Chapter Eleven

SHOPPING

Chapter Eleven
SHOPPING

INTRODUCTION

11.01 Shopping is concentrated in Dover and Deal town centres. Elsewhere in the urban areas and in the villages, there are small parades, groups and individual shops which serve very local areas. There are, however, two exceptions to this. The first concerns the White Cliffs Business Park at Whitfield, Dover, where there is some out-of-centre shopping. The second is the small rural town of Sandwich which contains a significant amount of shopping serving not only the local area but also some of the District's tourist trade.

Existing Situation

11.02 Dover and Deal compete for trade with other centres in East Kent, including Ashford, Canterbury, Folkestone, Margate and Ramsgate. When compared in terms of size of centre, retailer representation and rental values a clear hierarchy emerges with Canterbury dominating. Dover and Deal are at the bottom of the hierarchy, mainly serving the immediate needs of their catchment areas. In effect, major shopping trips, particularly for clothing and household products, are normally undertaken elsewhere. This results in a significant loss of expenditure from the District, as well as additional and longer journeys. Strengthening the position of Dover and Deal town centres is a main theme of this chapter.

11.03 Despite their comparatively low position in the shopping hierarchy, both Dover and Deal are experiencing pressure for new retail development. In order to provide a basis for responding to this pressure, the Council commissioned a comprehensive study of the District[1]. The Study took into account the Government's advice on shopping policy (PPG6), incorporated a survey of shoppers and shopping facilities, and provided a commercial assessment of shopping in the District. The conclusions of the study have provided a valuable input to the Plan.

11.04 The Study estimated the amount of money that is available for expenditure on convenience and comparison shopping and how this will change over the period to 2001. This is shown in Figures 11.1 and 11.2. The amount of expenditure that is lost to other shopping centres was also estimated.

Figure 11.1: Convenience expenditure (£m. 1990 prices)

Catchment	1991	1996	2001	2006
Dover	51.1	52.6	53.8	54.8
Deal*	32.7	33.5	34.8	35.5

Figure 11.2: Comparison expenditure (£m. 1990 prices)

Catchment	1991	1996	2001	2006
Dover	58.3	62.1	74.0	89.0
Deal*	37.1	39.7	48.1	57.6

Source: Dover District Council Retail Study, Erdman Lewis 1994
*Primary catchment only

11.05 Given the size of existing shopping centres, together with outstanding planning permissions, it is possible to reach a view as to the likely requirement for new shopping provision from a quantitative standpoint. The Study's conclusions are very similar to the County Council's, as set out in Structure Plan Technical Working Paper 4/94.

11.06 Owing to the rapidly changing nature of shopping, it is not possible to make reliable predictions for the last five years of the Plan Period. However, a supplement to the Study has provided some broad indicative figures in order to give a general picture of expenditure growth over the whole Plan Period. These are shown in Figures 11.1 and 11.2 in italics to differentiate them from the firmer predictions up to 2001. Further to this, an updating study of comparison shopping in Deal, carried out in 1997, has provided firmer expenditure figures particularly over the 2001 to 2006 period.

Applying the Plan's Aims and Objectives

11.07 With respect to Aim 1, new shopping should not involve building on countryside or valuable open space (Objectives 1 and 3). Rather, the focus of shopping activity is to be the town centres of Dover and Deal, where shoppers have greater choice of transport. In line with Aim 3 (Objective 22), town centres should provide easier access, particularly for those without a car. Objective 23 indicates that they should be welcoming places.

Shopping Strategy

11.08 Based on the existing situation and the Aims and Objectives, the Plan's shopping strategy seeks to:-

(a) concentrate new shops in the town centres of Dover and Deal;

(b) provide for the needs of the local population as far as is practical, taking into account the limitations imposed by Dover and Deal's positions in the shopping hierarchy;

(c) ensure that shops are accessible by a range of means of transport including walking and cycling;

(d) improve the quality of town centre shopping and its environment; and

(e) support local shopping, particularly in Sandwich.

