study Area which broadly reflects the District geography but is based upon postcode sectors which are not coterminous with the District boundary. The Study Area has been divided into six Study Zones.

Table 6.1 Rother Study Zones	
Bexhill East	Postcode Sectors: TN40_1, TN40_2
Bexhill West	Postcode Sectors: TN39_3, TN39_4, TN39_5, TN33_9
North West Rother	Postcode Sectors: TN5_7, TN19_7
Battle	Postcode Sectors: TN32_5, TN33_0
Rye	Postcode Sectors: TN31_6, TN31_7, TN36_4
Westfield, Guestling, Fairlight	Postcode Sectors: TN35_4

- 6.8 The Study Area and Zones are shown on **Map 1**, this map also shows the District boundary.

Population

- 6.9 The population of the Study zones and Study area for 2001 from the 2001 census is set out in Table 1, **Appendix 5**. Forecast population for 2006, 2007, 2011, 2016, 2021 and 2026 is also set out in Table 1. These population forecasts have been obtained from East Sussex County Council (ESiF) and are policy based projections from 2001 to 2026 for Rother District. The population growth within the District has been apportioned to the Study Zones based upon Council estimates of where the growth is forecast to take place. The percentage growth shares for each of the study zones are:

Bexhill East	24%
Bexhill West	24%
North West Rother	15%
Battle	14%
Rye	9%
West/Guest/Fair	15%

Consumer Spending Estimates

- 6.10 The consumer expenditure per head within the Study Area on convenience goods and comparison goods is provided in Tables 2 and 12 at **Appendix 5** respectively. The consumer expenditure per head data is for 2006 in a 2006 price base.

Adjustment for Special Forms of Trading (SFT)

- 6.11 Internet shopping and spending in non retail stores such as at markets, vending machines, mail order and party plan is commonly excluded from consumer spending per head estimates when undertaking retail studies. Experian and Mapinfo estimates of SFT vary greatly and other commentators on the potential growth of internet sales have widely differing views. Given this lack of consensus, rather than make deductions for SFT, the results of the household survey have been used to consider/exclude SFT.

- 6.12 The household survey recorded residents use of the internet, mail order and markets for both convenience and comparison goods. This provides a good up to date estimate of locally based SFT and has the advantage of being directly reflective the Study Area's shopping habits rather than a national figure which would otherwise have been applied.
- 6.13 The survey rates for SFT are held constant over the assessment period.

Consumer Expenditure Growth

- 6.14 The growth in expenditure over the assessment period up to 2026 has been based upon projections provided by Experian Business Strategies. The projected growth per annum for convenience goods adopted is 0.8% and for comparison goods the rate is 3.5% per annum. These growth rates are the defined Experian Business Strategies Consensus Forecasts for growth in UK spending per head between 2007 to 2016. For context, the comparison goods spending growth forecast of 3.5% which we adopt is below all of the trend based (ultra-long, long and medium) projections set out by Experian. However for a study such as this, and given the longer Study period, the more cautious growth forecasts is considered appropriate.
- 6.15 The product of Study Area population and expenditure per head provides an estimate of total consumer expenditure within the Study Area. The available expenditure for 2006, 2007, 2011, 2016, 2021 and 2026 is calculated within Table 3 (convenience goods) and Table 13 A to H (comparison goods) (**Appendix 5**).

Market Share Data

- 6.16 The capacity work is underwritten by the results of a household telephone interview survey conducted during October/November 2007 by Allegra Strategies Ltd an independent market research company. The survey established inter-alia, the locations which residents within the Study Area visited to undertake shopping for various broad categories of goods. These categories were:
- Main food shopping
 - To-up (day to day) convenience shopping
 - Clothing and footwear

- Chemist and Personal Care
- Books, Stationery Cards DVD's CD's etc
- Recreation and Leisure Goods
- China, Glass and Home Textiles
- Household Appliances
- Audio Visual Equipment
- Furniture, Furnishings & Carpets
- DIY, Decorating and Gardening

6.17 The full results of the household survey are reproduced as **Appendix 2** and details of shopping patterns are described in **Appendix 3**.

6.18 Table 4, **Appendix 5** sets out the main food shopping patterns informed by the household survey indicating a percentage market share of each individual store/centre/location drawn from the Study Area. Table 6, **Appendix 5** provides the percentage market share patterns for top-up food shopping.

6.19 Tables 12, A to I at **Appendix 5** provides the comparison goods market shares of the centres/locations informed by the shopping patterns revealed in the household survey. Responses 'varies', 'don't know' and 'don't buy' have subsequently been removed by Allegra Strategies Ltd and the survey results rebased. This adjustment has been made as such responses do not enable all consumer expenditure to be allocated to retail centres or locations.

Retail Capacity Methodology

6.20 Having established the convenience and comparison market shares of each of the retail locations, the available expenditure within the Study Area for each of the study years is distributed to centres/facilities on the basis of these market shares. This provides the implied turnover of these centres/locations. These shares are based upon the 2007 shopping patterns exhibited in the household telephone survey and are applied to the subsequent study years without making any adjustment to take account of future change to any of the existing market share stores/centres/locations attraction and consequent expenditure share. As centres improve and expand or decline and stores within them change, their attraction levels will change. Therefore these fixed shopping patterns (based on the 2007 survey results) will require review

in later years and a new household survey should be commissioned when updating this assessment.

- 6.21 The expenditure attracted to each centre/location is provided within Tables 5 and 7 for convenience shopping and Table 15 comparison shopping (**Appendix 5**). A summary of the turnover of facilities with the District is provided within Table 8 (implied convenience goods turnovers) and Table 16 (**Appendix 5**) (implied comparison goods turnovers).
- 6.22 Capacity/need for additional convenience and comparison floorspace is reviewed within Table 10 (convenience capacity) and Table 18 (comparison capacity) (**Appendix 5**). These tables compare the implied turnovers of facilities with the 'benchmark' turnovers of the same.
- 6.23 The benchmark turnovers are based upon published sales density figures for national multiple retailers with some adjustments to reflect sales mix and local independent traders within the study centres.
- 6.24 When considering the capacity calculations, a surplus of consumer expenditure points to a need for additional floorspace whilst a deficit of consumer expenditure (ie implied turnover is below benchmark turnover) suggests that either existing facilities are performing poorly or that there is too much retail floorspace, in either circumstance there is no quantitative need for additional floorspace.

Convenience Goods Capacity

- 6.25 Consumer expenditure per head on convenience goods within the Study Area in 2006 varied between £1,621 per head (Bexhill East Zone) and £1,832 per head (Rye Zone) (Table 2, **Appendix 5**). The overall Study Area expenditure per head was £1,735. The local Study Area expenditure level for convenience goods in 2006 is above the UK average of £1,649 per head by a margin of 5.2%.
- 6.26 The growth in convenience expenditure per head is projected to be +0.8% per annum (Experian Retail Planner Briefing Note 5.1, November 2007). The resultant expenditure per head values for the Study Area Zones are set out in Table 2 **Appendix 5**. The convenience goods expenditure per head across the whole survey area for the study years is set out in the table below:

Table 6.2 Convenience Expenditure Per Head (Study Area Total)	
Year	Expenditure Per Head
2006	£1,735
2007	£1,749
2011	£1,805
2016	£1,879
2021	£1,955
2026	£2,034
<i>Source: GLH Retail Capacity Table 2, Appendix 5</i>	

6.27 The household survey questioned where main food and top-up shopping was being undertaken to reflect the differing facilities used for larger food shopping trips and more local daily needs shopping. The split between main food shopping and top-up shopping has been assumed as 70% main, 30% top-up. The main food:top up food shopping/spending ratio varies dependent upon the potential for each type of shopping. In a relatively rural area such as Rother District where there is a number of smaller village locations where top-up shopping will be undertaken, 30% top up shopping it is considered an appropriate proportion.

6.28 The percentages of main and top up spend have been applied to the total convenience expenditure per head to derive consumers annual spending per head on main food shopping and top-up shopping. The resultant spending per head in the 6 Study Zones and whole Study Area is set out in Table 2, **Appendix 5**. For example the expenditure per head in the Study Area for main and top-up convenience goods shopping is:-

Table 6.3 Rother Study Zone Convenience Expenditure Per Head (Main Food & Top Up)						
	2006	2007	2011	2016	2021	2026
Main	£1,214	£1,224	£1,264	£1,315	£1,368	£1,424
Top-Up	£520	£525	£542	£564	£586	£610
<i>Source: GLH Retail Capacity Table 2, Appendix 5</i>						

6.29 Table 3, **Appendix 5** provides the estimated convenience goods expenditure available within the Study Zones for all convenience goods shopping, main food shopping and top-up shopping. These estimates are the product of population (Table 1, **Appendix 5**) and expenditure per head (Table 2, **Appendix 5**).

