Leeds CITY COUNCIL

Originator:	Sue Speak
Tel:	2478079

Report of the Director of City Development

Development Plan Panel

Date: 9 August 2011

Subject: Leeds City Centre, Town and Local Centres Study

Electoral Wards Affected:	**Specific Implications For:**	
All	Equality and Diversity	√
	Community Cohesion	√
	Narrowing the Gap	√

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The city council commissioned Colliers International to provide an up to date, picture of current and future capacity for retailing and other town centre uses across the district, and to project the future retail need. The study was also required to assess the existing hierarchy of designated centres in the Leeds district in terms of their function and effectiveness, and examine the emerging Core Strategy proposed hierarchy.

The Study provides a basis to develop appropriate planning policy approaches for town centres and main "town centre uses", which include retail, leisure, offices, arts, tourism and cultural activities. This report summarises Colliers findings and indicates that the role of Leeds city centre in the regional shopping hierarchy is not at risk and its status as the major centre in employment terms is secure. It is not considered that further allocations beyond those already committed are needed at this time, given significant commitments for both retail and leisure in the city centre.

There is no strategic need to identify new sites for office development beyond those already identified in the Employment Land Review, but small scale opportunities should be considered within and on the edge of town centres to meet the needs of local small businesses. The retail need for convenience goods within the district up to 2016 is estimated at 19,626 sqm. net and 135,576sq.m for comparison goods

The town and local centre hierarchy is examined and recommendations made regarding the status of existing and proposed town and local centres together with the need to consider development opportunities within or adjacent to specific centres.

1.0 PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

1.1 Members will recall that as part of the evidence base for the LDF, Colliers International were commissioned to provide an up to date, comprehensive picture of current and future capacity for retailing and related town centre uses across the district, and to project the future retail need. The study was also required to assess the existing hierarchy of designated centres in the Leeds district in terms of their function and effectiveness, examine the proposed hierarchy within the emerging Core Strategy and identify any gaps within the provision of retail and related town centre uses. This report summarises Colliers findings.

2.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Study Objectives

2.1 The objectives of the study were to:

- Contribute towards the evidence base to support the LDF, and assist in determining planning applications.
- Provide a quantitative and qualitative assessment of the need for new floorspace for comparison goods, convenience goods and leisure developments up to 2016. The consultants were asked to include an assessment of net ‘leakage’ of retail expenditure from Leeds to competing retail centres, catalogue shopping, and internet shopping.
- Assess the appropriate level of retail and leisure floorspace needed to support the Core Strategy growth proposals including consideration of city centre requirements up to 2026.
- Undertake a ‘health check’ on the vitality and viability of the city centre and town centres in accordance with the advice set out in PPS4 (Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth). This was to include an evaluation of whether centres are performing well, functioning adequately, performing poorly or are “at risk”.
- Assess the ability to meet identified need, within the city, town and local centres based on pipeline development and assessment of capacity available.
- Advise on the need to expand or contract centres within the district based on Core Strategy proposals.
- Advise on the need for new centres, to support any identified gaps in the retail hierarchy and provide an indication of the catchment area for different levels of the hierarchy for comparison and convenience goods.
- Provide a view on the centres hierarchy and planning policy for centres outlined in the Core Strategy Preferred Approach and recommend where changes would be appropriate.
- Provide a market view on retailer representation, including independent retailers and market facilities; retailer demand; rental values within centres and key retail trends relevant to the Leeds district. In this context a market view was requested on the appropriate scale and function of Kirkgate market in Leeds city centre.
- Confirm or suggest modifications to the appropriate boundaries of the city centre and town centres in the Leeds district identified by Leeds city council, and advise on appropriate local centre boundaries. Identified boundaries are intended to inform the Site Allocations DPD and will be used as a material consideration in determining planning applications.

- Advise on whether a lower impact assessment threshold is appropriate for the scale of edge of centre and out of centre development (as suggested in PPS4 EC1d).
- Provide input into defining any locally important impacts on centres (as advised in PPS4 EC31e)

Policy background

2.2 The current local Development Plan retail and town centre policies in Leeds are set out in the Leeds Unitary Development Plan (UDP) Review 2006. These were in effect generally unchanged from the original Leeds UDP adopted in August 2001, and are based on survey analysis and a national policy context dating from the late 1980's and early 1990's.