Dover town centre

11.09 While the question of access in terms of the location of new shops is considered in this chapter, complementary policies relating to access within town centres can be found in Chapter 4. Physical access to shops is considered in Chapter 8 and the potential for converting unused space above shops is considered in Chapters 3 and 10.

SUSTAINABLE RETAIL DEVELOPMENT

11.10 The Council believes that town centres are the most appropriate location for shops. The Plan's policies are very much geared to preventing any decline in the role of shopping in the town centres and maximising any opportunities for strengthening that role.

11.11 The Government's objectives include the need to sustain and enhance the vitality and viability of town centres and to ensure a wide range of shops, employment, services and facilities are available to which people have easy access by a choice of means of transport. Where the need for new development is established, the preferred location for new shopping investment will always be for town centre sites. If it can be demonstrated that no suitable sites or buildings suitable for conversion are available, an edge-of-centre site may be acceptable provided there is a need for additional facilities and there are good pedestrian and cycle links to the town centre and the development would sustain and enhance the vitality and viability of the existing centre. Such sites should be readily accessible by public transport.

11.12 Proposals for sites elsewhere in the urban area will only be considered if the above two options are not available, there is a demonstrable need for additional facilities, the site is accessible by a choice of means of transport, and the development would not undermine the key retail strategy of the Plan to sustain and enhance the existing town centres of the District. In addition, the supply of land for other uses must not be prejudiced and, if possible, the site should be grouped with other similar uses. In order to limit the possibility of retail warehousing competing directly with a town centre, any permissions will be subject to a condition restricting the range of goods which can be sold, to avoid direct conflict with existing town centres. Proposals for development beyond the urban area will not be acceptable. The 'sequential approach' to locating major retail developments is also contained within Structure Plan Policy R1.

11.13 The Plan applies the 'sequential approach' with one notable exception. In the case of major convenience food retail development in Dover, local circumstances justify taking a more restrictive approach. Here, sites beyond edge-of-centre will not be acceptable. Consequently, the Chapter sets out the policy requirements of food and comparison retailing by town centre, rather than having general policies which would apply throughout the District.

DOVER TOWN CENTRE

11.14 The following characteristics of Dover town centre are taken from a shopping study commissioned by the Council1 in 1993. Dover, which has a catchment of some 50,000 people, suffered from negative perceptions by both the retail industry and the shopping public. Shoppers did not spend very long in the town centre, suggesting that many trips were of a secondary nature. The town was generally perceived by the shopping public to be in decline and was rated poorly in terms of price and choice of goods. Access within the centre was seen as a problem, largely due to the volume of traffic. On the positive side, walking was the main mode of transport to the centre, with the private car a close second. Over 75% of shopping trips involved both food and non-food purchases. Shoppers wanted a new large foodstore in the town centre, a street market and an extension to pedestrianisation.

11.15 A substantial amount of convenience trade has been lost to out of centre stores. Some 85% of convenience shopping expenditure was retained in the catchment area. About 52% of total expenditure was retained by the out of centre Tesco store at Whitfield (which is overtrading) and only 33% by the town centre. Given the limited projected increase in expenditure, the issue for convenience retailing is one of quality rather than quantity.

11.16 The town has not performed a strong comparison goods role, with only some 50% of expenditure retained in the area. Since the capacity of existing floorspace is adequate to accommodate anticipated expenditure growth, the main issue is qualitative improvement. From 2001 onwards, growth in expenditure may help support a limited amount of new floorspace. Any further development of comparison shopping in the town centre would have benefits in terms of sustainability, by maximising the opportunity for people to use other means of transport than the car.

Town Centre and Shopping Frontages

11.17 The town centre, shown on the Proposals Map, identifies where mixed commercial uses predominate. Within it, the core shopping area is basically linear and stretches over a considerable distance between Townwall Street and Bridge Street. However, comparison goods multiple retailers are concentrated in only a short section of the shopping area. The Charlton Green area, although not in the town centre, includes several major retailers. It is considered to be an edge-of-centre site on the basis of rental values and location relative to the core area. This does not detract from the importance of this area for shopping in Dover.

