



Town Centres and Retailing Study

London Borough of Waltham Forest

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1. Introduction & structure of report

- 1.1 Bilfinger GVA is instructed by the London Borough of Waltham Forest ('the Council') to undertake a Town Centre and Retailing Study ('the Study') to inform policy and development control decisions. The Core Strategy was adopted in March 2012 as part of the Local Plan, and the Council are currently preparing associated Local Plan documents. This borough-wide assessment provides a robust evidence base for the plan preparation, setting out the need for new retail and leisure floorspace, and broader strategic guidance on enhancing the network of town centres.
- 1.2 In addition to on-site and desk-based evidence gathering, this report is informed by a household telephone survey of shopping and leisure patterns across the Borough, and also surrounding areas in which residents may look towards facilities in Waltham Forest to meet their shopping and leisure needs.
- 1.3 Our terms of reference are:
- To establish the extent to which the current provision for retail and town centre uses meets local need;
 - To estimate the scale and nature of any changes in this position that might arise from potential increases in population, forecast changes in retail expenditure, changing forms of retail provision, and possible increases or decreases in the trade draw from competing centres;
 - To provide an estimate of new comparison and convenience retail floorspace that may be appropriate / required in the borough up to the period of 2030, and also identify the scale and nature of additional commercial leisure provision that may be appropriate in the borough over this period;
 - To provide recommendations on a borough-wide strategy – how any forecast growth / demand for new retail and other commercial and employment provision could be accommodated within the borough, taking into account the Council's growth and regeneration aspirations.

Survey Work

- 1.4 The Study is underpinned by a robust household telephone survey as the key evidence base data source. Telephone surveys capture the shopping habits of households across a wide catchment area with the outer boundary defined to reflect the main catchments of the

Waltham Forest centres. The results also enable a deep understanding of the role of other centres outside Waltham Forest which function and compete alongside, and it has been possible to analyse their influence on the shopping patterns of those living in Waltham Forest, i.e. trade leakage.

Sub-Areas

1.5 In order to provide a more detailed analysis of shopping and leisure patterns at various stages throughout the study, we have divided the 2015 Survey Area into two sub-areas (See Plan 2):

- North Sub-Area: Zones 1, 2, 3
- South Sub-Area: Zones 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10

1.6 This enables a better understanding of shopping and travel patterns throughout the Borough, and the effectiveness of defined centres in meeting local needs. There is no basis for this division other than it effectively splits the survey zones into geographically distinct areas for the purposes of analysis. It should be noted that they do not represent or reflect areas drawn by the local authority within policy or for other projects/studies.

Structure

- **Section 2** sets out our review of national, strategic and local planning policies relevant to retail and leisure planning in the Borough;
- **Section 3** considers national trends in the retail sector, and in particular the implications of recent economic growth and technological advances which are impacting on shopping habits;
- In **Section 4** we consider the wider study context, focusing on geographical location and key competing centres within the wider sub-region. We examine the influence these centres have on the future role of the centres in Waltham Forest, taking into consideration major pipeline schemes;
- In **Section 5**, we review the composition, role and function of current shopping provision in the town and district centres, and out-of-centre provision across the Borough. Detailed town centre health checks are attached in Appendix 1;
- **Section 6**, sets out the quantitative economic projections for additional retail floorspace across the borough over the plan period to 2030;

- **Section 7** sets out our review of leisure provision within and outside the Borough, drawing conclusions in respect of qualitative and quantitative need for enhanced facilities;
- **Section 8** draws the analysis together and sets out our conclusions and recommendations in respect of the wider sub-regional context, the key policy considerations, the current health and composition of the Borough's main town and district centres and the need and opportunities for future growth. We provide strategic guidance and recommendations on future growth and change in the key centres.

2. Policy Framework

2.1 In this section we summarise the key features of national and local planning policy guidance which provide the context and framework for this study.

National Policy Framework

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), 2012

2.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), published on 27 March 2012 sets out the Government's planning policies for England and replaces the suite of national Planning Policy Statements, Planning Policy Guidance and Circulars with a single document.

2.3 The NPPF continues to recognise that the planning system is plan-led and therefore Local Plans, incorporating neighbourhood plans where relevant, are the starting point for the determination of any planning application. In line with the Government's aim to streamline the planning process, each Local Planning Authority (LPA) should produce a single Local Plan for its area with any additional documents to be used only where clearly justified.

2.4 The NPPF maintains the general thrust of previous policy set out in PPS4 – Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth (2009). It advocates a 'town centres first' approach, and requires planning policies to positively promote competitive town centre environments and manage the growth of centres over the plan period. In planning for town centres LPAs should:

- Recognise town centres as the heart of their communities and pursue policies to support their viability and vitality;
- Define a network and hierarchy of centres that is resilient to anticipated future economic changes;
- Define the extent of town centres and primary shopping areas, based on a clear definition of primary and secondary shopping frontages in designated centres and set policies that make clear which uses will be permitted in such locations;
- Promote competitive town centres that provide customer choice and a diverse retail offer which reflect the individuality of town centres;
- Retain and enhance existing markets and, where appropriate, re-introduce or create new ones, ensuring that markets remain attractive and competitive;

- Allocate a range of suitable sites to meet the scale and type of economic development needed in town centres. Where town centre sites are not available, LPAs should adopt a sequential approach to allocate appropriate edge of centre sites;
- Set policies for the consideration of proposals for main town centre uses which cannot be accommodated in or adjacent to town centres;
- Recognise that residential development can play an important role in ensuring the vitality of centres; and
- Where town centres are in decline, plan positively for their future to encourage economic activity.

2.5 LPAs should ensure that the Local Plan is based on adequate, up-to-date and relevant evidence about the economic, social and environmental characteristics and prospects of the area. These assessments should be integrated and take full account of relevant market and economic signals. LPAs should use the evidence base to assess, inter alia;

- The needs for land or floorspace for economic development, taking account of both quantitative and qualitative requirements for all foreseeable types of economic activity over the plan period, including retail and commercial leisure development;
- The existing and future supply of land available for economic development and its sufficiency and suitability to meet the identified needs;
- The role and function of town centres and the relationship between them, including any trends in the performance of centres; and
- The capacity of existing centres to accommodate new town centre development.

2.6 Consistent with transitional arrangements, the Local Plan will be examined by an independent inspector whose role it is to assess whether the plan is sound. In order to be found sound the Plan should be:

- **Positively prepared** i.e. based on a strategy which seeks to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements
- **Justified** i.e. the most appropriate strategy, when considered against the alternatives;
- **Effective** i.e. deliverable over its plan period and based on effective joint working; and
- **Consistent with national policy** i.e. enable the delivery of sustainable development

- 2.7 Overall, the NPPF adopts a positive approach, with a presumption in favour of sustainable development and support for economic growth. In terms of decision-making, applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The NPPF is a material consideration in planning decisions.

National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) (2014)

- 2.8 In March 2014 the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) launched the online planning practice guidance, which cancelled a number of previous planning practice guidance documents, including the Practice Guidance on Need, Impact and the Sequential Approach (2009). Although it does not constitute a statement of Government policy, it provides technical guidance on how to prepare a robust evidence base and how to assess the impact of proposals for main town centre uses. The web-based resource provides guidance on how to assess and plan to meet the needs of main town centre uses in full through production of a positive vision or strategy for town centres.

Permitted Development

- 2.9 The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 has introduced greater flexibility to enable a more straightforward change of use within shopping frontages. The amendments allow permitted change from retail premises (A1) to financial services (A2), and restaurants and cafes (A3) without a time limit on that change of use. The move is designed to reduce vacancies on high streets, but a consequence is that local authority retail frontage policies can be bypassed unless alternative mechanisms are in place.

Regional Policy Framework

London Plan (Consolidated with alterations since 2011) (March 2015)

- 2.10 On 10th March 2015, the Mayor adopted the London Plan (consolidated with alterations since 2011). This consolidated plan is now operative as formal alterations to the London Plan and forms part of the development plan for Greater London. It is a strategic spatial planning document setting the London-wide context within which individual London Boroughs must set their local planning policies.
- 2.11 The plan identifies a network of town centres across five categories; International, Metropolitan, Major, District and Local and Neighbourhood. Within Waltham Forest, Walthamstow is defined as a Major Centre, and Bakers Arms, Highams Park, Leyton,

Leytonstone, North Chingford, South Chingford and Wood Street are defined as District Centres. The definitions are set out in Annex 2 of the London Plan:

- **Major Centres** – typically found in inner and some parts of outer London with a borough-wide catchment. They generally contain over 50,000 sq m of retail, leisure and service floorspace with a relatively high proportion of comparison goods relative to convenience goods. They may also have significant employment, leisure, service and civic functions.
- **District Centres** – distributed more widely than the Metropolitan and Major centres, providing convenience goods and services for more local communities and accessible by public transport, walking and cycling. Typically they contain 10,000–50,000 sq m of retail, leisure and service floorspace. Some District centres have developed specialist shopping functions.

2.12 Policy 2.15 seeks to co-ordinate development within the network of town centres to ensure that they provide the main foci for commercial development; the structure for sustaining and improving a competitive choice of goods and services which are conveniently accessible; and the main foci for Londoners' sense of place and local identity. The policy states that any identified deficiencies in the network of town centres can be addressed by promoting centres to function at a higher level in the hierarchy or by designating new centres where necessary, giving particular priority to areas with particular needs for regeneration and better access to services, facilities and employment.

2.13 The Upper Lee Valley, partly within Waltham Forest, is identified as one of twelve 'Opportunity Areas' in East London. These are the capital's major reservoir of brownfield land with significant capacity to accommodate new housing, commercial and other development linked to existing or potential improvements to public transport accessibility. Typically they can accommodate at least 5,000 jobs or 2,500 new homes or a combination of the two, along with other supporting facilities and infrastructure. The Upper Lee provides a range of development opportunities including the growth point at Blackhorse Lane – a strategic growth area in Waltham Forest.