6.30 The Study Area exhibits the following convenience goods expenditure potential.

Table 6.4 Convenience Goods Expenditure Potential (Generated)						
	2006	2007	2011	2016	2021	2026
Main	£109.43m	£110.69m	£115.87m	£122.26m	£128.75m	£135.85m
Top-Up	£46.90m	£47.44m	£49.66m	£52.40m	£55.18m	£58.22m
Total	£156.33m	£158.13m	£165.53m	£174.65m	£183.92m	£194.07m

Source: GLH Retail Capacity Table 3, Appendix 5

6.31 The combination of population growth and growth in convenience goods expenditure provides a reasonable level of convenience goods expenditure growth over the Study period to 2021. The potential convenience goods expenditure growth is set out in the table below:

Table 6.5 Convenience Goods Expenditure Growth to 2026				
	2006 - 2011	2006 - 2016	2011 - 2021	20011 - 2026
Main	£6.44m	£12.82m	£19.31m	£26.42m
Top-Up	£2.76m	£5.50m	£8.28m	£11.32m
Total Growth	£9.20m	£18.32m	£27.59m	£37.74m

6.32 The market shares of convenience stores and facilities are provided within Tables 4 and 6, **Appendix 5** for main food shopping and top-up convenience shopping respectively. These market shares have been directly informed by the results of the 2007 household survey. In the case of main food shopping patterns, the household survey questioned which main stores respondents used in two separate questions, firstly the store they usually use and then any other store they regularly use for main food shopping. In analysing the responses weight has been applied to reflect the usual store (75%) and other stores (25%). The composite main food market shares are set out in Table 4C **Appendix 5**.

6.33 Tesco at Ravenside Retail Park is the most popular main food shopping destination for respondents in the Study Area, followed by Sainsbury, Bexhill. The overall main food shopping trade retention by facilities within Rother District is 50.9% across the whole Study Area. In Bexhill East and West zones the main food retention by shopping facilities in Rother District is 90% and 76% respectively. This trade retention is predominately due to dominance of Tesco Ravenside and Sainsbury, Bexhill. In contrast the Battle and Rye Study Zones achieve around 21% and 30% trade retention respectively. In Battle the Budgens store accounts for half of the

zones trade retention, whilst in Rye, the Budgens/Jempson store in the town centre claims one third (10%) of the retained spending whilst Jempsons at Peamarsh claims 18% of visits.

- 6.34 Stores outside the District which have a draw upon the Study Areas main food shopping potential include Sainsbury, St Leonards; Tesco, St Leonards; Morrisons, Hastings; and Asda, (Crumbles) Eastbourne.
- 6.35 Top-up convenience goods shopping tends to be undertaken on a more local basis and no single store or location is overly dominant. Top-up food shopping retention by the District's facilities from the Study Area is 71%.
- 6.36 The market shares of stores and locations set out in Tables 4 and 6, **Appendix 5** are then used to model convenience goods expenditure flows to stores and centres both within and beyond the Study Area. These results are provided within Tables 5 and 7, **Appendix 5** for main food and top-up shopping respectively. As already stated these shopping patterns and consequent expenditure shares are fixed at the date of the household survey (2007) and as the relative attractions of retail facilities both within and outside the Study Area changes over time these market shares will change. Therefore it will be necessary to conduct a further household survey when this study is updated.
- 6.37 The table below provides a summary of the convenience trade retention by Rother Districts facilities and the extent of convenience goods trade leakage to facilities outside the District.

6.38

Table 6.6 Convenience Goods Trade Retention/Trade Leakage	
Centre	% Share from Study Area
Bexhill Town Centre	20.5%
Battle Town Centre	3.1%
Rye Town Centre	3.8%
Sidley District Centre	2.9%
Little Common District Centre	2.3%
Tesco, Ravenside Retail Park (O-O-C)	14.1%
Others in Rother District	11.3%
Total Convenience Goods Trade Retention	58.0%
Sainsbury, St Leonards	10.4%
Tesco, St Leonards	5.5%
Morrisons, Hastings	3.6%
Asda, Eastbourne (Crumbles)	2.4%
Internet/Mail Order	1.0%
Others	19.1%
Total Convenience Goods Leakage	42.0%
<i>Notes: Derived from Table 8, Appendix 5</i>	

6.39 Table 8, **Appendix 5** combines the main food and top-up implied turnovers from Tables 5 and 7 to provide estimates of implied turnover of the stores/facilities within the District in 2007. Also included within Table 8 is an estimate of the percentage and turnover inflow attracted to Rother District's food shopping facilities from outside the Study Area. The inflow has been informed by the Hastings Retail Study (prepared by Knight Frank for Hastings Borough Council) and our own estimates of likely tourist visitor/spending.

6.40 Table 9, **Appendix 5** sets out the implied convenience goods turnovers of the convenience stores/facilities in 2011, 2016, 2021 and 2026. This is calculated by applying 2007 market shares for main food and top-up shopping whilst also adding a fixed share for expenditure inflow from outside the Study Area to the generated convenience goods expenditure for each of the Study years (Table 3, **Appendix 5**).

6.41 An estimate of the benchmark turnover of existing convenience goods floorspace in Bexhill, Battle and Rye town centres, Sidley and Little Common District Centre and out of centre food stores in the District has been set out in Table 10, **Appendix 5**.

- 6.42 The benchmark turnover calculations comprise the sales area of the store/facilities (subject to an allowance for comparison goods sales within larger stores) multiplied by the respective company average trading density for each individual grocery retailer. The company average trading density data has been obtained from the Mintel publication UK Retail Rankings 2007. The sales densities have been subject to adjustments for petrol sales and VAT. In dealing with comparison goods (non food) sales in grocery stores, in the absence of any definitive source of sales value for comparison goods sold by convenience businesses we have assumed that the comparison goods floorspace achieves a sales density which is 60% of the retailers average. The resultant convenience goods benchmark turnover is the estimate of convenience goods turnover on the assumption that the store trades at theoretical company average level (i.e. there is no over or under trading).
- 6.43 This methodology assumes that all stores (total sales floorspace) trade at company average and within that, the comparison goods floorspace trades at 60% of the company average density and the remainder is convenience turnover. This approach respects the published trading averages for each retailer whilst providing differential convenience and comparison goods sales estimates.
- 6.44 Smaller stores and local shopping floorspace has not been surveyed as part of this Assessment. As a consequence the implied 2007 turnovers (from Table 8, **Appendix 5**) of these facilities has been adopted as their benchmark turnovers in 2007.
- 6.45 An allowance for improved trading efficiency of 0.5% per annum has been used to calculate the benchmark turnovers of the existing floorspace in 2011, 2016, 2021 and 2026.
- 6.46 Having established the implied convenience turnover of stores and centres based upon market shares from the household survey results (2007-Table 8, 2011, 2016, 2021 and 2026 Table 9) and the benchmark convenience goods turnovers of stores and centres (Table 10); We proceed to comparing the two, in order to assess the trading capacity of the study area and the potential need for additional convenience floorspace having regard to growth in expenditure and store overtrading.
- 6.47 Table 11, **Appendix 5** provides the capacity (quantitative need) analysis, comparing benchmark turnovers with implied market share turnovers.

Convenience Capacity – Bexhill Town Centre

- 6.48 For Bexhill, the convenience capacity table shows that in 2007 the Sainsbury store at Buckhurst Place is significantly over trading. The smaller Somerfield Store is also overtrading by a significant margin. The Co-Op on Western Road is also overtrading but not to the same extent as Sainsbury and Somerfield.
- 6.49 The overall attraction of Bexhills town centre convenience goods provision is greater than our estimates for the benchmark turnover of the existing facilities (i.e. they are overtrading) this gives rise to a surplus convenience goods expenditure in 2007 (turnover potential). By adopting the same market shares over the study period, the quantitative need or theoretical requirement for additional convenience goods floorspace increases over time in line with expenditure growth. The convenience goods expenditure capacity for Bexhill town centre is set out below:

Table 6.7 Bexhill Town Centre Convenience Goods Capacity			
Year	Expenditure Surplus	Floorspace Requirement	
		£m	Gross Area sqm
2007	£12.20m	1,356 sqm	1,830 sqm
2011	£13.30m	1,478 sqm	1995 sqm
2016	£14.70m	1,633 sqm	2,205 sqm
2021	£16.12m	1,791 sqm	2,418 sqm
2026	£17.72m	1,969 sqm	2,658 sqm

Source: GLH Retail Capacity Tables, Table 11, Appendix 5

Notes: Assumes new convenience goods sales floorspace will have a trading density of £9,000/sqm in 2007, this being the density typical of supermarket/superstore type floorspace. A lower density reflective of smaller traditional convenience goods stores would give rise to a larger quantum of floorspace need.

Conversion factor of 1.35 is used to derive gross floorspace estimate from sales area.

- 6.50 The level of quantitative convenience floorspace need for Bexhill town centre, based upon existing market shares is sufficient to support another supermarket/superstore or an extension to an existing food supermarket during the Study period.
- 6.51 The potential for new floorspace in Bexhill town centre, taking into account both quantitative and qualitative need and other considerations is reviewed in the next section of this assessment.

Convenience Capacity – Battle Town Centre

- 6.52 In Battle town centre the capacity results show that in 2007 Budgens is overtrading where as the Co-Op store is undertrading.
- 6.53 In overall terms, the implied convenience goods turnover of Battle exceeds the estimated benchmark turnover of its convenience goods facilities. The summary table below show the capacity position and the potential floorspace requirement which the excess expenditure could potentially support.

Table 6.8 Battle Town Centre Convenience Goods Capacity			
Year	Expenditure Surplus	Floorspace Requirement	
		Sales Area sqm	Gross Area sqm
	£m		
2007	£0.51m	57 sqm	77 sqm
2011	£0.65m	72 sqm	97 sqm
2016	£0.82m	91 sqm	123 sqm
2021	£0.99m	110 sqm	149 sqm
2026	£1.19m	132 sqm	178 sqm

Source: GLH Retail Capacity Tables, Table 11, Appendix 5

Notes: Assumes new convenience goods floorspace (superstore) will have a trading density of £9,000/sqm in 2007, this being the density typical of supermarket/superstore type floorspace. A lower density reflective of smaller traditional convenience goods stores would give rise to a larger quantum of floorspace need.