11.18 Floorspace rentals and retailer representation indicate that the Primary Frontage consists only of Biggin Street and Cannon Street. The remaining shopping areas, which are somewhat fragmented, are less important but the strongest of these warrant specific consideration and are classified as Secondary Frontage. Owing to the fragility of the town centre, it is particularly important that its vitality and viability are not eroded further and that, if possible, its performance is improved. To achieve this, it is particularly important that the retail function of the Primary and Secondary Frontages is given as much protection and support as possible. The extent of the Primary and Secondary Frontages is shown on the Proposals Map.

11.19 Within the Primary Frontage, only uses in Classes A1 (shops) and A3 (food and drink) of the Use Classes Order 1987 will be permitted in ground floor premises. The Council considers that A3 uses are appropriate as they can assist in making the town attractive to visitors and create activity in the evenings. Proposals for A3 uses should be in accordance with Policy SP13. With regard to A2 uses (financial and professional services), the Council is concerned to avoid concentrations which could undermine the retail function. Currently, 10% of ground floor premises within the Primary Frontage are in A2 uses and the Council will not, therefore, permit any further proposals for such use. As A3 uses have the ability to change to A2 under permitted development rights, the Council when permitting an A3 use will remove such permitted development rights in order to avoid a concentration of A2 uses within the Dover Primary Frontages. The situation will be monitored, and reassessed in reviews of the Plan.

Policy SP1

Within the Dover Primary Frontage shown on the Dover Inset of the Proposals Map only uses in Use Classes A1 and A3 will be permitted in ground floor premises.

Environmental Appraisal

The policy supports the Objective of concentrating future investment in urban areas. It has no impact on any other Objective.

11.20 Within the Secondary Frontage, only A1, A2 and A3 uses will be permitted in ground floor premises. Other uses appropriate to a town centre (such as entertainment facilities, launderettes, vehicle showrooms, taxi and vehicle hire businesses) will be directed to town centre locations outside the Primary and Secondary Frontages. As some of these locations include residential areas, it will be necessary to consider the impact on residential amenity. Amusement centres are dealt with separately in Policy SP12 and the special considerations applying to A3 uses in Policy SP13.

Policy SP2

Within the Dover Secondary Frontages shown on the Dover Inset of the Proposals Map only uses in Use Classes A1, A2 and A3 will be permitted in ground floor premises. In town centre locations outside the Primary and Secondary Frontages these uses, and any other service and entertainment uses appropriate to a town centre, will be permitted provided that the amenities of any nearby residents would not be harmed.

Environmental Appraisal

The policy supports the Objective of concentrating future investment in urban areas. It has no impact on any other Objective.

New Convenience Provision

11.21 There is no quantitative case for additional floorspace, therefore, no sites have been allocated. There is, however, a need to provide firm guidance for dealing with any planning applications which may be submitted. In doing so, the major concern is to redress the serious imbalance between out-of-centre and town centre shopping in a way which improves the general shopping attractiveness of the centre. This can only be achieved through proposals which are physically well related to the town centre and have the potential to allow shoppers to use a range of services from one trip.

11.22 Therefore, while the locational criteria set out in paragraph 11.11 apply, development beyond edge-of-centre will be resisted. This approach, which is stricter than paragraph 11.12, is warranted in the local circumstances. Proposals on sites outside the town centre will be assessed for their effect upon nearby existing centres and the Plan's shopping strategy. The Council may seek information on the likely impact of proposed development from the applicant in relation to schemes of under 2,500 sq. m., depending upon the nature of the development and its relationship to the centre(s). Proposals for more than 2,500 sq. m. should, in accordance with PPG6, always be supported by such information.

Policy SP3

Proposals for convenience supermarkets and superstores at Dover will only be permitted if the site is within the town centre shown on the Proposals Map, or if no site is available, it is located on an edge-of-centre site provided that:-

Continued

Continued

(i) there is a demonstrable need for further convenience floorspace;

(ii) it would help to sustain and enhance the vitality and viability of existing centres; and

(iii) pedestrian and cycle access to the town centre is, or can be made to be, viable and attractive and easy linkages are available to the site by public transport.