Local Policy Framework

London Borough of Waltham Forest Core Strategy (March 2012)

2.14 The Core Strategy contains the planning vision and strategy for the Borough, and sets the broad policy framework for all other documents comprising the Development Plan for the next 15 years to the period to 2026. Strategic Objective 14 seeks to safeguard and strengthen

the function of Walthamstow Town Centre, the District and Neighbourhood Centres capitalising on their respective roles for shopping, culture, leisure, tourism and employment, and ensuring they continue to develop as vibrant, attractive, distinctive, safe and welcoming places.

2.15 In planning for growth, Policy CS1 promotes the focus of regeneration activities in the four key growth areas of Blackhorse Lane, Northern Olympic Fringe (including Leyton), Walthamstow Town Centre and Wood Street. In these areas, the Council will seek to accommodate growth primarily in housing and jobs, especially for the local people. This includes provision for up to 2,500 new homes and 1,000 new jobs at Blackhorse Lane; up to 2,500 new homes at the Northern Olympic Fringe area, which runs along the south-western stretch of the borough from the Lea Valley to Leyton; up to 2,000 new homes at Walthamstow town centre; and up to 1,000 homes at Wood Street. The respective Area Action Plans are discussed later in this section.

2.16 The Council will seek to maintain the existing hierarchy of town centres in the Borough as the primary focus for shopping provision. The hierarchy which is set out in Core Strategy as follows:

- Major Centre: Walthamstow;
- District Centres: North Chingford, South Chingford, Wood Street, Bakers Arms, Leytonstone, Leyton and Highams Park.
- Neighbourhood Centres: Stewardstone Road, Chingford Hatch, Chingford Mount Road, Forest Road, Markerhouse Corner, Francis Road, Thatched House and Blackhorse Road

2.17 In accordance with Policy CS14, the Council will promote successful and vibrant town centres throughout the Borough by ensuring that new proposals for town centre uses are directed to the designated centres through the 'sequential test'. Walthamstow town centre will be promoted as the main destination for comparison goods shopping in accordance with its role as a Major Centre in the London Plan. The strategy supports the majority of additional growth in retail and other town centre uses being located in this centre.

2.18 Policy CS14 promotes the consolidation of the District Centres of North Chingford, South Chingford, Highams Park, Wood Street, Bakers Arms, Leyton, and Leytonstone as complimentary centres to Walthamstow Town Centre. The provision of main and bulk convenience food shopping and a reasonable range of comparison shopping facilities and other services will be encouraged in these centres.

- 2.19 Policy CS14 sets out the overarching objective to create distinctive town centres by encouraging the development of complimentary roles, differentiation and specialisation between centres with regard to their 'offer' and place setting. There is a particular focus on the encouragement of housing in and around town centres as part of mixed use developments on the upper floors of commercial buildings and on sites where a high quality living environment can be created. This is particularly encouraged in the key growth areas of Blackhorse Lane, the Northern Olympic Fringe, Walthamstow Town Centre and Wood Street.
- 2.20 In respect of accommodating future growth, the previous borough-wide needs assessment (2009) informed the 2012 Core Strategy which seeks to plan for an overall growth requirement of 11,800 sq m net additional convenience retail floorspace and 64,800 sq m net comparison retail floorspace by 2026. With regard to leisure and other town centre uses, the Core Strategy confirms that Waltham Forest has a relatively poor range of commercial leisure, entertainment and cultural facilities and a high provision of Class A3 to A5 uses, particularly A5 take-aways. Opportunities to improve the quality of existing provision will be supported, especially restaurants and pubs in designated centres and parades.
- 2.21 The strategy for Walthamstow is protection and improvement of its dominant position in terms of shopping, particularly higher order comparison goods. The Core Strategy sets out that the district centres will progressively develop as mixed use destinations, evolving into fully functioning mixed-use and higher density urban centres with greatly enhanced public transport, access and appropriate parking facilities. The Core Strategy seeks to create distinctive centres, each with a unique offer in terms of their place setting. A greater degree of differentiation and specialisation between centres will be encouraged in all centres.

Development Management Policies (October 2013)

- 2.22 Development Management Policies translate the strategic policies in the Core Strategy into more detail to be used in the assessment of planning applications. The Proposals Map illustrates Development Plan Document Policies and proposals for the allocation of land for specific types of development.
- 2.23 In accordance with Development Management Policy DM25, the Council will seek to ensure that retail uses (Class A1) predominate on ground floors in the primary and secondary shopping frontages of Walthamstow town centre and the district centres. Part G of Policy DM25 also states that the Council will consider the nature of the business operation and the number of such occupiers in the designated centre or local area. The supporting text justifies this policy by highlighting how the Borough increasingly suffers from a high growth and

clustering of betting shops (Class A2) yet low representation of banks/financial services (Class A2) which needs to be carefully controlled.

- 2.24 The Council will also seek to create distinctive town centres by encouraging the development of complementary roles, differentiation and specialisation between centres with regard to their 'offer' and place setting. The rejuvenation of town centre areas through redevelopment of under used sites and premises will also be promoted.
- 2.25 In accordance with Core Strategy policies, Policy DM25, seeks to ensure the sustainable development and management of town centre uses at the most appropriate locations.
- 2.26 Policy DM26 seeks to safeguard and strengthen the function of Walthamstow Town Centre, the District and Neighbourhood Centres capitalising on their respective roles and encouraging their continued development. The Council will encourage the development of new 'town centre uses' that support and enhance the viability, vitality and function of the Borough's designated centres and parades by ensuring that:
- There is a demonstrated need for development;
 - There are no sequentially preferable sites or premises available and suitable that could accommodate the identified need;
 - An impact assessment has been undertaken; and
 - The proposed development will not harm the viability of any existing centre.

Walthamstow Town Centre Area Action Plan (October 2014)

- 2.27 Walthamstow Town Centre is the social and economic heart of the borough. The AAP sets out the vision for the centre together with objectives, policies and site proposals in order to guide its future regeneration and growth up until 2026. The Council's vision is for Walthamstow to be a vibrant town centre that provides a unique retail offer which builds on the opportunities of the street market and cultural diversity of the community.
- 2.28 This vision has been split into a set of 10 strategic objectives. Of particular relevance are objectives 1, 2 and 3, which seek to further promote the centre's unique retail offer by building on its historic market and high proportion of independent retailers, as well as providing new retail floorspace to improve the range and quality of goods sold within the centre. A further goal is to supplement this unique and enhanced retail offer with a greater provision of leisure and entertainment services to create a vibrant, attractive and competitive town centre.

- 2.29 Policy WTC3 of the AAP seeks to develop the opportunity sites identified for retail use to provide approximately 24,000 sq m of new retail floorspace. Key retail opportunity sites identified within the AAP include: Selbourne Walk Shopping Centre, which proposes a further 6,000-10,000 sq m net retail floorspace, the Sainsbury's Supermarket and associated car park which is allocated for retail led mixed use including 2,000-4,000 sq m net retail floorspace, and South Grove, which is allocated for mixed use development including 5,000 sq m net retail floorspace.
- 2.30 Policy WTC4 of the AAP focuses on leisure, entertainment, culture and tourism in order to develop the offer with regional appeal and support the development of a 'more than locally significant evening economy within Walthamstow town centre. The policy states that the Council will develop opportunity sites for leisure, entertainment and cultural uses to provide approximately 7,000 sq m of new floorspace. The policy supports the development of a Leisure and Entertainment hub at the eastern end of the High Street and the creation of St James Street Quarter at the western end of the High Street.

Blackhorse Lane Area Action Plan (January 2015)

- 2.31 Waltham Forest Council has identified Blackhorse Lane as a key growth area. The London Plan and Upper Lee Valley Opportunity Area Planning Framework also recognise the area as a strategically important location and major development opportunity. The Area Action Plan (AAP) sets out a framework for how growth should be co-ordinated to transform the area in a sustainable manner that maximises community gains.
- 2.32 The overarching vision of the AAP is to evolve Blackhorse Lane into a mixed-use area comprising housing, businesses and public open spaces which further enhance the existing built fabric and cultures. It seeks to ensure Blackhorse Lane has a neighbourhood centre which provides a range of shops and services to meet the needs of local residents and businesses, whilst also encouraging others to spend more time in the area. The AAP states that the current lack of a diverse offer of retail, leisure and community facilities means the area fails to function effectively as a destination where people want to spend significant lengths of time.
- 2.33 Paragraph 3.4.11 states that a new neighbourhood centre should only cater for local need, and not encourage trips from outside the area. Large comparison shopping facilities will not be appropriate as these should be located in Walthamstow Town Centre in the first instance. The AAP limits net retail areas to 1,000 sq m in order to discourage such uses, but considers

that there is scope for a larger flagship store (>500 sq m) to 'kick-start' the centre, and to ensure it fulfils its role as the main focus of activity in the locality.

- 2.34 The AAP also identifies a set of opportunity sites that could contribute effectively towards meeting the overall vision and objectives of the area. Of particular note is: the 'Station Hub and Waterfront' site which proposes a mixed-use development including 6,870 sq m of commercial space which includes retail, with the intention of having no single retail units no larger than 1,000 sq m net floor area, and Webb's Industrial Estate which has the capacity to support up to 1,100 sq m of retail space.

Wood Street Area Action Plan Preferred Options (July 2013)

- 2.35 The Core Strategy (2012) identifies Wood Street as a small linear district centre with a good range of independent and niche retailers. It is also a deprived neighbourhood with housing estates in need of improvement and a number of underused spaces which provide the opportunity for redevelopment.
- 2.36 The Council has identified Wood Street as a key growth area within the Borough, and in doing so has created an AAP which seeks to address its specific challenges and opportunities. The document's vision is to create a distinctive and thriving town centre which preserves and enhances the unique assets of Wood Street by encouraging artisan and artistic uses within the centre's retail and employment offer.
- 2.37 Objective 2 of the AAP seeks to create a distinctive and vibrant town centre which is well connected to the surrounding area and which has an appropriate mix of uses including a range of shops and restaurants. Policy WS3 reflects this objective by stating that the existing character, identity and amenity of this distinctive district centre will be protected. Key actions to implement this include the rejuvenation of the Plaza at the heart of Wood Street and ensuring new retail activity is focussed within the designated primary frontage.
- 2.38 The Plaza is also identified as an important Development Site (Site 11, 1.39ha), where the opportunity exists to enhance and intensify development at this location which is currently underutilising its available space. The Plaza would be a suitable location for approximately 70-170 residential units that would sit above an active ground floor for uses such as a Post Office, a supermarket that is appropriately sized, restaurants and cafes.