2.3 However, the UDP policies have retained a broad consistency with the general thrust of national policies and UDP proposals have supported the development of new facilities in areas where deficiencies in shopping provision for particular communities had been identified.

2.4 The preparation of the LDF, however, requires the re-assessment of policy against an up to date evidence base. In order to underpin the study an extensive household survey, was carried out together with supporting street surveys of shoppers and surveys of businesses This survey information was used to forecast future needs, together with population projections (based on the Strategic Housing Market Area Assessment SHMAA), and standard retail and expenditure projections All this information was then used to provide an assessment of current circumstances, potential future requirements and suggestions on appropriate strategy development.

2.5 The consultants findings take account of current economic and retailing circumstances. There are clear uncertainties over short term prospects and potentially longer term uncertainties over prospects for retail generally and high streets in particular. Colliers consider the scope to meet significant needs by bringing forward the development of new 'town centres' must be questionable given limited potential for public sector investment in key constituents of the overall town centre offer. Their advice is based on "a relatively cautious approach", reflecting PPS4 national planning policy guidance as currently stated.

3.0 MAIN ISSUES

Leeds city centre retail and leisure context

3.1 Leeds city centre is not only the main centre within Leeds, but also across a wide region. This relates not only to its shopping function but also to its status as a major regional office centre. Comparisons with other major centres confirm this. Leeds city centre floorspace within the Primary Shopping Quarter is estimated at approximately 350,000sq.metres (3.7million sqft). This compares with:

- Harrogate 140,000sqm (1.5m sqft)
- York 186,000sqm (2m sqft)
- Wakefield 165,000sqm (1.57m sqft)
- Huddersfield 185,000sqm (2m sqft)

- Bradford 185,000sqm (2m sqft)
- Halifax 130,000sqm (1.4msq.ft)

3.2 Colliers has undertaken a healthcheck of Leeds city centre which looks at aspects which include rental levels, vacancies, and commercial yields. In recent years the city centre has seen a decline in rental levels due to both the wider economic downturn, but also due to retailers awaiting the completion of Trinity Leeds in 2013 which will provide new units and create churn in the centre. In 2002 retail rental levels were £270 per sq.ft, rising to £310 in 2005, until 2009 when levels dropped to £260 per sq.ft.(Source: Focus April 2011).

3.3 In terms of vacant property Experian Goad figures indicate 241 units in the city centre providing 477,300 sq.ft of vacant floorspace in April 2009. These levels are higher than the national average, with the number of vacant units comprising 18.5% of the total, compared to a national average of 10.4%. With regard to floorspace this equates to 12.6% of city centre floorspace being vacant compared to the national average of 8.3%. Although these vacancy levels seem relatively high, the 2009 report contains a number of units that were undergoing refurbishment at the time. These have now been renovated and reopened, notable examples being the Corn Exchange, The Core and units affected by the refurbishment of Trinity Leeds. As a consequence vacancies recorded in 2009 are anticipated to be higher than currently exist.

3.4 Commercial yields are based on the evidence of property transactions. The level of yield (expressed as a percentage) broadly represents the markets evaluation of the risk and return attached to the income from a property. Broadly speaking, low yields indicate that investors believe a town is attractive and as a result, is more likely to attract investment than a town with high yields. The VOA Property Market Report, July 2008 provides yield data for Yorkshire and the Humber. Yields for 2008 in Leeds are recorded at 4.75%. This compares well with other centres within the region, with Harrogate and York recorded at 5.75%, Wakefield 6.75% Huddersfield and Bradford 7%, and Halifax 7.5%. Colliers estimate that the yield for Leeds is now at around 5%, however, this is still relatively low and is considered to reflect a centre that is performing well.

3.5 Taking into account recent and emerging proposals within other major city and town centres such as Wakefield and Bradford the consultants are confident in concluding that the role of Leeds City Centre in the regional shopping hierarchy is not at risk and its status as the major centre in employment terms is secure. This is not only evidenced by current facilities and its role as an employment centre, but also by developments underway and schemes being promoted. In particular, the well progressed Trinity Leeds scheme (providing 32,700 sq.metres (352,000sq.ft) of floorspace) and the Leeds Arena will each address some of the main deficiencies when compared with other regional centres. The proposals for the Eastgate Quarter 130,000sqm (1.4m sq ft) will provide, further retail space of the type that the city has been lacking.