Environmental Appraisal

The policy supports the Objectives of protecting the countryside from development, reducing pollution, re-using and recycling resources, encouraging investment in urban areas, minimising the need to travel and making provision for alternatives to the car. No Objectives are adversely affected.

New Comparison Provision

11.23 Comparison shopping includes retail warehousing, factory outlets and warehouse clubs. PPG6 states that for new forms of retailing, such as factory outlets and warehouse clubs, the planning issues are whether they would divert trade from existing centres, be accessible by a choice of means of transport and, in particular, have a significant effect on overall car use. Therefore, proposals for new forms of comparison retailing will be treated in the same way as traditional comparison goods outlets.

11.24 While it is unlikely that additional comparison floorspace will be required on quantitative grounds, there is evidence of market demand for additional retail warehousing to serve the Dover catchment, in the order of 6,500 sq.m. (70,000 sq.ft.). In addition, a factory outlet centre has opened on an edge-of-centre site at Wellington Dock. While the Council would welcome further improvements to the range of comparison shopping in Dover, it is essential that it occurs in a way which supports the town centre. The Plan provides criteria based guidance, rather than to anticipate retailer requirements and allocate a site, although retail development would be acceptable as part of a mixed use development in the St James's area (See Policy AS9). Demand for smaller scale comparison stores could be accommodated within the town centre through take-up of vacant premises.

11.25 In line with Structure Plan Policy R4, the Council will be sympathetic to proposals for retail warehousing which comply with the locational hierarchy described in paragraphs 11.10-13. Proposals on sites outside the town centre will be assessed for their effect upon nearby existing centres and the Plan's shopping strategy. The Council may seek information on the likely impact of proposed development from the applicant in relation to schemes of under 2,500 sq. m., depending upon the nature of the development and its relationship to the centre(s). Proposals for more than 2,500 sq. m. should, in accordance with PPG6 always be supported by such information.

Policy SP4

Proposals for comparison stores will only be permitted if:-

(i) they are located on a town centre site or, if no such site is available, an edge-of-centre site with good pedestrian and cycle links to the centre; or

(ii) in the case where a town centre or edge-of-centre site is not available a location elsewhere in the urban area may be acceptable, particularly if it is grouped with other similar uses.

Additionally, in the case of proposals involving an edge-of-centre or out-of-centre site the development must:-

Continued

Continued

(iii) demonstrate there is a need for further comparison floor-space;

(iv) help to sustain and enhance the vitality and viability of existing centres;

(v) be, or could be made, accessible by a range of transport modes, including public transport; and

(vi) not prejudice the supply of land for other purposes.

Any permission will be subject to a condition limiting the range of goods that can be sold.

Environmental Appraisal

The policy supports the Objectives of protecting the countryside from development, reducing pollution, re-using and recycling resources, encouraging investment in urban areas, minimising the need to travel and making provision for alternatives to the car. No Objectives are adversely affected.

DEAL TOWN CENTRE

11.26 The following characteristics of Deal town centre are taken from a shopping study commissioned by the Council1 in 1993. Although Deal is lower in the shopping hierarchy than Dover, its town centre performed better than Dover's in a number of respects. It retained a higher proportion of trade and was popular with shoppers, although its ability to attract major shopping trips is limited by its localised catchment. Shoppers rated Deal favourably in relation to neighbouring centres and, on average, spent more time in Deal than in Dover. Food shopping was the main reason for visiting the town, with use of service outlets second and comparison shopping a poor third. There was a high proportion of linked food and non-food shopping trips. Shoppers criticised car park charges and choice of goods and a majority did not want the pedestrianised area extended nor did they want a new superstore. Of those who wanted a superstore, most preferred it to be located in or on the edge of the town centre.