Conversion factor of 1.35 is used to derive gross floorspace estimate from sales area.

- 6.54 The convenience capacity calculation based upon continuing the existing low market share gives support for modest additional convenience goods floorspace provision to serve Battle's residents. This level of floorspace need may be most appropriately met by an extension to one of the existing small foodstores within the town centre. However, the floorspace need estimates are predicated upon a low level of convenience goods trade retention by Battle town centre. Further practical consideration of Battle's future convenience shopping needs is provided in the proceeding section.

Convenience Capacity – Rye Town Centre

- 6.55 In Rye town centre, the capacity calculations show that the existing Budgens store is trading at a level modestly above company average for Budgens/Jempson in 2007.

- 6.56 In overall terms, the implied convenience goods turnover of Rye town centre exceeds the estimated benchmark turnover of convenience goods facilities comprising the town centre. The summary table below shows the convenience capacity position and potential floorspace requirements in Rye up to 2026.

Table 6.9 Rye Town Centre Convenience Goods Capacity			
Year	Expenditure Surplus	Floorspace Requirement	
		£m	Gross Area sqm
		Sales Area sqm	Gross Area sqm
2007	£0.30m	33 sqm	45 sqm
2011	£0.53m	58 sqm	78 sqm
2016	£0.74m	82 sqm	111 sqm
2021	£0.95m	106 sqm	143 sqm
2026	£1.19m	132 sqm	178 sqm

Source: GLH Retail Capacity Tables, Table 11, Appendix 5

Notes: Assumes new convenience goods floorspace (superstore) will have a trading density of £9,000/sqm in 2007, this being the density typical of supermarket/superstore type floorspace. A lower density reflective of smaller traditional convenience goods stores would give rise to a larger quantum of floorspace need.

Conversion factor of 1.35 is used to derive gross floorspace estimate from sales area.

- 6.57 Based upon the continuation of the existing convenience store market share for Rye town centre, there is very modest quantitative capacity for additional convenience goods floorspace. The existing Budgens/Jemson store in Rye has permission for an extension and this will absorb all of the capacity identified.
- 6.58 However, as with Battle, the level of convenience goods trade retention within the Rye Zone and for Rye generally is low. Residents of the Rye Zone are choosing to shop at Jemson Peasmarsh, or outside the District at more distant stores such as Tesco and Waitrose Tenterden; Tesco, Ashford; and Sainsbury and Tesco at St Leonards/Hastings.
- 6.59 We consider the potential for Rye town centre to improve upon its convenience goods market share in the next section of this Assessment.

Convenience Goods Capacity – Sidley & Little Common District Centres

- 6.60 The two District Centres within Bexhill's urban area; Sidley and Little Common each contain small supermarkets which the capacity analysis shows are achieving healthy levels of turnover. Both District Centres have modest capacity assuming continuation

of the 2007 market shares. The turnover capacity for each centre is set out in the table below.

Table 6.10 Sidley & Little Common Convenience Goods Capacity		
Year	Expenditure Surplus £m	
	Sidley	Little Common
2007	£1.05m	£1.60m
2011	£1.20m	£1.73m
2016	£1.38m	£1.89m
2021	£1.57m	£2.05m
2026	£1.80m	£2.23m
<i>Source: GLH Retail Capacity Tables, Table 11, Appendix 5</i>		

6.61 This relatively modest capacity could potentially support a new small supermarket or discounter at Sidley or possible small scale extensions to the existing supermarkets (Lidl & Co-Op) to relieve over trading.

6.62 At Little Common, the identified expenditure surplus will be taken up by the recent planning permission for a convenience store at Cooden Sea Road

Convenience Goods Capacity – Out-of-Centre Stores

6.63 With regard to out-of-centre foodstores within Rother, the only store which is shown to be significantly overtrading is the Tesco store at Ravenside Retail Park. We anticipate the level of overtrading will be reduced when the replacement Tesco store at St Leonards is trading.

6.64 The Tesco at Ravenside Retail Park is the largest food store within Rother District and has the fullest range of convenience goods. This one stop main food shop potential, coupled with its extensive at grade free car parking will contribute to its customer attraction. Whilst the extent of overtrading would potentially lend quantitative need support for an extension to this store, the PPS6 tests of qualitative need, scale, sequential approach and impact would all need to be acceptably addressed for any expansion of this out of centre location.

6.65 Furthermore, applying the sequential approach there may be sequentially preferred stores or development sites within Bexhill town centre or other established centres

which would more appropriately relieve the overtrading and accommodate the quantitative need.

Convenience Goods Capacity – Village Stores

- 6.66 Convenience goods capacity calculations for the villages within Rother District do not in our view give rise to a specific quantitative need to plan for convenience goods floorspace in any of these centres. These centres have local convenience functions, relying primarily upon top-up and daily needs shopping trips. These centres are anticipated to continue to perform this role and can do so without the need for any substantive additional convenience floorspace.

Comparison Goods Capacity

- 6.67 The comparison capacity analysis is similarly underwritten by the household survey which questioned householders upon where they shopped for the following categories of comparison goods:-

- Clothing and Footwear
- Chemist and Personal care goods
- Books DVD's, CD's stationery and cards
- Recreation and Leisure Goods
- China, glass, home textile goods
- Household appliances
- Audio Visual Equipment
- Furniture, furnishing goods and carpets
- DIY goods

- 6.68 The goods categories analysed for the household survey are broadly consistent with the comparison goods categories for consumer expenditure estimates provided by Experian. The market shares of centres and facilities implied by the household survey have been applied to available comparison goods expenditure by study zone to build up the implied turnovers of the main town centres within Rother District and the extent of trade leakage to competing locations outside the District.

- 6.69 Tables 12A to I (**Appendix 5**) set out the comparison goods expenditure per head figures for each of the component comparison goods categories.

- 6.70 As with the convenience capacity analysis, no deduction has been made to the comparison expenditure per head values to reflect non-store spending (SFT) e.g. mail order, factory direct sales, market stalls and ecommerce. Instead SFT is informed by the household survey results in respect of internet and mail order shopping undertaken by households and spending made by household through these channels is excluded from the capacity calculations. This is considered to give a locally based allowance for SFT tailored to Rother District and is preferred to the adoption of any published national figure.
- 6.71 The level and significance of internet/mail order shopping varies by comparison goods categories and the survey results show that it is a popular shopping channel for Books, CD's etc; Audio Visual Goods; Household Appliances; and Recreational and Leisure goods. In overall terms, internet and mail order comprises 9.2% of consumer spending on comparison goods across the study area (Table 16 **Appendix 5**).
- 6.72 Growth in comparison goods expenditure per head in the study zones/area has been taken at a rate of + 3.5% per annum, this is based upon the Experian Business Strategies/Consensus forecasts over the longest term advised (2007 to 2016). Trend based estimates show higher rates of comparison goods growth, however for an Assessment such as this which is intended to inform floorspace need over a long period (to 2026) a more cautious growth rate is considered appropriate.
- 6.73 Tables 13A to I, **Appendix 5** provides the estimated comparison good expenditure generated within the Study Area over the study period. The results are provided in the Tables for each of the comparison goods categories considered. The comparison goods expenditure generated is the product of population (Table 1, **Appendix 5**) with respective comparison goods component expenditure per head (Table 12, **Appendix 5**).
- 6.74 The combination of population growth and the growth in comparison goods expenditure gives a considerable increase in available comparison goods expenditure in the Study Area over the period 2007 and 2026.

Table 6.11 Comparison Goods Expenditure Generated with Study Area					
Goods Category	Year (£m)				
	2007	2011	2016	2021	2026
Clothing and Footwear	£61.87m	£71.99m	£86.70m	£104.21m	£125.50m
Chemist & Personal Care	£36.17m	£42.09m	£50.69m	£60.93m	£73.38m
Books, DVD's, CD's Stationery etc	£25.26m	£29.39m	£35.39m	£42.53m	£51.22m
Recreation & Leisure Goods	£47.40m	£55.15m	£66.41m	£79.82m	£96.13m
China, Glass, Home textiles	£18.82m	£21.90m	£26.37m	£31.69m	£38.17m
Household Appliances	£10.89m	£12.67m	£15.25m	£18.33m	£22.08m
Audio Visual Equipment	£25.52m	£29.70m	£35.77m	£42.99m	£51.77m
Furniture, Furnishings & Carpets	£30.31m	£35.27m	£42.47m	£51.04m	£61.47m
DIY, Décor & Gardening	£27.71m	£32.24m	£38.83m	£46.67m	£56.20m
Total Comparison	£283.95m	£330.40m	£397.87m	£478.22m	£575.93m

Source: GLH Retail Capacity Tables, Tables 13 A to I Appendix 5

6.75 Taking the household appliances, furniture furnishings & carpets and DIY decorating & gardening goods categories as a proxy for what is commonly termed 'bulky goods', the analysis below shows the expenditure growth within the Study Area attributed to such goods is:

'Bulky Goods' growth 2007 – 2011	£11.3m
'Bulky Goods' growth 2007 – 2016	£27.6m
'Bulky Goods' growth 2007 – 2021	£47.1m
'Bulky Goods' growth 2007 – 2026	£70.8m

6.76 PPS6 does not make any locational distinction between categories of comparison goods and does not specifically define bulky goods, reflecting Central Government's 'town centre first' approach to retail locations and developments. The PPS does however provide a description of retail warehouses as "large stores specialising in the sale of household goods (such as carpets, furniture and electrical goods) DIY items and other ranges of goods, catering mainly for car-borne customers." Given that no distinction is made between 'non bulky' and 'bulky' goods and that the sequential approach directs all floorspace needs be assessed on a sequential approach basis, we have not sought to identify any separate or distinct 'bulky' comparison goods floorspace need.