Northern Olympic Fringe Area Action Plan Preferred Options (January 2011)

- 2.39 The 2012 Olympic Games and their legacy present a significant opportunity for the Northern Olympic Fringe Area. The AAP, which is currently at the Preferred Options stage, provides guidance to deliver positive change that capitalises on the economic potential of the area. The vision for this AAP is to transform the area into a successful urban neighbourhood of exceptional quality to create an attractive environment where people aspire to live.
- 2.40 A key objective is to support the town and neighbourhood centres within the area (Leyton and Lea Bridge) to ensure their long term viability so that the Northern Olympic Fringe is an attractive, convenient interesting place to live and visit. Policy NOF1 seeks to strengthen the retail offer of both centres as well as enhancing the cultural and entertainment services provision. In addition, the AAP highlights how there is an opportunity for redevelopment at Leyton Mills Retail Park to provide a higher intensity of mixed use development comprising retail, residential and social infrastructure which also allows better linkages to Leyton Station, the High Street and the surrounding areas.

South Grove/St James Supplementary Planning Document (September 2015)

- 2.41 The St James/South Grove area has been identified as a significant opportunity area within Walthamstow town centre. It is located to the south of the railway line between St James Street Station and Walthamstow Central Station; the SPD identifies it as 'a collection of adjoining opportunity sites that create a larger overall region where it would be beneficial to co-ordinate change'. The sites scale and potential means that it presents an opportunity to play a major role in shaping development and change across the town centre, providing a stronger sense of place and purpose in what is currently an 'ill-defined territory'.
- 2.42 The land comprises a Council owned car park and the St James Street car park, both of which are no longer required for that use, together with small scale industrial warehouses, large warehouses, a health centre and fragmented street terrace with shops located on the group floor. The site has poor quality links with the High Street and South Grove was subject to a previous major planning permission for a foodstore led scheme which is no longer being implemented.
- 2.43 The area covered by the SPD comprises four separate sites in the adopted AAP, and taken together, appropriate uses include retail (Use Class A1), Residential, Commercial (B1), live/work units and social infrastructure (including health centre). Paragraph 2.3.3 states that restaurant and café uses may also be acceptable (Use Class A3). The expectation of the SPD

is that the area will now be residential-led rather than retail-led, and any retail floorspace should be of a 'local scale' with minimal car parking provision.

Summary

- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was adopted in March 2012 and replaces the suite of national Planning Policy Statements, including PPS4. The NPPF maintains the general thrust of PPS4 and advocates a 'town centres first' approach. It requires planning policies to positively promote competitive town centre environments and manage the growth of centres over the plan period.
- The London Plan seeks to co-ordinate development within the network of town centres to ensure that they provide the main foci for commercial development, are conveniently accessible, and provide a sense of place and local identity. The Upper Lee Valley is identified as an Opportunity Area, and includes Blackhorse Lane - a strategic growth area in Waltham Forest.
- The Core Strategy promotes Walthamstow as the main destination for comparison shopping, and the district centres of North Chingford, South Chingford, Highams Park, Wood Street, Bakers Arms, Leyton and Leytonstone as providing main and bulk convenience food shopping and a reasonable range of comparison shopping facilities. The overarching strategy for the network of town centres is the encouragement of distinctiveness, complimentary roles, differentiation and specialisation.
- Four key growth areas are identified in the Core Strategy in which the Council will seek to accommodate new housing and jobs: Blackhorse Lane, Walthamstow Town Centre, the Northern Olympic Fringe (including Leyton), and Wood Street. The headline points of relevance from the respective AAP's/SPD include:
 - **Adopted Walthamstow Town Centre AAP:** encourages retail led mixed-use development at Selbourne Walk, Sainsbury's and Grove Road; and the encouragement of leisure/entertainment uses at eastern and western (St James Quarter) end of the High Street;
 - **Adopted Blackhorse Lane AAP:** allocates a new neighbourhood centre alongside housing, businesses and public open spaces. Sites for retail / mixed-use include the 'Station Hub and Waterfront' site and 'Webb's Industrial Estate'. The AAP acknowledges scope for a flagship retail development in excess of 500 sq m in order to 'kickstart' the centre and to ensure it is the main focus of activity in the locality;

- **Preferred Options, Wood Street AAP:** encourages the rejuvenation of the Plaza at the heart of Wood Street (Development Site 11); mixed use development including active ground floor uses and a supermarket;
- **Preferred Options Northern Olympic Fringe AAP:** Seeks to strengthen the retail offer of Lea Bridge and Leyton as well as enhancing the cultural and entertainment services provision. Opportunity to redevelop Leyton Mills Retail Park to provide higher density mixed use development and better linkages to adjoining areas/transport interchanges.
- **Adopted South Grove/St James SPD:** Identified as significant opportunity area within Walthamstow town centre with the ability to shape development and change. The site, which has poor quality linkages with the town centre, is identified as a residential-led site, with some smaller scale and local retail, restaurants and cafes if appropriate.

3. National Market Trends

3.1 At the time of the Council's previous retail study, the retail sector was experiencing considerable challenges as a consequence of the extremely rapid deterioration in the national economy during the final months of 2008. Much has changed during and since this period of economic instability and recession, and this section considers these economic fluctuations in more detail, identifying implications for retail and town centre growth and/or change in Waltham Forest.

Economic Upswing

3.2 Analysis published by Experian (Retail Planner 2014) concluded that following several years of subdued performance, including a period of recession; a 'strong economic upswing' took place in early 2013, driven by increases in consumer spending and business investment. Experian note that whilst there remain drags on growth in terms of fiscal constraint and a weak export market, 'low inflation, strong employment growth and high levels of consumer and business confidence point to sustained expansion, albeit at a more modest pace'.

3.3 Consumer and investor confidence is tentatively returning, and centres in Waltham Forest can therefore be expected to benefit directly from the upturn in the wider national economy as footfall and expenditure in town centres increase.

Changing Retailer Space Requirements

3.4 During the recession retailers' margins were squeezed, whilst other costs have continued to rise and a raft of multiple and independent retailers have either collapsed or significantly shrunk their store portfolios. The growth of the internet means that retailers no longer need stores in every town to achieve national coverage, and many are therefore focusing their development programmes on the provision of large flagship stores in strategic locations, supported by smaller satellite stores and transactional websites.

3.5 The larger flagships accommodate full product ranges whilst smaller stores offer more select ranges, supplemented by internet kiosks allowing access to the full range. This offers many advantages to retailers including lower property costs, more efficient logistics and being able to open stores where there is a high level of demand despite there being space restrictions. This 'polarisation' of retailing is enabling larger dominant centres to continue to attract key flagship formats, which can pose a challenge to centres such as Walthamstow where 'flagship' shopping locations such as Oxford Street and Westfield Stratford City are within close

proximity. However, as witnessed by a number of recent openings in Walthamstow town centre, this does not rule out smaller and medium-sized centres such as Walthamstow from offering the more limited floorspace formats being sought.

Internet Growth & Multichannel Retailing

- 3.6 The online shopping population is reaching saturation, and any future growth in the market is likely to come from increased spend driven by new technology, a better 'browsing' experience and improved delivery options. The growth in online sales has previously raised concerns about the continued need for bricks and mortar stores; however trends indicate that online and in-store shopping channels are becoming increasingly blurred.
- 3.7 The 'Click and Collect' market is the largest on-line growth sector in the UK at the current time. It is forecast to be one of the most significant drivers of growth, with expenditure set to grow by 82% between 2014 and 2019 to £6.5bn (Verdict 2014). Verdict comment that 'the importance of click & collect should not be underestimated. Maintaining a store network that can offer locality, whilst also having highly informative websites to drive growth, is now a fundamental requirement'. It can be used as an important tool in helping town centres to continue to have an important role and function, by being a footfall generator in its own right.
- 3.8 It is apparent that, despite being a relatively new concept for the retail sector to embrace, click & collect is affirming that physical stores will continue to have a role in the multichannel shopping environment. The advantages of physical stores, in terms of the shopping experience, service and immediacy of products in a showroom setting, will ensure that a network of key stores remains a fundamental component of retailer's strategies to provide an integrated multichannel retail proposition. Importantly for the Borough's network of centres, the Click and Collect phenomenon can be expected to drive an occupier desire to have a representation of physical store units across town centres.
- 3.9 'Click and Collect' can be used as an important tool in helping town centres to continue to have an important role and function, by being a footfall generator in its own right. The overall trend will be an increase in town centre collection points, but there are new opportunities to pro-actively support this town centre function including, for example, 'Click and Collect cafes' or 'Click and Collect Hubs'. Westfield, for example, has launched 'Click and Collect Hubs', in partnership with Collect+, allowing shoppers to pick up their online orders from their centres. The dedicated hubs allow shoppers to try on their purchases to know if they are suitable before taking them home, and offers a returns service. This provides shoppers with access to over 260 retailers signed up to the Collect+ service, including John Lewis, Amazon and Asos.

Westfield view it as an opportunity to respond to shoppers' needs and ultimately help deliver a seamless experience for customers shopping on-line and in-store.

The Role of the Town Centre

- 3.10 The town centre has been the main shopping channel for centuries, but in the face of new forms of E-Tailing competition many will need to continue to adapt in order to remain viable shopping destinations. Emerging trends suggest that many centres will be used increasingly for leisure and social activities as well as traditional retailing, with more bars, restaurants, food outlets and community spaces. Walthamstow town centre, with its recent enhancement of its leisure offer, is therefore well placed to capitalise on this trend. Centres which offer unique/specialist retail offer which cannot be matched online are likely to continue to perform strongly.
- 3.11 Enhancing the non-retail offer so towns function as more than just retail locations will help drive footfall and increase dwell time. Towns should promote unique attractions such as heritage assets, historic buildings and cultural features which can differentiate a centre and improve its attractiveness.
- 3.12 To ensure that town centres have a viable function moving forwards they must provide an attractive shopping and leisure experience which the internet is unable to match. A wider strategy must deliver a mix of town centre uses to enhance the attraction of a centre, and increase frequency of visit and dwell time. A vital component of this will be making town centres as accessible as possible, with improved and affordable car parking, as well as investment in public realm and place marketing initiatives.