11.27 The 1993 Study found that there was considerable leakage of convenience expenditure from the Deal primary and secondary catchment areas, particularly to Whitfield. This has been subsequently addressed through the development of a supermarket on a site at West Street adjacent to Deal railway station.

11.28 In 1993 Deal retained about 50% and 25% of comparison expenditure within its primary and secondary catchments, respectively. The 1997 updating Study found that, on the assumption Deal maintains its market share, there is potential for growth in both bulky and non-bulky comparison goods retail floorspace.

Town Centre and Shopping Frontages

11.29 The town centre, shown on the Proposals Map, identifies where mixed commercial uses predominate. Within this, the shopping centre is essentially linear (located between South Street and the Town Hall in High Street), although it also extends to several adjacent shopping streets. The Primary Frontage is concentrated in a short section of High Street, within the pedestrianised area. Of the remaining shopping streets, some warrant specific consideration and are classified as Secondary Frontage. The Primary and Secondary Frontages are shown on the Proposals Map.

11.30 Within the Primary Frontage, 27% of ground floor premises are in non-shopping uses. This percentage is very high given Deal's position in the

Primary Frontage, High Street, Deal

shopping hierarchy and the compact nature of the Primary Frontage. In order to ensure that this proportion is not exceeded, and in the long-term reduced, the Council will not permit anything other than shopping (A1) uses.

Policy SP5

Within the Deal Primary Frontage shown on the Deal Inset of the Proposals Map only Class A1 uses will be permitted in ground floor premises.

Environmental Appraisal

The policy supports the Objective of concentrating future investment in urban areas. It has no impact on any other Objective

11.31 Elsewhere within the town centre, the considerations are the same as for Dover - see paragraph 11.20.

Policy SP6

Within the Deal Secondary Frontages shown on the Deal Inset of the Proposals Map only Use Classes A1, A2 and A3 will be permitted in ground floor premises. In town centre locations outside the Primary and Secondary Frontages these uses, and any other service and entertainment uses appropriate to a town centre, will be permitted provided that the amenities of any nearby residents would not be harmed.

Environmental Appraisal

The policy supports the Objective of concentrating future investment in urban areas. It has no impact on any other Objective.

New Convenience Provision

11.32 The development of a retail foodstore on the West Street site meets the immediate need for a new foodstore in Deal. However, there is a need to provide firm guidance for dealing with any applications which may be submitted for other sites. The locational criteria set out in paragraphs 11.10-13 will be applied. Proposals on sites outside the town centre will be assessed for their effect upon nearby existing centres and the Plan's shopping strategy. The Council may seek information on the likely impact of proposed development from the applicant in relation to schemes of under 2,500 sq. m., depending upon the nature of the development and its relationship to the centre(s). In accordance with PPG6, proposals for more than 2,500 sq. m. should always be supported by such information.

Policy SP7

Proposals for convenience supermarkets and superstores at Deal will only be permitted if:-

(i) the site is within the town centre shown on the Deal Inset of the Proposals Map or, if no such site is available, is located on the edge-of-centre with good pedestrian and cycle links to the centre, or if no such site is available, is located elsewhere in the urban area; and

(ii) the scale of development must respect and be in sympathy with the size and character of the town centre.

Continued

Continued

Additionally, in the case of proposals involving an edge-of-centre or out-of-centre site, the development must:-

(iii) show that there is a demonstrable need for further convenience floorspace;

(iv) help to sustain and enhance the vitality and viability of existing centres;

(v) be accessible by a range of transport modes, including public trans-port; and

(vi) not prejudice the supply of land for other purposes.

Environmental Appraisal

The policy supports the Objectives of protecting the countryside from development, reducing pollution, re-using and recycling resources, encouraging investment in urban areas, minimising the need to travel and making provision for alternatives to the car. No Objectives are adversely affected.

New Comparison Provision

11.33 There is potential for additional comparison retail floorspace in Deal for both bulky and non-bulky goods in order of 5,700 to 6,400 sq. m. gross, of which around 2,600 to 2,900 sq. m. is for bulky goods. The regularisation of the retail sale of timber, timber products, and DIY and garden products from premises at Albert Road will meet the potential for bulky goods floorspace.