3.6 Given the significant commitments for both retail and leisure in the city centre, it is not considered that further allocations or specific proposals need to be made at this time. Clearly, the need to produce annual monitoring reports to review Development Plans will result in on-going reassessment, but given the scale of schemes under construction and permitted, it is considered that the city centre will undergo some years of readjustment and consolidation and any further significant development or strategies should emerge after that period. This does not in any way preclude the reconfiguring and remodelling of existing floorspace and proposals to modernise and improve space and facilities should be encouraged. However, the UDP Shopping Quarter will accommodate this significant committed growth and no expansion of it is considered necessary. The defined City Centre retains scope for additional office development but delivery and take up will also need to be monitored to assess need for further allocations given the strengthened PPS4 advice on the location of office development.

3.7 Cultural and leisure facilities have also experienced significant recent improvements and on-going developments respectively. The City Museum has a new home providing hugely improved facilities over those offered previously in the converted former Civic Theatre, while the Grand Theatre has had extensive remodelling and refurbishment which allow it to continue to accommodate not only high quality drama but also facilities for music and dance. The provision of modern and permanent homes for dance and music at Quarry Hill, have supplemented this. The city has been notable for its lack of a major performance venue for many years but the development of Leeds Arena will remedy this deficiency.

Kirkgate Markets

3.8 Colliers were asked to provide a market view on Kirkgate Markets. However, since starting the study the city council embarked on more specific investigations of costs, issues and opportunities relating to the Markets and consequently only a broad view has been requested. Colliers note that Kirkgate Markets are clearly an important landmark and provide a distinctive retail offer within the city. The historic fabric of the covered market warrants retention in its own right and the front market hall (the 1904 building) is spectacular both internally and externally. Maintenance and suitability are clearly significant issues for the council.

3.9 The open market area has been diversified to accommodate a variety of activities and this seems well attended generally by traders and shoppers. However, between the historic building and the open market are the utilitarian buildings which were erected following a fire. Colliers overall impression is that the indoor market provides more space than is required by both businesses and shoppers. This area might provide the opportunity for more radical intervention, particularly when Eastgate development progresses. This can be expected to fundamentally change the character of the area, bringing surface car parking into economic use and generally improving retail space. The city is expected to undergo a period of readjustment and pedestrian flows will be changed significantly. The opportunities that arise from this change could support such an approach in the future.

Leeds Office Market

3.10 Leeds City centre office market now operates in four zones; City Core, Greater Core, East Quarter and Southern Gateway. Headline rents across the city centre are £27per sqft, average rents across all grades are £18 per sqft. The city core has suffered the most in respect of the recession with an estimated 28,000 sqm (301,000 sqft) of floorspace being vacated between 2008 and 2010 across all grades of office space. This is partly due to the Core area being occupied by a large majority of financial and business service sectors which have been hard hit by the recession. The area has also seen a large amount of redevelopment with new floorspace coming on to the market, which has distorted the figures. At the end of 2010 Leeds City Centre had 200,097sq m (2.15m sqft) available for rent.

3.11 In addition to the city centre 817,000 sqm (8.8m sq.ft) of out of centre business and office parks has been developed over the last 15 years. Headline rents within the business parks are cheaper than the city centre at £18.50 per sq ft with an average across all grades at £12.70 per sq.ft. Despite this Colliers indicate that most businesses want city centre or city fringe locations which are more accessible to staff and clients.

Policy approach

3.12 The key national policy is PPS4 which seeks to return new economic development (including offices) to designated town centres and move away from the trend of out-of-centre development. The policy promotes the sequential approach aiming for in-centre development followed by edge-of-centre locations. If no centre or edge-of-centre sites are available, only then can out-of –centre sites be considered.