Convenience Goods/Foodstores

- 3.13 The main foodstores (i.e. the 'big four' - Sainsbury's, Tesco, Asda, Morrisons) have reigned in substantial expansion and the roll-out of super-sized stores, with Morrisons recently cancelling plans to develop the South Grove site, as identified for redevelopment in the Walthamstow Town centre AAP. The combined spread of convenience store openings, online grocery sales, and the expansion of 'deep discount' retailers such as Aldi and Lidl has fundamentally changed consumer shopping behaviour. These trends have encouraged repetitive top-up shopping that in turn diminishes main grocery sales and renders large-format stores less profitable.
- 3.14 The 'big four' have historically had a combined market share of over 75% of the convenience goods market, although in recent years their dominant market position is being increasingly

challenged by discount retailers such as Lidl and Aldi and also the continued growth in convenience retailers offering a more upscale product offer such as Waitrose. The value/discount retailers are, in particular, in the midst of a period of rapid expansion, having gained considerable market share during the recession, although year-on-year levels of growth have begun to slow.

- 3.15 Supermarket operators are continuing to invest in new stores, with the recent opening of a new Tesco at Highams Park evidence of this. However, we expect the 'big four' retailers to be significantly more selective in committing to new sites, and to instead focus on programmes of enhancements and upgrades to their existing store network where this is considered to be needed.

Out-of-Centre Retailing

- 3.16 Retailers are opting to develop stores in the most strategic and cost effective locations, with a notable resurgence of out-of-centre destinations, which offer benefits of lower rents, larger retail units and in most cases, free car parking. According to Verdict, out-of-town retailing is the only form of retailing which has seen store numbers increase consistently since 2000. The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) reports that the number of out-of-centre stores has increased by up to c.1,800 (25%) since 2000; whilst the number of town centre stores fell by almost 15,000 between 2000 and 2009, the majority of which are likely to have been in 'high street' locations.
- 3.17 The recovery of market confidence is benefitting out-of-town retailing. Vacancy rates have fallen, footfall has increased, and many retailers are seeking expansion in out-of-centre locations. A number of these are traditional town centre retailers which have developed out-of-town store formats, including John Lewis, which now operates a number of 'At Home' stores in out-of-centre locations, as well as other traditionally 'high street'-focussed retailers such as Debenhams, Next, Primark and H&M. So far, Waltham Forest has seen relatively little in the way of this new wave of out-of-centre stores.
- 3.18 Another trend is the evolution of traditional retail 'box' warehouse developments into retail parks, sub-dividing units, expanding the product offer, and developing beyond just retail to introduce food and beverage, encouraging longer dwell times. Retail park owners are also refurbishing their retail parks; i.e. public realm, walkways, car parks, signage, landscaping and seating to enhance the visitor experience. The Cork Tree Retail Park in Chingford has benefited from such investment in recent years.

Commercial Leisure

- 3.19 As the nature of retail and high-street shopping continues to change over time, the commercial leisure sector is becoming an increasingly important contributor to the vitality and viability of town centres. Leisure time is a precious commodity to consumers and in order to maximise free time, research suggests that town centre visitors often combine leisure activities as part of an overall going out experience.
- 3.20 Reflecting this trend, leisure is becoming an increasingly important component in town centre regeneration schemes, particularly in secondary towns which, reflecting the wider trends in the retail sector previously identified, are in some cases becoming less attractive as retail destinations. As noted above, Walthamstow is a case in point in this respect, with the Empire Cinema and commercial leisure scheme introducing an important new dimension to the offer of Walthamstow town centre.
- 3.21 The recession brought mixed fortunes for the restaurant sector. The main casualties were from the more exclusive end of the market, as well as smaller companies with less established brands. Many companies owning multiple brands expanded throughout the economic downturn and continue to trade well, often by offering heavy promotions and discounts. Family dining restaurants such as Pizza Express and TGI Fridays are increasingly anchoring leisure-focussed (often cinema-led redevelopment schemes), and also increasing representation in other strong trading destinations such as major retail parks.
- 3.22 The coffee shop sector remains buoyant; there are now approximately 16,500 coffee shops across the country. Recent analysis shows that the UK's coffee shop sector remains one of the most successful in the nation's economy and will continue to expand.
- 3.23 The pub industry suffered during the recession with a record number of pub closures across the UK as a direct consequence of a decline in both drinks sales and rental revenues. This decline continues today, at a rate of approximately 30 pub closures per week across the country. Many pubs have in recent years been converted to small-format convenience stores. Additional factors such as competition from supermarkets, changes to licensing legislation and the smoking ban have further compounded the problems faced by many operators. Similar to the foodstores, however, value led brands such as JD Wetherspoon have achieved sales growth in recent years and continue to expand.
- 3.24 The Health and Fitness sector continues to perform strongly as the social trend involving the maintenance of personal health and fitness shows no sign of abating. The health and fitness market is currently being expanded through investment by value and budget operators such

as Easy Gym, Gymbox and Pure Gym. This new breed of venues aims to appeal to a wider market with flexible, low cost monthly or 'pay as you go' subscriptions. These facilities are usually located in high-footfall, in or edge of centre locations, often as part of a wider leisure offer.

Summary

- The 'traditional' high street continues to face a number of challenges stemming from the impacts of the recent economic downturn, the tightening of retail spending in recent years, and continued significant changes in consumer shopping behaviour. The growth in online shopping, including multi-channel retailing, acts as tough competition for the high street, but also presents an opportunity for the high street to capitalise, by maximising the opportunities arising from services like 'click & collect', and retailers moving towards a seamless transition between store-based and virtual shopping experiences.
- Out-of-centre retailing remains an ever-present source of competition, and market evidence suggests that many retail parks have performed well during the economic downturn, and are becoming increasingly attractive to 'high street' retailers. Portfolio aspiration is generally to increase footfall through a greater product offer and mix of uses to encourage footfall and longer dwell times.
- Town centre strategies which support the continued evolution of the high street are therefore considered ever more vital. This may involve providing a high quality shopping 'experience', maximising the benefits of tourist trade, and improving the mix of retail and non-retail outlets to increase length of stay and spend. Walthamstow town centre has benefited from recent investment in this respect which will be important in securing its long term vitality and viability, however the other centres in the Borough will not be immune from the pressures set out in this section.
- It will be important, therefore, for town centres to be well positioned to be able to adapt to on-going changes in the retail and leisure sector over the development plan period and to reaffirm their unique selling points which differentiate their retail offer from other centres, allowing them to differentiate themselves from – rather than directly compete with – higher order centres. Heritage, tourism assets and other 'unique selling points' should be capitalised on, and robust place marketing strategies put in place.

4. Sub-Regional Context

- 4.1 This section examines the borough's location and demographic composition, accessibility/movement, and the influence of competing destinations. The retail performance of the Waltham Forest centres in the context of the retail network across the wider sub-region is reviewed, and the influence of key competing centres on the current and future role of the borough's centres discussed.
- 4.2 Our analysis draws extensively on the household telephone survey data, which underpins the entire study, and a number of other published data sources referenced where relevant. These identify the current role of each competing centre, and the extent to which this is likely to change and influence future shopping patterns in the region. Qualitative research was also undertaken to establish major pipeline development proposals in competing centres.
- 4.3 Results from the household telephone survey show that the main competing centres which have an influence over shopping patterns within the survey area are: Westfield Stratford City, Central London, Ilford, Stratford town centre and Lakeside.

Location/Demographics

- 4.4 Waltham Forest is an outer London borough in the North East of London which lies adjacent to Epping Forest and the London Boroughs of Redbridge, Newham, Hackney, Haringey and Enfield. It sits alongside major destinations such as the Olympic Park and Stratford City development, and provides a pivotal link between two of Europe's largest regeneration areas: The Thames Gateway and the London-Stansted-Cambridge-Peterborough corridor.
- 4.5 The Borough forms a green edged corridor from the edge of London's Green Belt in the north, to the heart of the Olympic Park and 'Urban Waltham Forest' in the south; the North Circular (A406) broadly divides the Borough into these two distinctive areas. The south comprising Leyton, Leytonstone and Walthamstow has a predominantly urban, higher-density form. In contrast, the north of the Borough comprising the district centres of North and South Chingford and Highams Park is generally more open in character with a lower-density built environment and a greater number of open spaces.
- 4.6 In terms of the residents and demographic characteristics, Waltham Forest was estimated to have a population of around 233,000 (Waltham Forest Core Strategy, 2012), with '271,170 (ONS mid-year estimates), with the south accounting for approximately twice as many residents than the north.

4.7 In terms of ethnic diversity, the Core Strategy (2012) states that the southern and central areas of the Borough accommodate more ethnic minorities than in the north. This is demonstrated through an analysis of ONS data for the Borough which highlights that c.75% of the northern area of the Borough are of White ethnicity, and c.47% are of White ethnicity in the southern area, demonstrating the cultural diversity throughout Waltham Forest. The London Plan (paragraph 1.12) also identifies Waltham Forest as one of twelve London Boroughs where, by 2036, black, Asian and other minority ethnic communities are likely to become the majority of the population.

Accessibility

4.8 Waltham Forest is well connected by public transport. The Borough is served by two overground rail lines and two London Underground Lines. The Gospel Oak to Barking overground line runs east west through the south of the borough, with stops at Blackhorse Road (also linking to the Victoria underground line), Walthamstow Queens Road, Leyton Midland Road (equidistant between Bakers Arms and Leyton), and Leytonstone High Road.

4.9 The Chingford to Liverpool Street overground line is perhaps more significant in respect of trade inflows/outflows, with stops running north/south through the borough at St James Street, Walthamstow Central (also linking to the Victoria underground line), Wood Street, Highams Park and Chingford (in North Chingford district centre). In the South West of the borough, Lea Bridge Station is scheduled to re-open in Spring/Summer 2016, offering an improved over-line service between Stratford and Tottenham Hale, providing some borough residents (those living in survey zones 6 and 8) with easier access to Westfield Stratford City.