11.34 The potential for additional floorspace for non-bulky comparison goods can be met through an existing commitment at 74 to 78 High Street, the allocation of sites at West Street and Park Street and through redevelopments, extensions and changes of use in the town centre. Any proposals for out-of-centre comparison shopping will be considered against Policy SP4.

Policy SP8

Sites at West Street and Park Street, Deal, shown on the Deal Inset of the Proposals Map, are allocated for comparison goods retail development.

Environmental Appraisal

The Policy supports the Objectives of re-using and recycling resources, encouraging investment in urban areas, minimising the need to travel and making provision for alternatives to the car. No Objectives are adversely affected.

SANDWICH

11.35 Sandwich contains a range of shops and services generally catering for the day to day needs of its own population of around 5,000 people, together with a rural catchment of around 4,000. It also has a significant role in catering for visitors, in that much of its non-food trade is of a specialist nature and dependant upon the continuing ability to attract a tourist trade. Research[2] identifies a need for more restaurants and cafes. The medieval street pattern within the centre of Sandwich poses access difficulties for shoppers and some delivery vehicles. This matter is considered in Chapter 4.

11.36 Although Sandwich's facilities are limited and generally of a secondary nature, they are, nevertheless, important to the local population. The Council, therefore, wishes to make sure that Sandwich continues to be a locally important shopping centre. Owing to the nature and scale of shopping in

Sandwich, it is not considered appropriate to identify Primary and Secondary Frontages. Instead, the most important areas are shown on the Proposals Map as Sandwich Town Centre Frontages, within which only A1, A2 and A3 uses will be acceptable. Proposals for A3 uses must also be acceptable within the terms of SP13. Elsewhere proposals for retail and service uses will be judged against Policy SP10.

Shopping in Market Street, Sandwich

Policy SP9

Within the Sandwich Town Centre Frontages shown on the Sandwich Inset of the Proposals Map only uses in Use Classes A1, A2 and A3 will be permitted in ground floor premises.

Environmental Appraisal

The policy supports the Objective of protecting and encouraging local shopping facilities in this important rural shopping centre. No Objectives are adversely affected.

New Convenience Provision

11.37 With regard to food shopping, the Moat Sole supermarket has improved the range of food on offer in the town of Sandwich. The supermarket is located within easy walking distance to the centre to encourage linked shopping trips and will help to strengthen Sandwich's general attraction to shoppers.

TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT

11.38 In recent years, the Council has achieved much in improving Dover town centre's general environment. Repaving schemes have been carried out in Castle Street and the area between Bench Street and Biggin Street, including Market Square. Although this has greatly improved conditions for pedestrians and the general environment of the town centre, the use of Pencester Road, a short section of Biggin Street, and Priory Street by traffic remains a major problem. In Deal, paving and pedestrianisation works have been carried out including, most recently, the upgrading of Middle Street car park. A survey undertaken by Sandwich Rotary indicated that while local residents wanted pedestrianisation, Sandwich traders did not.

11.39 A coordinated approach to managing all aspects of a town centre's environment is of great importance to improving overall quality and strengthening a centre's general attractiveness. The Plan supports all measures to achieve these ends. In Dover, the District and County Councils, in partnership with the private sector, have instituted a Town Centre Management Partnership. Its purpose is to maintain and strengthen the town centre through a series of action programmes on development, promotion, business support and organisation. A town centre manager has been appointed.

OTHER SHOPPING POLICIES

Local Shops

11.40 Shops in suburban locations and the rural area provide a valuable service and have an important social function. They can also help to reduce the need for people to travel to the town centres. Local shops are subject to ever increasing commercial competition, especially from large shops such as supermarkets. This has contributed to their decline. What constitutes a local, as opposed to non-local, shop will depend upon the type and range of goods sold in relation to the circumstances of any one locality. If a proposed shop would be likely to serve a wider catchment and would compete with other centres it would not be a local shop.