6.77 The household survey has been used to model the implied turnover of the District's main centres and facilities based upon their market shares from the Study Area. Tables 14A to I, **Appendix 5** provides the comparison shopping market share pattern for 2007. This market share pattern has then been applied to the comparison goods

expenditure generated within the study zones/area to establish each centres implied turnover (in 2007). Tables 15A to I (2007), **Appendix 5** set out the results for each component part of the comparison goods and Table 16: Comparison Goods Market Share Turnovers – All Comparison Goods £m 2007 (**Appendix 5**) identifies the total comparison goods market shares of Rother District main town centres and other facilities.

6.78 Table 16 also takes account of inflow of expenditure to the main town centres in Rother and to the Ravenside Retail Park arising from Hastings residents and visitor/tourist spending.

6.79 From Table 16, the comparison goods trade retentions of Bexhill, Battle and Rye town centres can be derived. Within its home zones, Bexhill retains 36.6% of comparison shopping from Bexhill East and 28.8% from Bexhill West. Battle town centre retains 11.8% of its home zones comparison goods expenditure. Rye town centre achieves a trade retention from its home zone of 18.6% of comparison goods expenditure generated by that zone.

6.80 Across the Study Area, the trade retention/attraction for Rother's town centres and other centres with a draw on comparison spending is summarised in the table below:

Table 6.12 Comparison Trade Retention/Trade Leakage	
Centre	% Share from Study Area
Bexhill Town Centre	16.2%
Battle Town Centre	2.5%
Rye Town Centre	3.6%
Ravenside Retail Park (Inc Tesco)	10.6%
Others in Rother District	2.6%
Total Comparison Goods Trade Retention	35.5%
Hastings	19.0%
Eastbourne	13.6%
Tunbridge Wells	6.9%
Internet/Mail Order	9.2%
Others	15.8%
Total Comparison Goods Trade Leakage	64.5%
<i>Notes: Derived from Table 16, Appendix 5</i>	

6.81 The comparison goods shares of the Rother's main town centres in 2007 including inflow (Table 16, **Appendix 5**) are held constant and applied to the comparison goods

turnover potential in 2011, 2016, 2021 and 2026. See Tables 17A to D. In summary, the implied turnovers for Bexhill, Battle and Rye and also for Ravenside (plus Tesco's implied comparison goods turnover) are:

Table 6.13 Comparison Goods Implied Turnovers (Plus Inflow)					
Centre	Implied Turnover (£m)				
	2007	2011	2016	2021	2026
Bexhill Town Centre	£50.68m	£61.38m	£73.92m	£88.85m	£107.00m
Battle Town Centre	£9.09m	£11.41m	£13.74m	£16.52m	£19.89m
Rye Town Centre	£13.78m	£16.69m	£20.10m	£24.15m	£29.09m
Ravenside Retail Park	£40.24m	£48.74m	£58.69m	£70.54m	£84.96m

Source: GLH Retail Capacity Tables, Tables 16 and 17A-D. Appendix 5

6.82 The comparison goods sales floorspace for Bexhill, Battle and Rye town centres and the out-of-centre Ravenside Retail Park have been estimated based upon the Experian footprint floorspace with adjustment to reflect net sales. The estimated comparison goods sales floorspace within Bexhill is 15,200 sqm, Battle is 3,300sqm Rye is 6,820sqm and for Ravenside Retail Park the floorspace is 12,500sqm. Dividing the implied turnover of these locations by their corresponding comparison goods floorspace provides an implied sales trading density. The resultant implied floorspace trading densities are:

Table 6.14 Comparison Goods Implied Floorspace Trading Density		
Centre	Floorspace	2007
Bexhill Town Centre	15,200 sqm	£3,334/sqm
Battle Town Centre	3,330 sqm	£2,254/sqm
Rye Town Centre	6,820 sqm	£2,021/sqm
Ravenside Retail Park	12,500 sqm	£3,219/sqm

6.83 The implied trading density for Bexhill and Battle town centres are close to the levels we would anticipate for centres with their comparison shopping offer and status. The implied trading density for Rye town centre is lower than we would have anticipated, given its retail offer and we consider that comparison floorspace is currently trading below its potential. At Ravenside Retail Park, given the mix of 'bulky' and 'non bulky' retailers, the implied trading density is close to but very slightly below the level we would have anticipated based upon company average trading performance for the retailers located there. Generally, there is potential for all of these facilities to improve their trading densities and this increased trading intensity would act to absorb some of the growth in consumer spending.

- 6.84 Table 18 (**Appendix 5**) sets out our estimates of 2007 benchmark turnover for Bexhill, Battle and Rye town centres comparison goods floorspace. The comparison goods benchmark turnover for Ravenside Retail Park is also considered.
- 6.85 The benchmark turnovers for 2007 are increased by 1.5% per annum over the study period to reflect anticipated year on year improved trading efficiency of the floorspace.
- 6.86 Table 19, **Appendix 5** provides the theoretical comparison goods capacity (quantitative need) by comparing the implied turnover of centres (Tables 16 and 17 A to D) with the benchmark turnovers (Table 18).

Comparison Goods Capacity – Bexhill Town Centre

- 6.87 For Bexhill town centre, based upon a continuation of the current market share, the comparison goods capacity calculations show a deficit of expenditure in 2007, i.e. no quantitative need for additional floorspace. By 2011 there is an expenditure surplus and this continues to grow over the study period to 2026. The theoretical comparison goods expenditure surplus and floorspace need for Bexhill town centre is set out below:

Table 6.15 Bexhill Town Centre Comparison Goods Capacity					
	2007	2011	2016	2021	2026
Implied Turnover	£50.68m	£61.38m	£73.92m	£88.85m	£107.00m
Benchmark Turnover	£53.20m	£56.46m	£60.83m	£65.53m	£70.59m
Surplus	- £2.53m	£4.92m	£13.09m	£23.32m	£36.41m
Sales Floorspace	- sqm	1,325 sqm	3,272 sqm	5,409 sqm	7,839 sqm
Gross Floorspace	- sqm	1,921 sqm	4,744 sqm	7,843 sqm	11,366 sqm
<i>Source: GLH Retail Capacity Tables, Table 19 Appendix 5</i>					
<i>Notes: A conversion factor of 1.45 is used to derive gross floorspace estimate from sales area.</i>					

- 6.88 Within the next section we consider the potential comparison floorspace need for Bexhill town centre based upon it increasing current market share, which we consider is justified on qualitative grounds.

Comparison Goods Capacity – Battle Town Centre

6.89 For Battle town centre, there is a very small deficit of comparison goods expenditure in 2007 with future years showing an expenditure surplus which gives rise to a modest comparison floorspace need over the study period. The surplus expenditure and theoretical comparison goods floorspace need for Battle town centre is set out in the table below.

6.90 These floorspace capacity estimates are based upon the continuation of existing market shares, in the following section we review the potential for Battle to increase its market share given the historic nature and relative constraints on the potential for physical expansion of Battle town centre and its proximity to competing centres.

Table 6.16 Battle Town Centre Comparison Goods Capacity					
	2007	2011	2016	2021	2026
Implied Turnover	£9.09m	£11.41m	£13.74m	£16.52m	£19.89m
Benchmark Turnover	£9.16m	£9.72m	£10.47m	£11.28m	£12.15m
Surplus	- £0.07m	£1.69m	£3.27m	£5.24m	£7.74m
Sales Floorspace	- sqm	580 sqm	1,041 sqm	1,547 sqm	2,122 sqm
Gross Floorspace	- sqm	841 sqm	1,509 sqm	2,243 sqm	3,077 sqm
<i>Source: GLH Retail Capacity Tables, Table 19 Appendix 5</i>					
<i>Notes: A conversion factor of 1.45 is used to derive gross floorspace estimate from sales area.</i>					

Comparison Goods Capacity – Rye Town Centre

6.91 The comparison goods capacity table (Table 19, **Appendix 5**) indicates that for Rye town centre, there is no quantitative floorspace need for 2007, 2011 and 2016 as there is negative expenditure capacity. By 2021 there is a small surplus of expenditure which is equivalent to 208 sqm of comparison goods floorspace. By 2026 the surplus expenditure in Rye translates to a comparison floorspace requirement of 1,400 sqm sales. The comparison goods capacity for Rye is summarised in the table below:

Table 6.17 Rye Town Centre Comparison Goods Capacity					
	2007	2011	2016	2021	2026
Implied Turnover	£13.78m	£16.79m	£20.10m	£24.15m	£29.09m
Benchmark Turnover	£18.76m	£20.20m	£21.77m	£23.45m	£25.26m
Surplus	- £4.98m	- £3.52m	- £1.67m	£0.7m	£3.83m
Sales Floorspace	- sqm	- sqm	- sqm	208 sqm	1,049 sqm
Gross Floorspace	- sqm	- sqm	- sqm	302 sqm	1,521 sqm
<i>Source: GLH Retail Capacity Tables, Table19 Appendix 5</i>					
<i>Notes: A conversion factor of 1.45 is used to derive gross floorspace estimate from sales area.</i>					

- 6.92 Rye town centre, like Battle has a low comparison goods market share draw within the Study Area. The historic interest in the town, its attractive setting and its tourist focused comparison goods retailers means that it relies heavily upon tourist and visitor spending to sustain itself. Residents of Rye are likely to consider other competing centres such as Hastings, Ashford or Tunbridge Wells when looking to undertake mainstream comparison goods shopping.
- 6.93 The comparison capacity calculations are sensitive to the allowance we have made for inflow of expenditure, we have assumed that in 2007 40% (£3.94m) of the towns turnover is drawn from outside the Study Area. We do not have any strong evidence to support this assumed inflow and it may be the case that more tourist/visitor spend is captured by Rye's tourism orientated comparison retailers – if this was to be the case the comparison goods capacity would rise, but not to a significant level.
- 6.94 In the next section we consider the potential for Rye town centre to improve upon its existing market share.