4.10 The Victoria and Central line underground services run through the borough. The Victoria line starts at Walthamstow Central and runs westwards with a stop at Blackhorse Road, and through to Central London. The Central line runs north-south to the east of the borough through Woodford and Snaresbrook, and then enters the borough with stops at Leytonstone, Leyton and Stratford, running through to Central London. The north of the borough is not served by the underground network.

Competing Centres

4.11 This section draws on the 2015 household survey results to identify the shopping patterns of Borough residents for their main comparison goods shopping, and main food and top up food shopping. This analysis identifies the main competition outside the Borough, and enables us to

investigate the relationship, role and performance of each of the eight main centres, together with out-of-centre retail warehousing.

4.12 We have also undertaken qualitative work to establish major developments and pipeline proposals in identified competing centres that may have an influence on shopping patterns in Waltham Forest. The findings will feed into our conclusions of the ability of existing retail provision to meet the needs of their catchments, and will also inform our key recommendations for future growth, investment and change throughout the Borough. This assessment complements the quantitative/economic analysis set out later in this report and will assist in strategic recommendations for the North and South borough Sub Areas.

Shopping Patterns

4.13 Shopping patterns derived from the telephone survey allow us to calculate the amount of comparison goods expenditure that each centre draws from within the study area. This indicator reflects the strength of the retail offer as well as the centres' accessibility. The total comparison goods expenditure leaking to competing centres is set out in Table 4.1 (below).

Table 4.1: Comparison Goods Market Share

	Survey area	North Sub-Area	South Sub-Area
Total available spend (£m)	£941.2m	£296.1m	£645.1m
Comparison goods trade draw to Waltham Forest (£m)	£380.4m	£118.0m	£262.4m
Retention rate (%)	40.4%	39.9%	40.7%

Source: Table 5, Appendix 3

4.14 Our assessment has identified that there is £941.2m of comparison goods expenditure available to residents of the survey area; £380.4m of which is retained by stores and centres within Waltham Forest. This is equivalent to a 'retention rate' of 40.4% within the survey area, as shown in Table 4.1. A closer analysis of the individual sub-areas demonstrates that they both have similar retention rates to the Borough-wide average: 39.9% of comparison goods expenditure available to residents in the North Sub-Area is retained within the survey area, whilst 40.7% of comparison goods expenditure available to residents in the South Sub-Area is retained within this Sub-Area.

4.15 The comparison goods trade draw of the key centres within and surrounding the study area is summarised at Table 4.2.

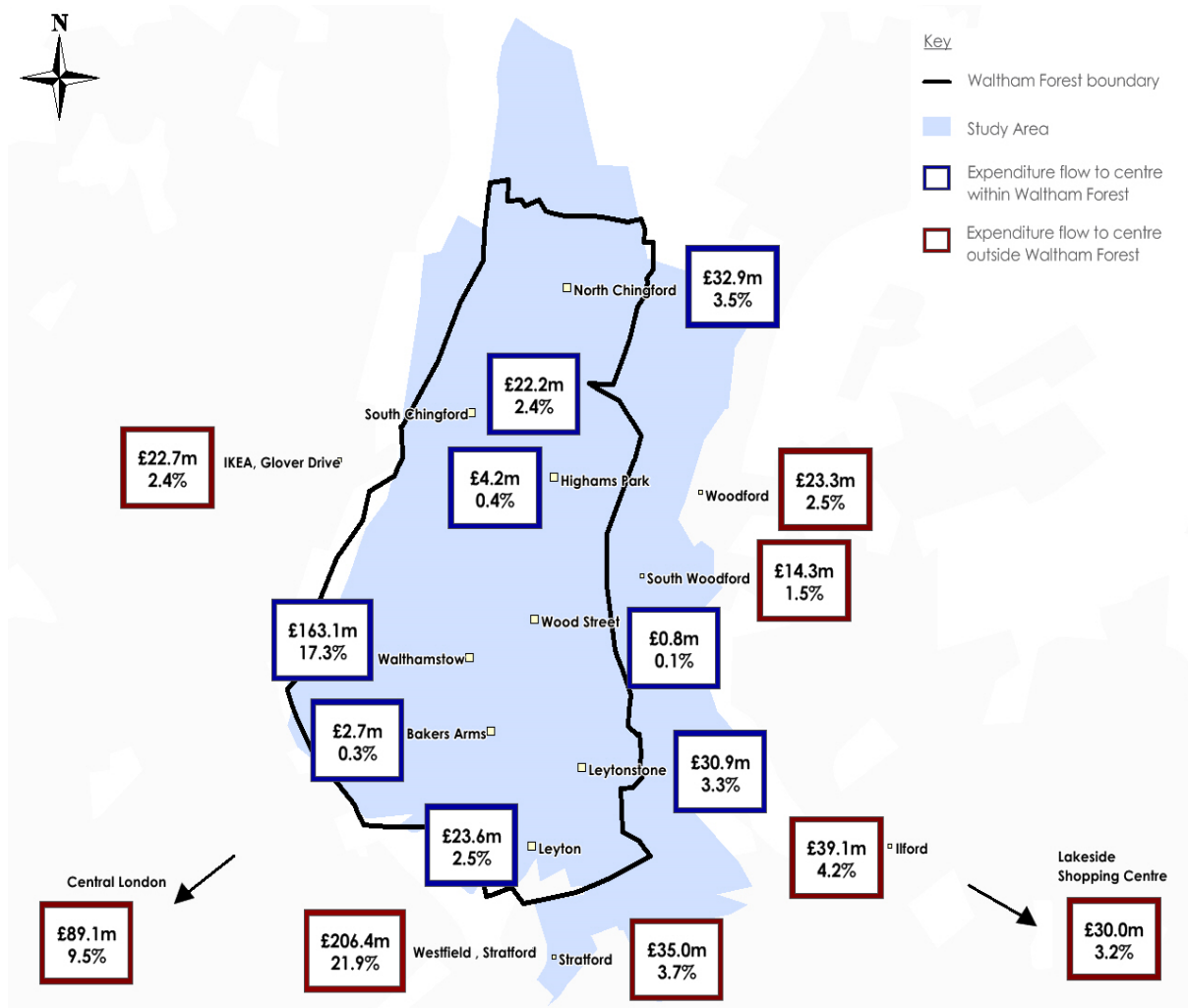
Table 4.2: Study Area Comparison Goods Trade Draw: Key Competing Centres

Centre	Borough	London Plan Classification	Comparison Goods Trade Draw from Survey Area (£m)	% of Total Available Comparison Goods Expenditure (%)
Westfield Stratford City	Newham / LLDC	Metropolitan*	206.4	21.9%
Walthamstow	Waltham Forest	Major	163.1	17.3%
Central London	Various	Westminster / Camden / Kensington & Chelsea	89.1	9.5%
Ilford	Redbridge	Metropolitan	39.1	4.2%
Cork Tree Retail Park	Waltham Forest	-	37.9	4%
Stratford	Newham	Metropolitan	35.0	3.7%
Leyton Mills Retail Park	Waltham Forest	-	34.0	3.6%
North Chingford	Waltham Forest	District	32.9	3.5%
Leytonstone	Waltham Forest	District	30.9	3.3%
Lakeside	Thurrock	-	30.0	3.2%
Leyton**	Waltham Forest	District	23.6	2.5%
South Woodford	Redbridge	District	23.3	2.5%
South Chingford	Waltham Forest	District	22.2	2.4%
Highams Park	Waltham Forest	District	4.1	0.4%
Bakers Arms	Waltham Forest	District	2.7	0.3%
Wood Street	Waltham Forest	District	0.8	0.1%
<i>Other destinations</i>	-	-	166.1	17.6%
Total	-	-	941.2	100%

*as part of Stratford Metropolitan Centre **excluding Leyton Mills Retail Park

4.16 A summary of the patterns of comparison goods spending to key centres and stores within and outside the study area is shown in **Figure 4.1**.

Figure 4.1: Comparison goods turnover of centres in and surrounding Waltham Forest, 2015



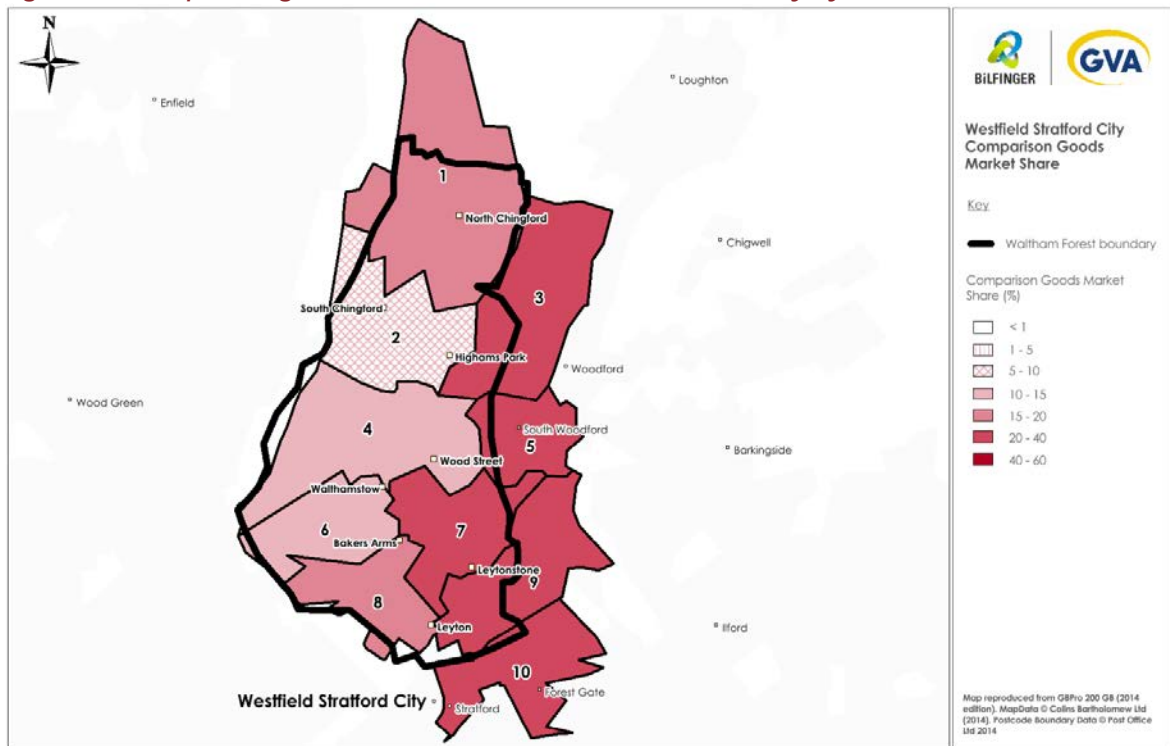
Source: Table 5, Appendix 3

4.17 Table 4.2 shows that centres in Waltham Forest chiefly compete with Westfield Stratford City, Central London, Ilford, Stratford town centre and Lakeside for comparison goods spending of residents in the survey area.