11.41 While planning policy cannot prevent shops from closing, planning permission for changes of use will only be given in certain circumstances. It can also take into account the likely competitive effects of a new out-of-centre shop on the economy in the rural area. In addition, when sites of 5 Ha. (12 acres) or more are proposed for uses other than shopping, the Council will seek the provision of local shopping facilities to meet the needs of those working or living in the immediate vicinity, as part of the objective of creating areas of mixed uses. However, proposals for local shops must not harm the amenities of any nearby residents and must also be acceptable in design and transport terms.

Local shop, Mill Hill, Deal

11.42 In the rural area, the Council considers that local shops should be well related to settlements both physically and in terms of the range of goods for sale, in order to ensure that they do not encourage more and longer journeys, especially by car. In addition, they must be acceptable in design terms and not cause a reduction in traffic safety. Paragraph 11.51 refers to farm shops.

Policy SP10

Proposals for local shops or extensions to local shops will be permitted:-

(i) within the urban areas and rural settlements provided that there would be no harm to the amenities of nearby residents and that the design and transport aspects are satisfactory; and

(ii) on development sites for other land uses of 5 hectares or more.

Environmental Appraisal

The policy supports the Objectives of both concentrating investment in the urban areas and helping to maintain/enhance basic services in the villages. No Objectives are adversely affected.

Retention of Rural Shops and Pubs

11.43 Rural shops are of great importance to the economic and social well-being of the rural area. Their loss to other uses, particularly non-commercial use, can be a severe blow to the fabric of a village and its catchment. Their loss often means that the local community is less sustainable and that people will have to travel further for essential items. Similar considerations apply to rural pubs. Such pubs are often not simply a place to have a drink but also provide a venue for local clubs and societies to meet and facilities for people to hold parties and receptions. The loss of such pubs to other uses can seriously diminish the range of facilities available to local people. When applications are submitted for the change of use of a rural shop or pub, account will be taken of its importance to the community which it serves, having regard to the range of shopping and other facilities which would remain. Permission for alternative uses will not be granted if the community would be left without any local shops or facilities, or the range of shopping or facilities would be seriously diminished, unless the applicant has established that a shop or pub use is no longer commercially viable. In this respect, it must be shown that genuine and adequate attempts have been made to market the premises and have failed to produce a viable offer. Marketing should be through an appropriate estate agent and for a period of time which fully tests demand having regard to the buoyancy of prevailing market conditions.

Policy SP11

Planning permission will not be granted for the change of use of a rural shop or pub unless:-

(i) its loss would not harm the economic and social viability of the community which it serves; or

(ii) genuine and adequate attempts to market the premises for retail purposes or as a pub (as appropriate) have failed.

Environmental Appraisal

The policy supports the Objectives of reducing pollution, maintaining services in villages and minimising the need to travel. The policy works against concentrating investment in the urban areas.

Amusement Centres

11.44 Planning permission is required for the use of any premises as an amusement centre. Amusement centres include such activities as bingo halls, prize bingo centres, amusements with prizes machines and amusement only machines. Planning permission for the installation of amusement machines in pubs and cafes etc. is not required if they are ancillary to the main use of the building. However, this very much depends upon the scale and intensity of use of the amusement area. In cases of any doubt, the Council should be consulted. PPG6 describes the particular problems associated with centres and gives guidance on appropriate locations and detailed planning controls.

11.45 This advice and the nature of the District's shopping centres, leads the Council to conclude that amusement centres will only be acceptable in Dover and Deal town centre locations, provided they do not involve ground floor premises within the Primary Shopping Frontages. Even then, amusement centres should not harm visual amenity, nor cause noise or disturbance - which can only be judged in relation to the general levels of noise and activity in an area. Greater weight will be placed on these considerations if a conservation area, or other place of architectural or historic character, is affected. Locations close to noise sensitive uses such as dwellings, schools, churches and hotels will not be acceptable.