Comparison Goods Capacity – Ravenside Retail Park

- 6.95 The comparison capacity calculations have also given consideration to the out-of-centre Ravenside Retail Park to the east of Bexhill, lying just within the Rother District Boundary. As an out-of-centre facility, the Council are not obliged to plan for any expansion of retailing at this location, however as it is a substantial quantum of retail floorspace and is a significant and popular retail destination, it has been considered appropriate to assess current and potential future overtrading and theoretical floorspace need.

Table 6.18 Ravenside Retail Park Comparison Goods Capacity					
	2007	2011	2016	2021	2026
Implied Turnover	£40.24m	£48.74m	£58.69m	£70.54m	£84.96m
Benchmark Turnover	£43.75m	£46.43m	£50.02m	£53.09m	£57.20m
Surplus	- £3.51m	£2.30m	£8.67m	£17.45m	£27.76m
Sales Floorspace	- sqm	620 sqm	2,166 sqm	4,048 sqm	5,977 sqm
Gross Floorspace	- sqm	744 sqm	2,600 sqm	4,858 sqm	7,172 sqm
<i>Source: GLH Retail Capacity Tables, Table19 Appendix 5</i>					
<i>Notes: A conversion factor of 1.2 is used to derive gross floorspace estimate from sales area</i>					

- 6.96 By 2011, applying the existing market share, there is modest overtrading at Ravenside and this increases steadily up to 2026, giving rise to a significant potential floorspace requirements by the end of the study period.
- 6.97 As this is an out-of-centre facility, the only planning justification for the Council to make provision for expansion of facilities at Ravenside arises where the identified level of need cannot be accommodated in a sequentially preferred location (Bexhill or Hastings town centres or the edge of these centres) and where no harm (detrimental impact) would arise to the health and planned future investment of existing established town centres. Should the Council be minded to make provision for some expansion of retail facilities at Ravenside, they should ensure that any planned or potential town centre investment or retail growth at Bexhill town centre would not be comprised and that the future vitality and viability of the centre is maintained.

7 INTERPRETING THE STUDY FINDINGS

Introduction

7.1 In this section we draw upon the qualitative and quantitative analysis provided within the preceding two sections to consider the future retail requirements for Bexhill, Battle and Rye town centre in order for them to satisfy existing customer demands and where appropriate for the status of the town centre, to plan to recapture market share from competing towns and out of centre locations.

7.2 With regard to existing market shares of each of the town centres for both convenience and comparison goods, the table below re-states these.

Table 7.1 Summary Trade Retention/Trade Leakage		
Centre	Comparison Goods % Share from Study Area	Convenience Goods % Share from Study Area
Bexhill Town Centre	16.2%	20.5%
Battle Town Centre	2.5%	3.1%
Rye Town Centre	3.6%	3.8%
Ravenside Retail Park	10.6%	14.1%
Others in Rother District	2.6%	16.5%
Total Trade Retention	35.5%	58.0%
Total Trade Leakage	64.5%	42.0%
<i>Notes: Derived from Tables @ Appendix 5</i>		

7.3 Generally the market shares being achieved by Rother's town centres are low. For comparison goods shopping, this is in part symptomatic of the strong attraction and retail draw of competing Sub-Regional centres, but also due to the limited and niche/tourist orientation of comparison shopping offer, particularly within Battle and Rye town centres.

7.4 Convenience goods market shares as set out above are on a Study Area basis and therefore do not reflect the more local nature of households shopping trips, particularly food shopping.

7.5 The following table shows the level of trade retention from centres within their home zone.

Table 7.2 Summary Trade Retention by 'Home' Zone			
Centre	Home Zone	Comparison	Convenience
		Goods Share %	Goods Share %
Bexhill Town Centre	Bexhill East/Bexhill West	29.7%	41.4%
Battle Town Centre	Battle	11.8%	17.5%
Rye Town Centre	Rye	18.6%	20.2%
Ravenside Retail Park	Bexhill East/Bexhill West	17.3%	27.3%
<i>Notes: Derived from Tables @ Appendix 5</i>			

7.6 The analysis on a zone basis does show that Bexhill town centres convenience stores are a relatively strong attractor of food shopping trips (but not as strong individually as Tesco, Ravenside) whilst a significant proportion of households in the Battle and Rye zones do not consider their 'home' towns as first choice food shopping locations.

Bexhill Town Centre

7.7 Qualitatively, Bexhill has a distinctive local identity and individuality with a high proportion of smaller independent and specialist retailers and a relatively modest number of national multiple retailers. The Centre is dominated by a large number of smaller units and floorspace provision of this nature is more suited to local independent traders and retail service providers. Typically national multiple traders seek larger units to accommodate their trading formats.

7.8 We consider that the national multiple store representation within Bexhill town centre is low for a centre of Bexhill's size and none of the multiples could be described as key attractors or motivators of shopping trips. Whilst the town centre has a number of quality independents which provide a local distinctiveness, generally shopper attraction to a centre is motivated by national multiple traders and a range and depth of comparative shopping offer which Bexhill town centre is currently lacking. In contrast, the nearby competing centres of Eastbourne and Hastings provide attractive shopping propositions.

7.9 Convenience goods shopping provision within Bexhill town centre is focused primarily upon Sainsbury at Buckhurst Place. This store is somewhat dated, has relatively modest sales floorspace and falls short of customer expectations of a modern supermarket/superstore in terms of range of goods, in store services, layout and overall store size. Furthermore, the store is poorly located and does not integrate

particularly well with Bexhill's main retail area. Other opportunities for convenience goods shopping include small Somerfield and Co-Op stores which provide day to day and top up convenience goods. Bexhill town centre has also retained a number of traditional independent convenience goods traders which bolster the supermarket provision.

- 7.10 The Bexhill area is subject to the largest concentration of new housing within the District and as a consequence of this housing/population growth the town centre will benefit from substantial growth in comparison and convenience goods spending potential over the study period 2021/2026. This growth when compared to the existing market shares and trading density of existing floorspace within Bexhill town centre (and Ravenside Retail Park) gives rise to a retail capacity (need) in the short/medium term based upon a continuing market shares:

Table 7.3 Bexhill Town Centre Summary Retail Capacity		
Convenience Goods		
2011 Turnover Capacity	Bexhill Town Centre	£13.3m
	<i>Ravenside Retail Park</i>	<i>£13.8m</i>
	Total	£27.1m
2016 Turnover Capacity	Bexhill Town Centre	£14.7m
	<i>Ravenside Retail Park</i>	<i>£15.2m</i>
	Total	£29.9m
Comparison Goods		
2011 Turnover Capacity	Bexhill Town Centre	£4.9m
	<i>Ravenside Retail Park</i>	<i>£2.3m</i>
	Total	£7.2m
2016 Turnover Capacity	Bexhill Town Centre	£13.1m
	<i>Ravenside Retail Park</i>	<i>£8.7m</i>
	Total	£21.8m

- 7.11 The theoretical quantitative retail need shown for Ravenside Retail Park as an out-of-centre facility should not be planned to be met at this location where alternative in town centre and edge of centre sites can be identified. Applying a sequential approach, this identified quantitative need should be directed to Bexhill town centre where there are sites which are capable of accommodating it. Alternatively, Hastings town centre could plan to capture some of the Ravenside Retail park overtrading capacity.

- 7.12 The overtrading at Tesco Ravenside may be relieved to an extent by the redevelopment/replacement Tesco store at St Leonards (Churchwoods) which, we anticipate will cannibalise some of the Ravenside stores trade. However, the identified convenience goods capacity for Bexhill town centre can legitimately be increased by claiming a share of the Tesco Ravenside overtrading.
- 7.13 The convenience goods floorspace capacity at Bexhill town centre, in combination with the overtrading at Tesco Ravenside and our perceived qualitative deficiency in provision within Bexhill town centre, points to a need for additional convenience goods shopping provision.
- 7.14 In our view, this should take the form of modern superstore floorspace to satisfy Bexhill residents main food shopping needs. In terms of floorspace quantum, to provide an indication of the potential scope for additional floorspace in Bexhill town centre we consider the effect of adding 50% of the overtrading capacity at Ravenside to the identified market share based quantitative capacity for Bexhill town centre. The results provided in table 7.4 below shows the following additional convenience goods floorspace requirement for Bexhill town centre. The potential of Bexhill town centre to recapture convenience goods trade will depend upon the attractiveness of the convenience shopping offer being provided but will also be influenced by competing facilities and their potential draw as well as customer loyalty to a particular retailer or stores.

Table 7.4 Bexhill Town Centre Convenience Floorspace Potential					
	2007	2011	2016	2021	2026
Convenience Turnover Potential	£18.5m	£20.2m	£23.3m	£24.4m	£26.8m
Potential Sales Floorspace	2,055sqm	2,216sqm	2,525sqm	2,611sqm	2,832sqm
Potential Gross Floorspace	2,775sqm	2,992sqm	3,409sqm	3,525sqm	3,824sqm
<i>Notes: Convenience goods trading density of £9,000/sqm is used to convert turnover to sales floorspace a trading efficiency of +0.25% per annum has also been applied. A conversion factor of 1.35 is used to derive the gross floorspace estimate from sales area.</i>					

- 7.15 The sales and gross floorspace estimates in Table 7.4 above provide a broad indication of the potential convenience floorspace which could be supported within Bexhill town centre over the period to 2026. This level of need points to a superstore

sized facility. Retailers operating this size of store would typically expect to have a sales mix at a rate of around 65% food (convenience): 35% non food (comparison).