4.18 Westfield Stratford City attracts the highest amount of spending from the survey area, drawing £206m of spend, equivalent to 22% of total comparison goods expenditure available to residents of the study area. A further £35.0m of expenditure flows to Stratford town centre (i.e. the 'town centre', sitting adjacent to Westfield Stratford City). As you might expect, the trade draw of Westfield Stratford City from the survey area is greater than the comparison goods turnover of any town centre/retail destination within Waltham Forest.

4.19 Figure 4.2 illustrates the influence of Westfield Stratford City over comparison goods shopping patterns of residents in the survey area. Westfield Stratford City has a strong market share across the south and east of the study area, reflecting the route of the Central Line underground service. As noted earlier, the re-opening of Lea Bridge station (in Zone 8, and close to the boarder with Zone 6) will enable those living in Zone 6 and 8 to gain access to Westfield Stratford City more easily which is likely to have implications on market share in these two zones.

Figure 4.2: Comparison goods market share of Westfield Stratford City by zone



Source: NEMS Household Survey results

4.20 As we have identified above, other destinations outside the study area where residents undertake their comparison goods shopping include **Central London** (£89.0m of spending from the survey area), **Ilford** (£39.1m) and **Lakeside** (£30.0m). Being an international shopping destination, Central London exerts a reasonably uniform trade draw from each of the survey zones, with the highest market shares from zone 3 (13%) and zone 5 (12%). Ilford’s trade draw is predominantly restricted to zone 5, which falls largely outside the Borough (14% market share) and to a lesser extent zone 9 (8% market share), whilst Lakeside’s trade draw is predominantly restricted to zone 2 (10% market share) and zone 5 (7% market share).

Major Competing Retail Developments & Proposals

4.21 The information above reviews the current position of the competing centres in and around Waltham Forest. This section considers the new and proposed retail and town centre developments in these centres to assess the likely increased attraction of the various centres that may compound trade leakage and impact on retail performance.

- **Westfield Stratford City** – after opening in 2011, the Westfield Shopping Centre is one of the largest urban shopping centres in Europe comprising over 300 stores, with a total retail floor area of approximately 175,000 sq m. Westfield is now preparing plans for a major expansion to the existing Stratford City shopping centre which will comprise new homes, a public park, commercial floorspace for small and medium-sized businesses and circa 9,300 sq m of retail floorspace. It is currently unknown when applications for the extension will be submitted.
- **Unity Square, Ilford** (London Borough of Redbridge) – Ilford town centre continues to be flagged as a major redevelopment opportunity in anticipation of Crossrail's arrival. Redbridge Council has recently announced a raft of new plans to generate £1 billion worth of investment over the next six years, but no material masterplans or potential schemes have been drafted yet. Scheme proposals should continue to be monitored.
- **Lakeside Shopping Centre** (Thurrock) – an application for an extended retail offer comprising 40,700 sq m of additional A1-A5 floorspace was approved in March 2013. The extension will increase the size of Lakeside by nearly a third and will incorporate up to 40 new stores. Thurrock Council have longer-term aspirations for Lakeside to function as a 'regional town centre', by introducing employment, housing, community facilities and open space into an area that is currently dominated by shopping and leisure.
- **Tottenham / Tottenham Hale** - Haringey Council are currently preparing a Tottenham Area Action Plan (AAP) Development Plan Document (DPD), and consulted on a preferred options draft in February and March 2015. Within the AAP, a key proposal is to establish a new district centre in Tottenham Hale that becomes a distinctive, diverse and vibrant commercial destination. Located approximately 1km from the Waltham Forest borough boundary, and 3km from Walthamstow town centre, the AAP's vision involves merging the existing Tottenham Hale Retail Park with adjoining sites to create the new district centre. Policy AAP3 specifically seeks to provide Tottenham Hale with a range of new retail, leisure and business spaces, although the quantum of this is not yet defined. Following the AAP's adoption and any future proposals coming forward at the site, this development may have implications for residents on the western fringe of Waltham Forest.

- **Meridian Water, Enfield** – Meridian Water is an 85 hectare, £3.5 billion investment that will provide 10,000 new homes, a full range of neighbourhood facilities, 6,700 new permanent jobs and a new Meridian Water station over the next 20 years. Barratt and Segro are the Council's chosen development partner on the scheme adjacent to the waterside environment of the Lee Valley Regional Park only 20 minutes from Central London. Construction on phase one will begin in Spring 2017.

Summary

- According to the 2015 household survey, Waltham Forest's eight main centres collectively capture £280m of comparison goods expenditure from across the survey area, equating to a market share of 30%. When out-of-centre floorspace is factored in, comparison goods floorspace across the borough has a market share of 35%. Zones 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, and 9 better reflect the borough boundary, and the analysis demonstrates that the eight main centres retain only 39% of available comparison goods expenditure within the Borough. This reflects reasonably high levels of leakage and confirms the overall strategy to focus on consolidating and improving trade retention over the plan period.
- The 2015 survey has identified Westfield Stratford, Central London, Ilford, Stratford town centre, Lakeside and South Woodford as the main competing destinations in the wider sub-region. These centres collectively capture c.£422.9m of available comparison goods expenditure in the survey area (Zones 1-10), equating to a combined market share of 45%; this is 15% greater than the borough town centres across Zones 1-10. The remaining 25% is accounted for by other centres and out-of-centre comparison provision both within and beyond the survey area.
- Within those zones that better reflect the borough boundary (1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9), the key competing centres capture c.£246.7m of comparison goods expenditure, from a total of £674.9m. This equates to a trade leakage from the borough to these key competing centres of 37%. Westfield, Stratford has opened since the evidence base underpinning the Core Strategy was produced, and this analysis demonstrates the influence of this international shopping destination. Westfield draws £206.4m of comparison goods trade from the survey area (Zones 1-10) (22% market share), compared to Walthamstow (£163.1m / 17% market share). Westfield draws primarily from the eastern part of the borough, reflecting the route of the Central Line underground service.
- The influence of destinations outside of the borough should be monitored given a number of proposals to increase and enhance floorspace. Westfield, Stratford, for example is preparing plans for a major residential and commercial expansion including c.10,000 sq m

of retail floorspace, plans continue for the redevelopment of Unity Square in Ilford, and Lakeside has major expansion plans highlighted by planning permission to extend the retail offer by c.40,000 sq m. Located just 1km from Waltham Forest borough boundary to the west, the Tottenham Area Action Plan is guiding the implementation of a large-scale district centre at Tottenham Hale.

5. Retail Hierarchy

- 5.1 In this section we define the role and function of current shopping provision in the higher-order town and district centres in Waltham Forest, and provide an overview of the Neighbourhood Centres. Our assessment is split between the North and South Sub-Areas (as defined in Section 1), and covers the centres listed in Table 5.1. The remainder of the chapter sets out summaries of the performance of each of these centres, with more detailed 'health check' assessments provided at Appendix 1. Appendix 2 sets out Customer Views and Behaviour drawn from the household telephone survey, and Appendix 5 provides the outputs from newly commissioned pedestrian footfall data for each of the main and district centres.
- 5.2 Table 5.1 provides an overview of the higher order centres in Waltham Forest, in terms of retail floorspace, the total number of shop units and placing in the Venuescore national retail rankings. A plan showing the location of the centres (and competing centres surrounding the Borough) is provided in Volume 3 of the Study.

Table 5.1: Profile of Waltham Forest town and district centres

Centre	Position in Borough Retail Hierarchy	Total number of units*	Total floorspace (sq m net, estimated)*	Venuescore Retail Ranking 2014-15
North Sub-Area				
North Chingford	District	165	22,800	1,792
South Chingford	District	163	21,600	709
Highams Park	District	-	-	-
South Sub-Area				
Walthamstow	Major Centre	572	76,400	220
Bakers Arms	District	236	29,600	2,557
Leyton	District	-	-	1,096
Leytonstone	District	252	42,400	630
Wood Street	District	134	10,800	-

*Based on Experian Goad centre boundaries, which may differ from Council policy boundary. No Experian Goad data is available for Highams Park or Leyton.

- 5.3 Table 5.2 below draws on the Council's 2015 town centre audits and sets out the mix and balance of uses by Use Class. We draw on this to inform our assessment in respect of the overall balance of the economy in each centre, highlighting indications of any one centre

requiring intervention to redress imbalance and/or reduce the role of retailing as a ‘town centre’ use.

Table 5.2: Balance and Mix of Uses by Use Class

	North Chingford	South Chingford	Highams Park	Walthamstow	Bakers Arms	Leyton	Leytonstone	Wood Street
A1	55%	65%	60%	65%	66%	58%	59%	81%
A2	21%	11%	9%	15%	13%	22%	19%	6%
A3	19%	15%	16%	15%	13%	14%	13%	8%
A4	2%	4%	2%	1%	2%	1%	4%	0%
A5	3%	5%	13%	4%	6%	5%	5%	5%

Source: LB Waltham Forest, Town Centre Audits, 2015

NB: Inclusive of Use Classes A1-A5 only

- 5.4 The centres reviewed as part of this assessment are broadly consistent in respect of the mix of uses aside from Wood Street which has a substantially higher proportion of A1 uses. It is apparent that this centre is at the early stages of gentrification and this mix is likely to evolve in the future towards a stronger ‘café culture’. This should be monitored moving forwards, but it is evident that the defined secondary shopping frontage will allow for such evolution in the future, and intervention in the policy framework is unlikely to assist in the meantime.
- 5.5 Highams Park has a strong proportion of fast-food take-aways, seemingly at the expense of A2 uses rather than A3. The Council might wish to consider restricting Use Class A5 within the secondary shopping frontage policy to avoid any further representation.