3.13 The Core Strategy Preferred Approach(CSPA) broadly reflects the aims of PPS4 and the sequential approach and promotes the city centre as the focus for major new office development. Existing out-of-centre permissions which lapse will be considered against the sequential approach in PPS4. The CSPA takes on board the floorspace development targets set out in the Regional Spatial Strategy, advising that 550,000sqm be provided within the city centre and 50,000sqm within other defined centres between 2008 and 2026. Subsequently, the Council’s own Employment Land Review (ELR)(March 2011) now identifies a requirement for the provision of 805,000sqm of office floorspace to 2026 based on regional economic model forecasts of employment growth in the City Region. The ELR identifies 950,000sqm of office floorspace to meet the employment requirements of the city to 2026, based on sites with extant planning permission. Approximately 52% of the identified supply is located within the city centre and 45% in out-of-centre locations. Only 2% are situated in edge of centre locations and just 0.5% are situated in other designated town centres.

3.14 The ELR concludes that on the basis of the requirement there is no strategic need to identify new sites for office development and sites with extant permission which provide a least a ten year supply of 645,000sq.m (7m sqft) should be identified on the Proposals Map.

3.15 In summary given that existing supply is sufficient to meet the identified requirement for office floorspace to 2026, development will continue in a similar manner as achieved through the current UDP, although with more emphasis on new development within the city centre. There appears to be limited opportunity for new office development within existing defined centres, although the ELR currently only looks at sites with an area of 0.4ha or greater and many town centre sites are likely to be smaller. It is proposed to review this size threshold and include sites above 0.2ha. In addition through the Site Allocations Development Plan Document further opportunities for office development will be sought within and on the edge of the defined town and local centres. It is therefore likely that small office opportunities will arise in association with these centres which are likely to meet the needs of local small businesses.

Centres Hierarchy

3.16 The pattern of centres in Leeds is generally a consequence of historical growth of the main urban area and outlying towns. As the nature of retail provision and shopper expectations has changed, then the ability of centres to perform the role expected of them has changed. An important element of the Study is to identify deficiencies and needs and the capacity for meeting those needs. Consequently an assessment of how centres are performing through analysis of a household survey, shopper and business surveys is particularly important.

Town Centres

3.17 Colliers have reviewed the existing and proposed lists suggested through the Core Strategy Preferred Approach (CSPA) shown in Appendix 1. Appendix 2 gives a full list of town and local centres recommended for inclusion in the Core Strategy. The hierarchy now proposed consists of the city centre, 29 town centres and 38 local centres. They have confirmed agreement to most of the town centre designations, but on the basis of a healthcheck assessment, and market information (Appendix 3) have recommended that certain centres should be downgraded to local centre status, based on their ability to meet weekly shopping needs and the range of facilities they provide.

3.18 The Study suggests a two-tier approach to local centres, recognising that there can be significant differences in scale and function of centres. Centres which they consider which should be regarded as local centres instead of town centres, are Boston Spa, Harehills Corner and Kippax. In addition to these, Moortown Corner was put forward as a town centre in the CSPA but the consultants consider it should remain as a local centre, however, they concur with proposals to designate Harehills Lane, and land at All Saints/Great Clothes, Richmond Hill as town centres.

3.19 The role of Dewsbury Road within the hierarchy is considered to be significantly dependant on the identification of development opportunities. If such centres cannot be shown to be operating at an appropriate level, then the consultants view is that their place within the hierarchy should be adjusted accordingly.

3.20 A number of other centres do not perform as major locations for weekly shopping needs, mainly due to the absence of a major foodstore, however, they continue to provide other town centre facilities or operate as very much a focus for specific local communities. Armley, Farsley, Chapel Allerton, Cross Gates and Headingley are noted in this respect, but it is concluded that given that town centre status should reflect the overall role of centres, there is no need to redefine them. Colliers suggest that it would be appropriate for Site Allocations DPD to consider whether there are appropriate development opportunities within or more likely on the edge of these centres to accommodate new foodstore developments to add to the functions of these centres. They note that this will not always be possible, because of physical constraints, commercial prospect of delivery, or the presence of existing freestanding stores in the local area.

3.21 There are also centres based on large foodstores which might be considered either limited or outdated. Holt Park and Horsforth are given as examples. It is recommended that the need and scope to revitalise these centres through refurbishment or redevelopment is discussed with relevant retailers.

Local Centres

3.22 Local centres put forward in the CSPA have been assessed and advice given on appropriate boundaries, (see list in Appendix 1). It should be noted that while the Core Strategy will identify the locations of Local centres, precise boundaries will be a matter for the Site allocations DPD.