- 7.16 The sales floorspace calculations are based upon a trading density of £9,000/sqm, this is an average with some retailers achieving higher trading densities whilst others achieve lower sales levels. The floorspace estimates are therefore for guidance rather than prescriptive floorspace targets.
- 7.17 The Adopted Rother District Local Plan (2006) identifies within Policy BX6 a site within the town centre for mixed retail led re-development which includes the existing Sainsbury store. This general location has the potential to provide a modern large food store and some comparison goods shopping within the town centre to meet the shopping needs and expectations of the growing population of Bexhill.
- 7.18 The success of any redevelopment proposal in this area will depend to a large extent on its integration with the main part of the town centre on the southern side of the railway line and a key to this will be the provision of a strong physical and visual pedestrian connection to ensure linked trips are maximized to benefit the whole town centre and that the foodstore does not operate predominately as a stand alone car borne facility.
- 7.19 The planned expansion at North East Bexhill will require careful consideration as to retail component. Whilst there is a need to create sustainable communities to include local provision of retailing, retail developers may rely upon the planned housing growth to justify a new large foodstore. Whilst it would be appropriate to plan for some retail provision at this location, this should be of a local nature and in scale with the proposals for the North East Bexhill area and not detract from the role of Bexhill town centre or the District Centres.
- 7.20 Existing comparison goods shopping floorspace in Bexhill town centre comprises a mix of national multiple but more predominately local independent traders. Qualitatively, the town centre has some room to improve its retail offer and trading performance. Bexhill town centre loses out on market share to surrounding competing centres (predominately Hastings and Eastbourne - but also Ravenside Retail Park for certain goods).

7.21 We consider that the Council should plan to improve the comparison shopping market share of Bexhill town centre. The potential for additional comparison goods floorspace in Bexhill town centre is set out in Table 7.5 below. This table combines the market share based future comparison goods capacity for the town centre with 50% of the identified future comparison goods overtrading at the Ravenside Retail Park to provide the Council with some broad guidance on the potential turnover that could be captured and the quantum of floorspace which could be supported within the town centre. The comparison shopping turnover potential estimates for Bexhill town centre set out in Table 7.5 are considered appropriate in the context of the aspirations for growth at both Hastings and Eastbourne town centres.

Table 7.5 Bexhill Town Centre Comparison Floorspace Potential				
	2011	2016	2021	2026
Comparison Turnover Potential	£6.07m	£17.43m	£32.05m	£50.29m
Potential Sales Floorspace	1,634sqm	4,355sqm	7,434sqm	10,829sqm
Potential Gross Floorspace	2,369sqm	6,315sqm	10,779sqm	15,702sqm
<i>Notes: Comparison goods trading density of £3,500/sqm is used to convert turnover to sales floorspace a trading efficiency of +1.5% per annum has also been applied. A conversion factor of 1.45 is used to derive the gross floorspace estimate from sales area.</i>				

7.22 Whilst the table above converts all of the potential comparison turnover into floorspace equivalents, it should be recognised that some of the turnover potential could be absorbed by existing comparison shopping floorspace in Bexhill town centre trading more intensively at a sales density up to £5,000/sqm. Thus reducing the physical need for additional floorspace.

7.23 From our initial physical analysis, the opportunities for expanding comparison shopping provision within Bexhill town centre is limited due to its constrained nature. Although there is some potential relating to the possible redevelopment under **Policy BX6** to provide additional comparison shopping floorspace, with the scope for this to connect into a redevelopment of properties to the south of the railway along Western Road. Other opportunities are anticipated to arise from selective redevelopment and infill development within and around Bexhill town centre.

7.24 The combination of seeking to provide additional/replacement shopping floorspace which is more suited to national multiple traders and also making more of Bexhill town centres existing distinctiveness and attractions through coordinated marketing and

town centre management should ensure the attraction of the town centre to residents and shoppers from a wider area is increased and with it the trading intensity of its existing retail floorspace.

Battle Town Centre

- 7.25 Qualitatively, Battle town centre has a distinct niche retailer and tourist orientated shopping offer, characterised by local independent retailers.
- 7.26 Convenience goods shopping opportunities are primarily provided by Budgens/Jempsons and Co-Op both of which have modest shopping floorspace. In combination with other smaller local independent convenience traders there is a reasonably good range of convenience shopping available in Battle. However our household survey results do indicate that Battle town centre is little used for main food shopping, with residents choosing to travel to the large food stores in St Leonards/Hastings.
- 7.27 Battle is likely to be subject to relatively modest growth in population over the study period and as a consequence of this and the low level of trade retention by Battle town centre our retail capacity modelling shows there is only a limited quantitative convenience goods floorspace need arising over the study period. The table below summarises the quantitative convenience goods retail need within Battle town centre:

Table 7.6 Battle Town Centre Convenience Floorspace Capacity					
	2007	2011	2016	2021	2026
Convenience Turnover Potential	-	£0.65m	£0.82m	£0.99m	£1.19m
Potential Sales Floorspace	-	72sqm	91sqm	110sqm	132sqm
Potential Gross Floorspace	-	97sqm	123sqm	149sqm	178sqm
<i>Notes: Convenience goods trading density of £9,000/sqm is used to convert turnover to sales floorspace. A conversion factor of 1.35 is used to derive the gross floorspace estimate from sales area.</i>					

- 7.28 The convenience capacity calculations based upon existing market shares gives support for very modest additional convenience goods floorspace provision to serve Battles residents. However, these floorspace need estimates are predicated upon an existing low level of convenience goods trade retention by Battle town centre, with substantial leakage of convenience goods shopping expenditure. As a guide for the

Council, we have considered the convenience goods floorspace potential of Battle on the basis of it increasing its current market share to the equivalent of 60% of its 'home' catchment zone from the current level of around 17% (see Table 7.2), an uplift of some 43%. This would increase in Battle town centre's market share within the whole study area from 3.1% to around 8.5%. The potential uplift for convenience shopping market share does however need to be considered in the context of the proximity of Battle to Hastings and in particular the larger foodstores at St Leonards.

7.29 Table 7.7 below provides the revised estimates for potential convenience goods sales and potential convenience goods floorspace up to 2026.

Table 7.7 Battle Town Centre Convenience Floorspace Potential With Improved Market Share/Trade Retention					
	2007	2011	2016	2021	2026
Existing Market Share Turnover	£4.82m	£5.28m	£5.57m	£5.87m	£6.20m
Convenience Turnover Potential @ 60% of the Battle Zones Expenditure Generated	£11.21m	£11.73m	£12.37m	£13.03m	£13.75m
Additional Turnover Potential	£8.63m	£8.79m	£9.28m	£9.77m	£10.30m
Potential Sales Floorspace	959sqm	968sqm	1,021sqm	1,074sqm	1,133sqm
Potential Gross Floorspace	1,294sqm	1,306sqm	1,378sqm	1,450sqm	1,529sqm
<i>Notes: Convenience goods trading density of £9,000/sqm is used to convert turnover to sales floorspace a trading efficiency of 0.25% per annum has also been applied. A conversion factor of 1.35 is used to derive the gross floorspace estimate from sales area..</i>					

7.30 The sales floorspace calculations are based upon a trading density of £9,000/sqm, this is a broad average with some convenience goods retailers achieving higher trading densities whilst others achieve lower sales. The floorspace estimates are therefore for guidance rather than prescriptive floorspace targets.

7.31 We are aware that there are limitations upon the scope for new development within the town centre and wider urban area of Battle, however we consider that the Council should assess opportunity sites which would allow Battle town centre to recapture convenience goods trade, particularly within its home zone. The level of floorspace identified above (around 1,000sqm sales area (1,350sqm gross) 2011/2016) could be achieved by way of a new foodstore or an extension to one of the existing smaller supermarkets within the town centre. Further consideration should be given to

assess the potential to accommodate this within the clearly important historic environment of Battle town centre, which is a conservation area.

- 7.32 Battle town centre's comparison shopping provision is characterised by local independent traders, there is limited mainstream clothing, electrical and household goods provision. However for a centre of its size and given Battle's proximity to the higher order shopping destinations of Hastings and Tunbridge Wells, the town does not feature highly on national multiple comparison retailers requirements lists. Therefore the potential for further comparison shopping is in our view more limited to a continued tourist and niche offer which the town centre provides, with residents continuing to travel out to Hastings and Tunbridge Wells for their main comparison goods shopping needs.
- 7.33 Furthermore, expansion and improvement to the shopping offer of Bexhill town centre could be anticipated to be attractive to Battle's residents and they may visit Bexhill more than is currently the case.
- 7.34 The comparison goods expenditure calculations for Battle town centre give rise to a modest comparison floorspace need over the study period. These are set out in the table below.