11.46 When a location is acceptable, the Council will assess the particular type of amusement centre proposed for the level of noise and general disturbance likely to be created. Depending upon this assessment, conditions may be imposed to control such matters as hours of opening and noise attenuation. Noise may be reduced by measures such as insulation, self-closing doors, the enclosure of the front of the premises and prohibiting external loudspeakers.

11.47 In addition to planning permission amusement centres require a separate permit from the Council under the Gaming Act 1968.

Policy SP12

Proposals for amusement centres will be permitted provided that:-

(i) they are located within the town centres of Dover and Deal, shown on the Insets of the Proposals Map, but do not involve ground floor premises within the Primary Shopping Frontages;

(ii) they are not located close to uses sensitive to noise and disturbance; and

(iii) they would not harm visual amenity or cause noise or disturbance, particularly in relation to conservation areas and buildings or places of special architectural or historic interest.

When proposals are acceptable within these terms, conditions may be imposed concerning such matters as hours of use and noise attenuation.

Environmental Appraisal

The policy supports the Objective of concentrating investment in urban areas. No Objectives are adversely affected.

Food and Drink (A3) Uses

11.48 Food and Drink uses include hot food shops, restaurants, cafes, snack bars, wine bars and public houses. They provide a valuable service to local people and visitors. They can also add much to the vibrancy of town centres, particularly when the use is allowed to extend onto the pavement. However, associated noise, disturbance and smell can seriously harm the amenities of people living nearby and the general character of an area. This can be made worse when opening hours extend into the evening, often beyond licensing hours. This is especially the case with hot food shops.

Street café, Market Square, Dover

11.49 Such uses are acceptable in principle within the Dover Primary and Dover and Deal Secondary Frontages (subject to Policies SP1, 2 and 6), where a more lively atmosphere is expected and encouraged. Elsewhere, the Council will assess compatibility with surrounding land uses, the suitability of access and availability of car parking. In all cases, the physical requirements of introducing such uses into listed buildings and buildings in conservation areas can pose great difficulties, particularly with regard to fume extraction equipment. Whenever possible, this equipment should be housed in existing chimney stacks. This aspect will be judged against the Plan's historic environment policies.

11.50 All permissions will usually be subject to conditions concerning hours of operation and the provision of fume extraction equipment. In addition, hot food take-away shops can attract significant car borne trade. Where parking is limited, this can cause inconvenience and even danger to other road users. In instances when an A3 use would be acceptable, permission may be granted subject to a condition preventing hot food take-away use.

Policy SP13

Proposals for food and drink (A3) uses in premises outside the Primary and Secondary Frontages will be permitted provided that:-

(i) the amenities of nearby residents and the general area would not be harmed; and

(ii) access and car parking arrangements are adequate and the proposal would not lead to disruptions in the flow of traffic.

In addition, any proposal, whether or not located in the Primary or Secondary Frontages, will be subject to:-

(iii) conditions regarding the siting of fume extraction equipment and limiting the hours of operation; and

(iv) a condition will be imposed to prevent the use of the premises as a hot food take-away shop, when justified on highway grounds.

Environmental Appraisal

The policy has no direct impact on any Objective.

Farm Shops

11.51 It is becoming increasingly common for agricultural produce to be sold direct to the public from the farm on which it was grown. Farm shops can serve the rural community by helping to meet the demand for fresh produce and provide a limited number of jobs. On a small scale, this can be regarded as ancillary to the main farming use and can contribute towards rural diversity. However, retailing is different in character from farming and can be a material change of use constituting development. Planning permission will be required if:-

(a) a new building or related ancillary development, such as a hardstanding for car parking, is proposed; or

(b) a significant proportion of sales is of fresh produce not grown on the farm or is of other goods imported for sale; or

(c) sales become so large that the use is no longer ancillary and an independent retail use is created.

11.52 The Council classifies such development as local shops, to be judged against Policy SP10.

REFERENCES

[1] *Dover District Council Retail Study; Erdman Lewis 1994*
[2] *Sandwich Looks Forward: A Strategic Plan for the 21st Century; URBED 1992*