Sub Area: North

North Chingford District Centre

- 5.6 Located towards the northern boundary of the borough, the relatively small centre principally consists of independent retailers, alongside a small mixture of national retailers, particularly towards the southern end of the centre around Chingford Green.
- 5.7 The majority of the town centre’s retail activity is concentrated along the stretch of Station Road between the train station at the eastern end of the centre and the junction with Kings Head Hill (A110) at the western end of the centre, whilst a number of units are located outside the centre on Kings Head Hill itself. Most of the shop units are relatively small and some are converted residential properties. Venuescore ranks North Chingford in 1,792nd position in its

2014-15 index, and identify the 'market position' of North Chingford as being 'Middle', indicating that the overall quality of the retail offer is satisfactory.

- 5.8 Our assessment of North Chingford district centre has identified that the centre is currently performing well. The diversity of uses is good, with particularly strong representation in respect of restaurants and pubs, suggesting the centre has both daytime and evening economy functions.
- 5.9 Foodstores in the centre are only able to cater for top-up shopping needs and we would expect many residents will need to travel to stores further afield for their convenience goods shopping. There are a limited number of national retailers present in the centre but one of North Chingford's assets is the strength of its independent retail and service offer. To inform our conclusions about the role and function of each of the centres, as part of the household telephone survey we asked a number of questions that revealed the attitudes and shopping behaviours of the users of the Borough's centres. The household survey results revealed that 12.2% of respondents like North Chingford's range of specialist and independent stores. It is also positive to note that the vacancy rate in the centre is currently 5%, significantly below the UK average of 11%.
- 5.10 The 2015 PMRS footfall survey demonstrated that the highest footfall takes place to the western end of the District Centre outside Boots (18-21 Station Road), The Village Arcade (49 Station Road) and 'Dolly's Blinds' (69 Station Road) – all within the Primary Shopping Frontage. The general trend of the footfall results indicate that footfall decreases along Station Road from west to east, as lower footfall was recorded to the eastern end of Station Road around the train station. The lowest footfall counts were recorded outside 'Image' (169 Station Road), 'The Fountain' (152 Station Road) and Amanda Roberts' (118 Station Road) at the eastern end of Station Road. The footfall counts are consistent with the Primary and Secondary Shopping Frontage designations.
- 5.11 The strong environmental quality of the centre, particularly to the southern end around Chingford Green, is a further important asset. This is reflected within the household telephone survey results which highlight that when asked what people like about North Chingford, 28.5% of respondents mentioned the centre's 'attractive environment'.

South Chingford District Centre

- 5.12 South Chingford is located in the north west of the borough on the cross roads of the A112 and A1009, and features a mix of independent retailers and national retailers. Venuescore ranks South Chingford in 709th position in its 2014-15 Index, its position in the index

strengthened by the range of national multiple retailers in the centre. Venuescore identify the 'market position' of South Chingford as being 'Lower Middle', indicating that the overall quality of the retail offer is between average and poor quality.

- 5.13 The centre can be considered to be performing adequately in respect of vitality and viability. The diversity of uses in the centre is such that most residents' day to day shopping needs can be met, and the centre benefits from a good anchor store in the form of a medium-sized Sainsbury's store. Consequently, 'food shopping' was the most common response (79%) when asked what people's main purpose for visiting South Chingford is. Furthermore, people tend to visit the centre either once or twice a week to shop (49.8%).
- 5.14 The vacancy rate, at 11%, is in line with the current UK average and accordingly needs to be carefully monitored.
- 5.15 The 2015 PMRS footfall survey demonstrated that the highest footfall in South Chingford takes place around the junction between Old Church Road, New Road, Hall Lane and Chingford Mount Road – the central core retail area. The highest footfall was recorded outside the 99p Store (5-7 Old Church Road) and 'Strictly Silver' (2 Old Church Road); count point 3, the route to Sainsbury's, was the fourth highest count point. Consistent with the Secondary Shopping Frontage designations, the lowest footfall counts were recorded towards the northern boundary of the District Centre outside 'Bollywoods' Indian Restaurant (99-101 Old Church Road) and Indiano Pizza (77 Old Church Road), and outside Nisa and William Hill in the southern part of the town centre.
- 5.16 The environmental quality of the centre is best described as functional – the centre could benefit from some 'softening' in the form of additional planting and greenery to break up large areas of hardstanding and the dominance of traffic. Traffic congestion appears to be a major issue affecting the centre. A number of shopfronts also benefit from an enhanced external appearance.

Highams Park District Centre

- 5.17 Located south east of Chingford Mount, Highams Park is centred around the railway station. Since the Council's previous retail study (2009), Highams Park has been promoted from a neighbourhood centre to a district centre, primarily due to the development of the large Tesco foodstore which can be considered to have improved the main food shopping facilities in this part of the borough. We agree that the opening of this store, and associated smaller retail units, mean that Highams Park functions as district centre.

- 5.18 The majority of the centre's retail activity is concentrated either side of the level crossing for the railway line which runs through the heart of the centre, and along The Avenue towards Highams Park station. Over and above the new Tesco superstore, the rest of the retail units are relatively small and mostly comprise independent traders.
- 5.19 The Tesco store now forms the natural 'anchor' store in the centre, and is reasonably well integrated with the wider retail offer. As the store has its own dedicated car park, there is potential for the store to function as a 'one stop' shop, and it is noteworthy that the smaller units which were constructed as part the development remain, for the most part, empty. This is reflected within the household survey results, which reveals that 81.5% of survey respondents quoted 'food shopping' as the main purpose of their trips to Highams Park, and 12.5% of survey participants like how easy it is to park.
- 5.20 Elsewhere, the centre has a mix of uses which is orientated towards smaller convenience retailers and services. The comparison offer of the centre is more limited, but this is not unusual in smaller district centres such as Highams Park.
- 5.21 The vacancy rate in the centre is quite high, at 9%, although this is largely explained by the vacant units in the Tesco development. The presence of these vacant units does however suggest that demand for representation in the centre may be limited. Elsewhere in the centre, the vacancy rate is lower, and the most prominent vacant unit is the former Regal Cinema. Should proposals for the reopening of this facility come forward, this will further enhance the diversity of uses in the centre, improving the range of amenities available for local residents.
- 5.22 The 2015 PMRS footfall survey undertaken in September 2015 demonstrated that the highest footfall takes place outside the entrance to the Tesco Superstore/Subway Café on Larkshall Road, outside Highams Park Railway Station, and on Larkshall Road at the railway crossing. The highest footfall counts were all recorded in the Primary Shopping Frontage areas, aside from a low count outside the former Budgens unit to the north of the Tesco superstore on Larkshall Road. Low counts were also recorded north of Highams Park station on The Avenue, and south of the centre on Winchester Road – both Secondary Shopping Frontage allocations. Hale End Road, allocated Secondary Shopping Frontage to the south east of the town centre has a mid-range pedestrian footfall count.
- 5.23 The environmental quality of the centre is inevitably compromised by the railway line which runs through the centre, and associated congestion which arises from the closures of the level crossing barriers. Taking this into account, the environmental quality of the centre is reasonable, and the new public realm introduced as a result of the Tesco development is of good quality.

5.24 Overall, we consider Highams Park to display generally positive signs of vitality and viability.

Out-of-centre retail provision

5.25 The Borough has a relatively limited number of out-of-centre retail facilities. The only significant concentration of out-of-centre retail activity is to the west of the Borough, focussed on the Cork Tree Retail Park, located on the western edge of the Borough on the North Circular in Chingford. The Retail Park is approximately three miles to the north-west of Walthamstow town centre, but is closer to other centres in the Borough including South Chingford and Highams Park. A large branch of CostCo is also located on the opposite side of the North Circular.

5.26 Cork Tree Retail Park extends to include approximately 7,500 sq.m of retail floorspace. Current occupiers at the Park include Currys/PC World, Halfords, Hobbycraft, Sports Direct and Pets at Home. We understand that the Park trades under 'bulky goods' A1 non-food planning consent, although given the presence of retailers such as Sports Direct there may some units which are trading under more flexible planning consents.

5.27 The North Sub-Area is also served by a number of larger out-of-centre foodstores, although the network of foodstores across the Borough is principally concentrated within its defined town and district centres, allowing the foodstores to make positive contributions to the wider vitality and viability of their respective centres. However there are two large standalone foodstores located in the South Chingford area:

- Sainsbury's at Walthamstow Avenue, Low Hall is a 5,812 sq.m net foodstore, and its large size enables a significant range of both food and non-food products to be traded, including the company's Tu clothing range, as well as TVs and digital products, small domestic appliances, toys, home furnishings, books, CDs, DVDs and games. Other facilities at the store include a petrol station, restaurant, pharmacy, dry cleaning, key cutting and photo processing.
- The nearby Morrisons store at Chingford Road extends to 3,193 sq.m net, and whilst significantly smaller than the Sainsbury's, has a wide-ranging food offer as well as a petrol station, pharmacy and a restaurant.