Table 7.8 Battle Town Centre Comparison Floorspace Capacity				
	2011	2016	2021	2026
Comparison Turnover Potential	£1.7m	£3.27m	£5.24m	£7.74m
Potential Sales Floorspace	580sqm	1,041sqm	1,547sqm	2,122sqm
Potential Gross Floorspace	841sqm	1,509sqm	2,243sqm	3,077sqm
<i>Notes: Comparison goods trading density of £3,500/sqm is used to convert turnover to sales floorspace a trading efficiency of 1.5% per annum has also been applied. A conversion factor of 1.45 is used to derive the gross floorspace estimate from sales area.</i>				

- 7.35 In the context of our quantitative and qualitative analysis and the wider comparison goods shopping geography, we do not consider there is any strong justification for seeking to make planning policy provision to increase the comparison goods market share of Battle town centre. However we do anticipate that planning permission may be sought for smaller infill and store extension proposals within the Town, these should in our view be favourably considered in local retail policy terms.

Rye Town Centre

- 7.36 Qualitatively, Rye town centre has a distinctive niche retailer and tourist orientated shopping offer, it is also an historically important town.
- 7.37 Convenience shopping provision in Rye town centre is focused upon the Budgens/Jempson store which has a sales area of 805 sqm and permission for an extension. Whilst the store holds a reasonable range of goods, it does not fully provide Rye residents with a comprehensive main food shop. Other convenience shopping opportunities are provided by traditional local independents and a weekly farmers market. These facilities bolsters Rye's convenience shopping provision. However the convenience of shopping at a large foodstore where a bulk main food shop can be undertaken is attracting Rye's residents away from the town centre to shop at the Jempsons store at Peasmarsh, larger stores including Sainsbury, St Leonards; Tesco, St Leonards; Tesco, Ashford; Tesco, Tenterden; and Waitrose, Tenterden.
- 7.38 There is only modest population growth forecast for Rye over the study period and this coupled with the current low level of trade retention exhibited by the town's existing convenience shopping provision gave rise in our capacity calculations to a modest convenience goods floorspace need. The identified convenience goods need based upon our existing market share analysis will be taken up by the permission for an extension to the Budgens/Jempson store in the town centre.
- 7.39 Table 7.9 below summarises the existing market share convenience goods quantitative need results:

Table 7.9 Rye Town Centre Convenience Floorspace Capacity					
	2007	2011	2016	2021	2026
Convenience Turnover Potential	-	£0.53m	£0.74m	£0.95m	£1.19m
Potential Sales Floorspace	-	58 sqm	82 sqm	106sqm	132sqm
Potential Gross Floorspace	-	78sqm	111sqm	149sqm	178sqm
<i>Notes: Convenience goods trading density of £9,000/sqm is used to convert turnover to sales floorspace. A conversion factor of 1.35 is used to derive the gross floorspace estimate from sales area.</i>					

- 7.40 The existing level of trade retention on convenience goods by shopping facilities in Rye town centre is low (see Table 7.1 and 7.2 above) and as a consequence a substantial proportion of Rye's immediate population who should consider the Town centre as their 'home-town' are travelling quite large distances to satisfy their food (and non-food) shopping needs.
- 7.41 In qualitative terms, given the size and status of Rye and the distances involved in travelling to alternative main food shopping locations we consider there is scope for improvement in Rye town centres convenience retailing offer to ensure the town centre is fulfilling its shopping role by providing for food and everyday comparison shopping thus enabling the Town to reclaim existing trade leakage.
- 7.42 In this context, we have considered the future convenience goods floorspace potential of Rye on the basis of it increasing its current market share. The Rye Zone is relatively self contained and the town centre is some distance from other competing shopping facilities, in such circumstances we consider that the Town centre should be able to retain a significant proportion of the convenience expenditure generated within the Rye Zones. As a guide for the Council, we have assessed the convenience goods capacity potential of Rye town centre on the basis that it retains the equivalent of 70% of its 'home' catchment zones convenience goods expenditure. The existing market share from the 'home zone' is 20% and the uplift assessed is 50%. This would provide an uplift in Rye town centre's convenience goods market share within the whole study area from 3.8% to around 12.5%.
- 7.43 Table 7.10 below provides the analysis together with estimates for potential sales and gross convenience goods floorspace up to 2026.

Table 7.10 Rye Town Centre Convenience Floorspace Potential With Improved Market Share/Trade Retention					
	2007	2011	2016	2021	2026
Existing Market Share Turnover	£6.07m	£6.65m	£7.02m	£7.39m	£7.80m
Convenience Turnover Potential @ 70% of the Rye Zones Expenditure Generated	£20.35m	£21.16m	£22.18m	£23.23m	£24.35m
Additional Turnover Potential	£14.28m	£14.51m	£15.16m	£15.84m	£16.55m
Potential Sales Floorspace	1,587sqm	1,596sqm	1,668sqm	1,742qm	1,821sqm
Potential Gross Floorspace	2,142sqm	2,155sqm	2,251sqm	2,352sqm	2,458sqm
<i>Notes: Convenience goods trading density of £9,000/sqm is used to convert turnover to sales floorspace a trading efficiency of +0.25% per annum has also been applied. A conversion factor of 1.35 is used to derive the gross floorspace estimate from sales area..</i>					

- 7.44 The sales floorspace calculations are based upon a trading density of £9,000/sqm, this is a broad average with some convenience goods retailers achieving higher trading densities whilst others achieve lower sales. The estimates are therefore for guidance rather than prescriptive floorspace targets.
- 7.45 Whilst there is planning permission for extension to the existing Budgen/Jempson store in Rye town centre, we consider that the amount of floorspace within the extended store will simply service the growth in convenience expenditure arising from the continuing low market share of Rye rather than have sufficient customer attraction or critical mass in retailing terms to recapture a substantive element of the existing outflow of convenience goods shopping trade.
- 7.46 The outflow can only realistically be arrested by the provision of more convenience goods shopping, which we consider should in 2011/2016 be in the region of an additional 1,650sqm convenience goods sales area (2,227sqm gross).
- 7.47 Given the demand of large grocery store retailers to have a mix of both food and non food goods in store, it is anticipated that the level of floorspace need identified in Rye would be supplemented by some ancillary comparison goods floorspace.
- 7.48 To maximise shopping benefit in terms of linked shopping, additional footfall and linked spending within shops and services in Rye town centre, further consideration should be given to assess the potential to accommodate this scale of store in a manner that integrates and connects within the existing town centre shopping core.

Sites in the town centre should be considered in the first instance and, if not possible or appropriate, then edge of centre opportunities should be reviewed. In all cases, the compatibility of such a retail proposal with the conservation of the vitality important historic town centre Conservation Area will clearly be a key consideration.

- 7.49 In considering comparison goods shopping, qualitatively Rye town centre has a distinct and predominate tourist orientation. The retail offer and opportunities for undertaking everyday comparison goods shopping for mainstream clothing, electrical and household goods within Rye town centre are limited. As a consequence, residents in Rye are travelling some distance to shop for these goods, in particular they are accessing Hastings but are also travelling out to shop in Ashford, Tunbridge Wells, Tenterden and Ravenside Retail Park. Based upon the existing market share of Rye town centre (3.6% across the whole study area, 18.6% within the Rye Zone) the retail capacity for additional comparison shopping floorspace is very limited.

Table 7.11 Rye Town Centre Comparison Floorspace Capacity				
	2011	2016	2021	2026
Comparison Turnover Potential	-	-	£0.7m	£3.83m
Potential Sales Floorspace	-	-	208 sqm	1,049 sqm
Potential Gross Floorspace	-	-	301sqm	1,521sqm
<i>Notes: Comparison goods trading density of £3,500/sqm is used to convert turnover to sales floorspace a trading efficiency of +1.5% per annum has also been applied. A conversion factor of 1.45 is used to derive the gross floorspace estimate from sales area.</i>				

- 7.50 Additional comparison goods shopping provision in Rye town centre is in our view justified, particularly in qualitative need terms, to broaden the level of comparison shopping available particularly everyday comparison provision; and subject to providing appropriately configured floorspace attracting more mainstream national multiple retailer representation. This will assist with drawing shoppers back into Rye and providing a range and mix of goods to satisfy the comparison shopping needs of Rye's residents.

- 7.51 To provide a broad indication of the appropriate level of additional comparison goods floorspace for Rye town centre, we have considered an uplift to the existing comparison shopping market share equivalent to a 30% share of comparison goods expenditure generated within the Rye Study Zone. This is an increase of just over 12% on the current market share of this zone and would increase the overall

comparison goods market share of Rye within the Study Area to around 6%. This is considered an appropriate claw back target and is a reflection of the competition for comparison goods provided by Hastings in particular but also Ashford and Tunbridge wells.

Table 7.12 Rye Town Centre Comparison Floorspace Potential With Improved Study Area Market Share/Trade Retention					
	2007	2011	2016	2021	2026
Existing Market Share Turnover	£9.84m	£11.92m	£14.35m	£17.25m	£20.78m
Comparison Turnover Potential @ 30% of the Rye Zones Expenditure Generated	£15.66m	£18.10m	£21.65m	£25.87m	£30.96m
Additional Turnover Potential	£5.82m	£6.18m	£7.30m	£8.62m	£10.18m
Potential Sales Floorspace	1,662sqm	1,663sqm	1,824sqm	2,000sqm	2,191sqm
Potential Gross Floorspace	2,410sqm	2,411sqm	2,644sqm	2,900sqm	3,177sqm
<i>Notes: Comparison goods trading density of £3,500/sqm is used to convert turnover to sales floorspace a trading efficiency of +1.5% per annum has also been applied. A conversion factor of 1.45 is used to derive the gross floorspace estimate from sales area.</i>					

7.52 Table 7.12 above converts all of the comparison turnover potential into floorspace equivalents, it should be recognised that some of that turnover potential could be absorbed by existing comparison shopping floorspace in Rye town centre trading more intensively.