3.23 Colliers suggest that this level of the hierarchy should be separated into large local centres and small local centres on the basis that there are clear differences in scale among the local centres. Large local centres can provide for developments at an appropriate scale to meet local convenience needs, or there may be potential opportunity within them, or on their edges. Even some of the smaller local centres are defined to incorporate properties which may provide opportunity for redevelopment which could accommodate more up to date convenience store opportunities.

3.24 Where there are gaps in convenience food provision within the hierarchy which would result in facilities not being within walking distance of communities, and where opportunities do not exist within centres, it is considered that it may be a sustainable approach to provide stores up to 372sq m [4,000 sq ft] to meet basic day to day needs.

Retail Need Assessment

3.25 A major objective of the study is to estimate the need for additional **retail** floorspace within Leeds District through to 2026. The assessment has been undertaken for the two main categories of retailing – convenience goods and comparison goods. The area studied is shown on Plan 1. This is the area from which most of the retail expenditure in the district is seen to derive and is consequently the area for which a household survey was undertaken to establish the current pattern of shopping activity. The household survey is the foundation upon which retail need estimates are built.

3.26 A traditional approach to estimating retail floorspace need has been followed. The need for additional retail floorspace within a centre is dependent on the relationship between the demand for and the supply of space. The demand for floorspace is determined by assessing the likely growth in the volume of consumer retail expenditure within an area taking into account population growth. An assessment of floorspace supply involves quantifying existing supply and the extent to which proposed changes in the location, quality and quantity of retail floorspace will meet the forecast increases in expenditure. Any monetary shortfall of supply relative to demand, in the future, indicates there is the need for more retail floorspace in quantitative terms.

3.27 The scale of additional retail provision is then determined by converting any excess of consumer expenditure (assessed through detailed survey) into a retail floorspace need by applying appropriate sales densities. It should be noted that the estimates make deductions to allow for “special forms of trading” e.g internet shopping.

3.28 Estimates of retail need for convenience goods, non- bulky and bulky comparison goods have been provided for 10 geographic zones within the Leeds district for 2016, 2021 and 2026 based on two scenarios for population projections supplied by the city council. The lower scenario reflects the projections used for the SHMAA. The retail need figures derived from this are considered to represent a more realistic approach to retail need. This is on the basis that there is uncertainty about levels of population growth and clear uncertainties about retail prospects in the short term and difficulty in forecasting retail growth beyond five years.

3.29 The methodology assumes that the market share of the Leeds retail economy will remain constant through to the end date of 2026. This is a standard starting point for analysis, referenced in PPS4, however, PPS4 makes clear that where considered appropriate or necessary, policy can be devised to develop a strategy to change market shares to reduce polarisation into higher order centres and/or ensure delivery of additional development to meet particular needs more sustainably. Consequently the retail need outcomes provide the basis for policy development and should not be taken to confirm definitive requirements for new retail development at various locations.

3.30 Retail need estimates are shown in Tables 1 and 2, Appendix 4 at 2016, 2021 and 2026 for convenience goods and comparison goods. In terms of convenience goods the retail need for the Leeds district in 2016 is estimated to be 19,626 sq.m net, rising to 41,515,sq.m in 2026. For comparison goods the need is anticipated to be 135,576 sq.m in 2016 rising to 178,201 sq.m in 2026. Although estimates have been carried out for 2021 and 2026, Colliers consider that the retail strategy for the LDF should be focussed on potential retail floorspace at 2016. This is because a cautious approach should underpin the assessment not only because of current economic conditions, but because the growth in expenditure and consequent floorspace needs arises to a significant extent from forecasts of population growth as previously referred to in paragraph 3.26 above. Issues relating to retail need in respect of the impact on centres are discussed below and highlighted in Appendix 4.

Issues arising from retail need estimates

<u>Comparison shopping in Leeds city centre</u>

3.31 The household survey highlights that the dominant centres within Leeds for comparison shopping are the city centre attracting 59% of spend on non-bulky comparison goods and White Rose attracting 20.4%.

3.32 The need for floorspace to 2016 is calculated to be 24,404 sq.m net. The capacity assessment takes Trinity and Eastgate as commitments. In light of these developments it is not considered imperative to plan for further expansion of the city centre at the present time, despite the market share indications of capacity. The two schemes, individually and certainly cumulatively, will result in restructuring and re-organisation of retailers and other operators in the city centre. The experience of past schemes, such as the Bond Street Centre, has demonstrated that in the assimilation of new development, retailer relocations occur, to take advantage of the most modern quality retail space and the re-occupation of the resulting space, can take some time. It is therefore considered unlikely that developers would feel confident enough to bring forward any significant development in addition to Trinity and Eastgate until both of those schemes have been developed and established their trading position within the city centre. It is however, reasonable to assume that there will be scope for and opportunities to remodel existing floorspace as the development of the former Lewis/ Allders and the remodelling of the Headrow shopping centre to form The Core have demonstrated. This may be particularly the case as retailers relocate into the new developments and existing landlords seek to modernise their space to meet particular requirements.

White Rose

3.33 Comparison shopping facilities in Leeds are clearly dominated by Leeds City Centre, but White Rose also provides significant floorspace. Furthermore the assessment of retail need apportions a further 100,012 sq.m net to the Outer South zone, which is essentially White Rose. This raises issues; White Rose is not a defined centre and lacks the range of facilities and character which would enable it to become designated as one.

3.34 The quantitative assessment is based on the market share approach which is acknowledged as appropriate in Government guidance. However, this approach as its name suggests, simply projects existing market shares forward. This can mean that the most significant centres or retail destinations will become increasingly more dominant. The extent to which this is desirable and whether and how adjustments should be made is a matter of policy consideration. In Colliers view, given national guidance, the currently extant RSS and Leeds' own policy, together with the aims and objectives relating to town centres in neighbouring Districts, there is no case for supporting additional development at White Rose.

3.35 Furthermore, Colliers assessments were made at a time when Trinity Walk in Wakefield was still under development, but that has now opened and the aspiration is that it will clawback significant trade to Wakefield city centre (currently lost to White Rose). The long stalled Westfield development in Bradford is remerging and it would clearly be contrary to an overall strategy for development at White Rose to prejudice the possible development of this significant regeneration scheme. In addition, as stated previously, Leeds city centre has new development underway. While new proposals are emerging it would be inappropriate for development to take place at White Rose which might deter investment in committed city centre schemes, as well as denying trade to established town centres within Leeds and elsewhere.

Other Leeds Centres

3.36 Other centres within Leeds are less significant in terms of comparison shopping, however, it is considered that proposals for additional comparison goods floorspace within or on the edge of defined town centres should be supported, particularly within Inner and Outer South and Inner and Outer West zones to absorb the significant market share capacity related to White Rose.

Convenience Shopping

3.37 The town centre hierarchy is related significantly to the pattern of shopping for main convenience goods needs. This should not be the sole criterion for 'town centre' status, but it is a consideration which carries weight. Main convenience shopping needs in Leeds are met in a number of ways. They range from:

1. Relatively large stores accommodated within or on the edge of long established centres.
2. More recent developments based on relatively large foodstores, some of which clearly meet town centre definitions, but others where there is some compromise and others which are simply shopping destinations.
3. Centres which incorporate relatively large foodstores, albeit these may be somewhat dated.
4. Freestanding stores.

3.38 There are relatively few freestanding stores in Leeds, albeit a large number of foodstore developments have taken place on the edge of centres, as centre redevelopments or where centre upgrades have been identified as appropriate response to meeting needs.

3.39 The quantitative analysis shows that there are a number of centres where overtrading is taking place and there are other opportunities where expected population growth might justify new provision. More generally, it is considered that there is scope to enhance accessibility through facilities for everyday shopping needs without requiring development of a scale which could prejudice town centres or incorporate the sale of a range of goods which would be expected at such town centres.

3.40 The key conclusions relating to meeting convenience shopping needs are as follows:

1. Investigations should be made to attempt to identify opportunities for relatively large store developments to meet specific deficiencies particularly where centres have not developed as expected. These centres are most notably Dewsbury Road, but also include Chapel Allerton, Cross Gates and Farsley. In addition, the scope for new town centres or significant foodstore development in Inner East Leeds such as the proposal at All Saints/Great Clothes, Richmond Hill should be considered further.