7.53 We are aware of the physical and historic constraints on development within Rye town centre. It is anticipated that the quantum of additional comparison goods floorspace identified above could be provided through selective redevelopment, the expansion of existing premises, infilling schemes around the town centre and as part of the floorspace within a new foodstore.

7.54 Expansion of the convenience and comparison goods shopping provision within Rye should be coupled with proactive, co-ordinated marketing and town centre management.

8 SUMMARY & CONCLUSION

- 8.1 GL Hearn was instructed by Rother District Council in October 2007 to prepare for them a District-Wide Shopping Assessment. The purpose of this assessment is to inform and guide retail planning in the District and specifically to form a robust evidential base for the preparation of the Council's Local Development Framework Core Strategy.
- 8.2 The assessment has reviewed current national, regional and local planning policy guidance in relation to town centre development and this policy guidance sets the background to the shopping assessment. Similarly a review of national trends in retailing has been undertaken and this provides a macro economic context to the subsequent local retail analysis.
- 8.3 An important background element to the assessment has been a household telephone survey which has examined the shopping choices of the Districts residents. Whilst Bexhill, Battle and Rye town centres do attract shopping visits from residents, the household survey identifies that the larger centres of Eastbourne, Hastings, and Tunbridge Wells attract shopping visits from across Rother District. In order to give a wider context to the assessment, an overview of the status, scale and location of these competing shopping destinations and other Sub-Regional status centres has been undertaken.
- 8.4 The centres with the greatest attraction for Rother's residents are Hastings, Eastbourne and Tunbridge Wells and all these centres are subject to some form of retail expansion and the respective local authorities have in place strategies for positive retail change. Retail hierarchies are dynamic and town centres are competing continually with each other for market share. Changes and improvements to town centres effect market shares of all centres within the hierarchy to some extent and will lead to rebalancing of the retail system. Within this context, it is important that Rother's main town centres evolve and where appropriate expand in order to remain competitive.
- 8.5 Bexhill town centre is the largest of Rother's retail centres and provides the widest range of convenience and comparison goods shopping opportunities. The town centre is a popular destination for convenience shopping (primarily for residents within the Bexhill East and Bexhill West Zones) and is also a reasonably popular

destination for residents within the whole study area for comparison goods shopping, although residents do also use Hastings, Eastbourne and Ravenside Retail Park for comparison goods shopping. We have reviewed the health of Bexhill town centre and conclude that it is both vital and viable, but in context with its competitors would benefit from some qualitative improvement to both convenience and comparison goods shopping provision.

- 8.6 Rye town centre is considered to be positioned below Bexhill and above Battle in the local retail hierarchy. Whilst there is a high proportion of comparison goods floorspace within Rye a large element of this is orientated toward tourist and day visitors comprising gift, craft and specialist shops. Mainstream comparison shopping in Rye is quite limited and as a consequence there is leakage of trade to Hastings, Ashford and Tenterden. Convenience shopping facilities in Rye town centre are limited primarily to top-up shopping opportunities and there is evidence of substantial outflow of spending to larger foodstores in Hastings, St Leonards and Tenterden and also to the out of centre Jempson Store at Peasmarsh. We conclude that Rye is an attractive town centre with an important historical context and possess a strong local distinctiveness. The town centre is in good health and a significant contributor to its vitality and viability is its strong attraction for tourist and day visitors, a feature which should be capitalised upon.
- 8.7 Battle is the smallest of Rother's main retail centres. Whilst the town centre is relatively small, for its size it offers a good balance of uses comprising convenience and comparison goods shopping and services. Reflecting the towns important historical context and wide tourist attraction, there is a particularly high proportion of service uses in the town. Battle town centre is not a primary shopping destination, even for residents within the Battle study zone. The household survey indicated that the primary destinations for main food shopping were the larger stores in Hastings and St Leonards, while comparison goods shopping was primarily undertaken at Hastings and Tunbridge Wells. In terms of vitality and viability, our town centre health check concluded that Battle was performing strongly for a centre of its size and nature.
- 8.8 Ravenside Retail Park is the only out of centre retail park within Rother District and lies between Bexhill and Hastings. The retail park is also a popular destination for residents within the study area for both convenience and comparison goods

shopping. Ravenside Retail Park also draws a substantial amount of its trade from the Hastings area.

- 8.9 In reviewing each of the three main towns in Rother District, we engaged with stakeholders and town centre occupiers. What was most striking from these sessions was the enthusiasm and commitment of the participants to their respective towns. This is something which should be harnessed in order to coordinate promotion, marketing and events in each of the towns to encourage residents and visitors to use the town centres more frequently.
- 8.10 The District-Wide Shopping Assessment has consider the quantitative need for additional retail floorspace in Rother District up to 2026. The retail capacity work has been prepared adopting a conventional approach and has been underwritten by the results of a specifically commissioned household telephone survey to establish current shopping patterns and town centre usage.
- 8.11 The retail floorspace capacity calculations for Bexhill town centre show, on a constant market share approach a quantitative convenience floorspace need which is sufficient to support either an additional large foodstore in the town centre or an extension to an existing food store. On a continuing fixed market share approach there is comparison goods floorspace need in Bexhill of 1,325 sqm sales in 2011 and this rises over the study period.
- 8.12 However, we consider that there is qualitative justification to plan for both convenience and comparison floorspace in excess of the identified market share based quantitative need. Given the planned growth in Bexhill's population and the increased future competition which the town will face from both Hastings and Eastbourne, it is appropriate to seek to enhance Bexhill town centres market share through retail expansion and co-ordinated town centre marketing to capitalise on the existing distinctive retail offer.
- 8.13 For Battle, based upon existing market share levels, the convenience goods capacity calculations give support for very modest additional convenience goods floorspace provision to serve Battle's residents. However, the floorspace need estimates for Battle town centre are predicated upon a continuation of the existing low level of convenience goods trade retention by Battle town centre and outflow of shopping visits to the larger food superstores around St Leonards and Hastings. In order to

achieve a more sustainable pattern of food shopping, we reviewed the potential for Battle's convenience shopping market share to be increased and our assessment sets out alternative convenience goods floorspace need estimates for the town centre.

- 8.14 This convenience goods need could be met by a new foodstore or an extension to one of the existing small foodstores within the town centre. However, given the historic nature and relative constraints on the potential for physical expansion of Battle town centre further consideration will be required to assess the potential to accommodate this within the historic environment and conservation area constraints of the town centre.
- 8.15 The quantitative assessment of comparison goods shopping need in Battle town centre showed limited potential for new floorspace over the study period and given the proximity to and attraction of the comparison shopping offer in Hastings, it was not considered practical to seek to grow Battle town centres market share for comparison goods.
- 8.16 In Rye town centre, the market share based retail capacity analysis shows a modest quantitative need for additional convenience and comparison goods floorspace to serve Rye's residents. However, the quantitative need analysis is based upon the existing low levels of trade retention by the retail facilities in Rye town centre and a corresponding high proportion of trade leakage to Hastings, Ashford, Tunbridge Wells and other distant locations for main food shopping and mainstream comparison goods shopping.
- 8.17 We consider that quantitatively (and qualitatively) retail provision within Rye town centre should be improved to address trade leakage. To provide guidance upon the scope for additional floorspace at Rye town centre, we have assessed the future potential based upon an increased trade retention for both convenience and comparison goods shopping. This uplifted trade retention objective would support additional convenience goods floorspace beyond the permitted extension to the Jempson store. An improved market share for Rye's comparison shopping gives rise for additional comparison goods shopping floorspace, this could potentially attract more mainstream comparison goods retailers into the town. In addition, we consider that town centre management coordination would also act to boost Rye's overall visitor attraction and its trade retention within the local area.

- 8.18 When considering the identified retail need for Rye town centre, the compatibility of proposals with the conservation of the vitally important historic town centre will be a key consideration.
- 8.19 Turning to the two District centres of Sidley and Little Common which are contained within Bexhill's urban area, each contain small supermarkets which the retail capacity analysis shows are achieving healthy levels of turnover and give rise to convenience goods floorspace need over the study period. In Sidley this could potentially support a new small supermarket or discounter or small scale extensions to the existing supermarkets (Lidl & Co-Op) to relieve over trading. At Little Common, planning consent has been granted for a convenience store and this will absorb the quantitative need identified.
- 8.20 The Tesco at Ravenside Retail Park is the largest foodstore within Rother District and has the fullest range of convenience goods. The capacity analysis shows this store to be overtrading and this could be viewed as supporting an extension to this store. However as an out-of-centre store, the PPS6 tests of quantitative and qualitative need, scale, sequential approach and impact would all need to be acceptably addressed for any retail expansion to be appropriate in this location.
- 8.21 The comparison goods shopping at Ravenside Retail Park is popular and the capacity calculations show that by 2011, there is modest overtrading at Ravenside, this increases steadily up to 2026, giving rise to a significant floorspace requirements by the end of the study period. As an out-of-centre facility, the Council are not obliged to plan for any expansion of retailing at this location. The only planning justification for the Council to make provision for expansion of facilities here arises where the identified level of need cannot be accommodated in a sequentially preferred location (primarily Bexhill or Hastings town centres or the edge of these centres or any other existing centre within the area) and where no harm (detrimental impact) would arise to the health and planned future investment in existing established town centres.
- 8.22 Should the Council be minded to make provision for some expansion of retail facilities at the Ravenside Retail Park, they should ensure that any planned or potential town centre investment or retail growth objectives at Bexhill, Battle or Rye town centres would not be comprised and the future vitality and viability of these town centres is maintained.