2. The position at Armley should be monitored closely and if the current proposals are not delivered, then alternatives will need to be investigated, including scope for the consideration of a new centre in Inner West around Stonebridge Mills, Wortley.

3. Requirements relating to potential significant population growth should also be investigated, although the timescales within which that population growth is likely suggests that these are not urgent.

4. The scope for redevelopment, refurbishment or improvement of stores anchoring established town centres should be explored with operators, and the local authority should adopt a pro-active approach to delivering improvements. There are sectors of Leeds where assessments indicate that existing centres, or more accurately, stores, are overtrading. Town centres as the preferred locations to address such needs and the city council will need to identify opportunities for retail development.

5. It is considered that opportunities for stores selling convenience goods up to, say, 1,858 sq metres gross (20,000 sq ft) could remedy particular deficiencies. These would best be associated with large local centres but particular circumstances might allow greater flexibility. Colliers advise the local planning authority to

engage with retailers to investigate this potential prior to introducing it as a policy initiative. The matters to address with retailers might include:

- the appropriate size threshold;
- need to limit the range of goods to be sold to address convenience shopping needs in a sustainable manner;
- consideration of sectors of Leeds where this approach would assist in meeting needs in accordance with the principles of sustainable development.

3.41 PPS4 suggests that planning authorities consider any "locally important considerations". Colliers suggest that any planning application which would increase floorspace in any defined centre by 10% should be subject to assessment. The 10% figure is a guide and current consumer expenditure expectations might justify a lower figure.

3.42 PPS4 suggests a threshold of 2,500 sq metres gross for assessment of impacts for proposals out of centre and not identified in a development plan. Given the suggestion that there may be opportunities for smaller stores to meet identified convenience shopping needs Colliers advise that a lower threshold of 1,500 sq metres gross would be appropriate. The PPS4 thresholds are however, considered appropriate for non-food and leisure proposals.

4.0 Implications for Council Policy and Governance

4.1 PPS4 "Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth" requires local authorities to assess the detailed need for land or floorspace for all main town centre uses within their Local Development Framework's and identify any deficiencies in terms of capacity and supply within the Plan period. The Leeds city centre, town and local centres study, forms part of the evidence base for the LDF. Once adopted the LDF will form part of the Development Plan for Leeds. It has been necessary to undertake this work in order to justify the council's future approach to development within the city, town and local centres.

5.0 Legal and Resource Implications

5.1 The LDF is being prepared within the context of the LDF Regulations and statutory requirements. Once adopted, the LDF, will be the development plan for Leeds and will need to be consistent with corporate objectives of the community strategy. Preparing evidence for the council's emerging LDF is time consuming and resource intensive.

6.0 Conclusions

6.1 This report has provided information on Leeds city centre, town and local centres study which will inform policy within the LDF. The main conclusions of the report are that:

- the role of Leeds city centre in the regional shopping hierarchy is not at risk and its status as the major centre in employment terms is secure.

- given significant commitments for both retail and leisure in the city centre it is not considered that further allocations beyond those already committed are needed at this time.

- there is no strategic need to identify new sites for development beyond those already identified in the Employment Land Review, but small scale opportunities will be sought within and on the edge of town centres to meet the needs of local small businesses.

- the town centre status of Boston Spa, Harehills Corner and Kippax should be reconsidered and they should now be regarded as local centres.

- Harehills Lane, All Saints/Great Clothes, Richmond Hill should be designated as town centres

- requirements relating to any significant areas of population growth will need to be investigated

- the council should consider whether appropriate development opportunities are available within or on the edge of Dewsbury Road, Farsley, Chapel Allerton Cross Gates, and Headingley to improve the weekly shopping function of these centres

- the scope to revitalise the large outdated foodstores within Holt Park and Horsforth should be discussed with relevant retailers.

- the retail need for convenience goods within the district up to 2016 is estimated at 19,626 sqm. net and 135,576sq.m for comparison goods

7.0 Recommendations

7.1 Development Plan Panel are requested to note and comment on the contents of this report.

Background Papers

Leeds city centre, town and local centres study: Carried out on behalf of Leeds city council by Colliers International.