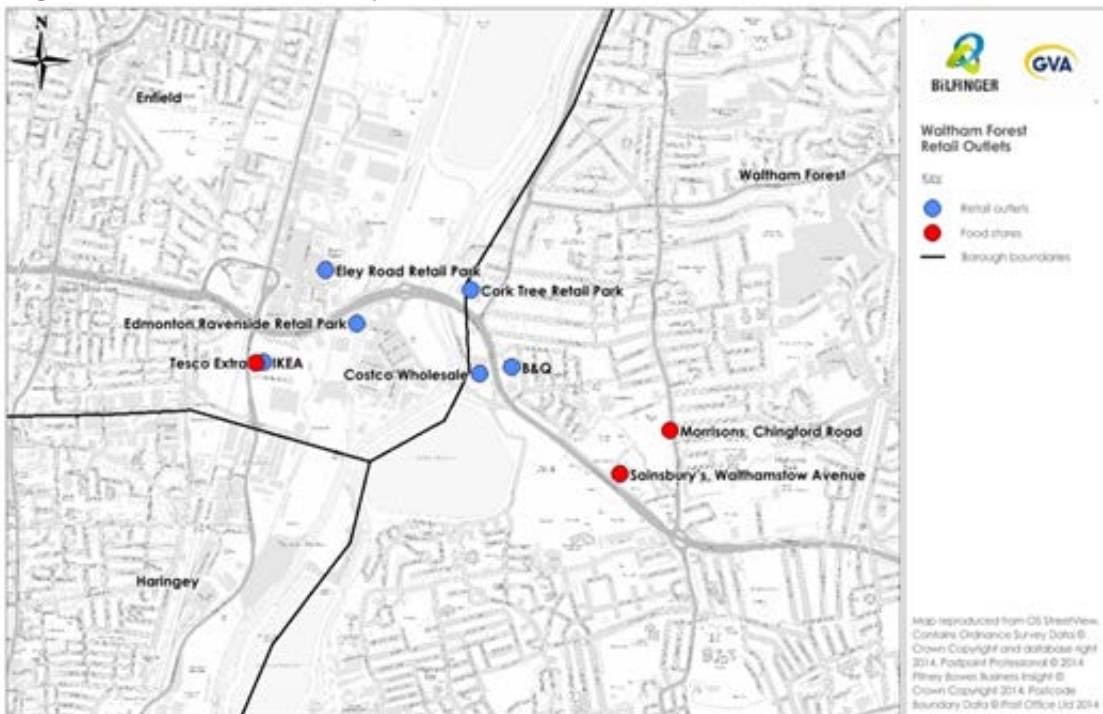
5.28 To the west of the Borough, in LB Enfield, there is significant large-format retail provision in the Edmonton area. These destinations are easily accessible to residents in the North Sub-Area by virtue of the North Circular, and when considered alongside the provision described above, is an established and comprehensive retail warehouse offer. The offer includes:

- one of only three Ikea stores in London at Glover Drive;
- a large Tesco Extra store, also at Glover Drive;

5.29 There is also further retail provision at Tottenham Retail Park, adjacent to Tottenham Hale station, which offers a mixture of ‘high street’ comparison goods (Boots, Carphone Warehouse, Next, Wilko) and ‘bulky goods’, convenience goods (Lidl), food and drink (Costa, KFC, Pizza Hut) and ‘bulky goods’ (Asda Living, B&Q, Currys/PC World, Maplin)

5.30 **Figure 5.1** shows a plan of the main out-of-centre retail provision within and surrounding the North Sub-Area.

Figure 5.1: Out-of-centre retail provision in North Sub-Area



Sub Area: South

Walthamstow Town Centre

5.31 Walthamstow town centre is currently ranked 220th in the national Venuescore retail rankings, comparable with other London centres such as Wandsworth and Holloway. Venuescore classify the retail offer of the centre as ‘lower middle’, indicating that the majority of retailers present are ‘mid-market’ rather than high end/luxury boutique. This is not necessarily a weakness, and many of these retailers are strong footfall drivers; the overall objective should be to retain a strong proportion of A1 comparison goods operators alongside other town

centre uses to ensure strong footfall and dwell time. Given proximity to Central London and Westfield Stratford City, Walthamstow should continue to focus on this complementary mid-market offer for the local catchment, seeking to enhance it where opportunities arise.

- 5.32 There is an above-average representation of comparison (non-food) retail uses in the centre, which is a positive reflection on its vitality and viability. The centre also has a strong convenience (food) goods offer, which includes two large supermarkets operated by Asda and Sainsbury's. Reflecting this, 72% of survey respondents stated that food shopping was often the main purpose of their trip to Walthamstow. The market which runs almost the entire length of the High Street further enhances the diversity of uses and is evidently an important contributor to its wider vitality and viability. Walthamstow's street market was one of the main positive attributes of the centre quoted by the household survey participants. Furthermore, 31.6% of people who mostly shop in Walthamstow visit the centre daily, which is likely to be a consequence of the centre's regular street market and strong convenience goods offer.
- 5.33 The leisure offer of the town centre has witnessed significant enhancement following the opening of the mixed use cinema, family dining and residential scheme at the junction of High Street and Hoe Street. This has introduced an important new 'anchor' to the town centre, and assisted in meeting two key gaps in the town centre offer. The cinema now acts as the focus for the evening economy in the town centre, which was previously largely absent, whilst the restaurants play an important role in ensuring the centre remains busy during the 'transition' period between the daytime and evening functions of the centre.
- 5.34 Further diversification of the café/restaurant offer is, however, considered necessary, to capitalise on the recent investment. There is also a problem of over-concentration of take-away uses in some secondary areas of the centre.
- 5.35 The vacancy rate in the centre currently stands at 8%, below the UK average of 11%. Vacancy rates in the primary shopping frontage are generally low however, and we note the centre has recently attracted representation from retailers such as TK Maxx.
- 5.36 The investment in public realm at the eastern end of the centre, in conjunction with the new leisure development, is a positive enhancement of this part of the town centre – however it also has the effect of drawing attention to the fact that similar investment is required throughout much of the remainder of the town centre. The recent investment by the owners of The Mall in providing an internal refresh of the appearance of the centre is further evidence of positive investment in the centre.

5.37 The centre's other principal strength is its accessibility – the centre is served by two railway stations, London Underground, and is a hub for bus routes from across much of north and east London. The ease of access into central London is a particular asset of Walthamstow – but clearly also places competing locations for spending, most specifically Central London – within easy reach of residents in the area.

Bakers Arms District Centre

5.38 Located approximately 1km south of Walthamstow town centre, Bakers Arms is relatively large district centre, which also features a high proportion of independent retailers. The centre is predominantly structured around the four-way junction between Hoe Street, Lea Bridge Road and High Road.

5.39 The vitality and viability of the centre is generally good. The centre has a well-sized anchor supermarket (Tesco) and a good range of supporting retail facilities. The independent retail provision, particularly in respect of convenience goods, is also good. Reflecting this, 82.9% of people from the survey who visit Bakers Arms most often to shop usually do so to buy food. Whilst there are some gaps in the comparison goods retail offer, this is to be expected given its role and function as a district centre, and also the centre's proximity to Walthamstow town centre.

5.40 The quality of the retail offer is towards the lower end of the market, but appears well used by the local community, and on this basis should not be considered cause for concern. The operators provide an important local top-up function, providing for everyday shopping and service requirements. It is positive to note that a number of national retailers have commenced trading from the centre in recent years.

5.41 The vacancy rate is, at 8%, below the UK average and has decreased subsequent to completion of the Experian Goad survey.

5.42 The 2015 PMRS footfall survey undertaken in September 2015 demonstrated that the highest footfall takes place around the Tesco Superstore on High Road, and nearby around the High Road/Lea Bridge Road main town centre junction. As would be expected, footfall gradually falls with distance from the High Road/Lea Bridge Road junction, where the core retail is located. The lowest footfall was recorded eastwards along Lea Bridge Road outside Wakefield (680 Lea Bridge Road) and 'Indiano Pizza' (631 Lea Bridge Road). Low footfall was also recorded outside Global Service Travel Agent (428 Hoe Street) to the north.

- 5.43 As with a number of other district centres across the Borough, the environmental quality of the centre has benefited from enhancement in recent years, and this has positively impacted on the vitality and viability of the centre. In particular, improvements to public realm and shopfronts at the Lea Bridge Road crossroads at the heart of the centre lend a positive impression. The Council needs to ensure that investment is available to maintain the appearance of the centre, as some peripheral areas which were upgraded as part of recent investment works are already beginning to look in need of attention.

Leyton District Centre

- 5.44 Leyton is a predominantly linear centre located in the south of the Borough. The centre hosts a good mix of multiple and independent retailers of varying sizes. Leyton Mills Retail Park, located at the southern end of the centre, is also within the town centre boundary and features a number of larger-format stores. There is a good range of smaller-format convenience stores and day-to-day services located along Leyton High Road.
- 5.45 The centre is performing well, and unquestionably has a feel of being 'on the up'. Day to day shopping needs sit alongside an emerging café culture, and there have been recent enhancements to the food and drink offer in the centre. There are a number of pubs located throughout the centre, and of particular note is the conversion of the Grade II listed Leyton Town Hall into an upscale pub – the Leyton Technical – following a successful 'pop up' during the 2012 Olympic Games, which is evidence of investor confidence in the area.
- 5.46 The centre scores highly in terms of national multiple retailer representation on account of the presence of Leyton Mills Retail Park. This means the centre has representation from retailers such as Next, Sports Direct and TK Maxx who would not be found in a 'typical' district centre. This is reflected in the household telephone survey results which reveal that 12% of participants like the range of well-known stores within the centre. The Retail Park also contains a large Asda which is the largest foodstore by some margin in the district centre, and indeed one of the largest in the Borough. The Retail Park is poorly connected to the rest of the centre however, turning its back on the High Road, and the occurrence of linked trips between the two appears relatively limited.
- 5.47 Leyton benefited from investment as a result of the Council's 'Creating a Better Place' campaign, which in turn followed a £475,000 grant awarded to the area by the Government's Working Neighbourhood Fund. The grant has seen money invested to improve the shop fronts and public realm within the shopping area, and the impact of the investment is clearly apparent. Attractive pastel coloured facades and consistent signage throughout the primary

shopping frontage makes for an attractive shopping environment, and has the effect of the centre feeling coherent and easily navigable. Pavements have also been widened and feature intermittent seating and planted trees. We understand that in 2013 the improvements to Leyton won 'best town centre project' at the London Planning awards.

- 5.48 The impact of these works on the overall vitality and viability of the centre should not be understated – and indeed the northern part of the centre, which has not yet received the same level of investment – demonstrates fewer signs of vitality and viability, with a number of poor quality shop-fronts and lower-grade paving. The footfall data demonstrates that the highest footfall is experienced around the underground station and throughout the southern part of the centre (south of Coronation Gardens), with the lowest footfall experienced north of Coronation Gardens. This area continues to offer a good range of operators and still forms a healthy part of the district centre.
- 5.49 Overall, we consider that whilst there are areas where the vitality and viability of Leyton could be further improved, the centre generally performs strongly.

Leytonstone District Centre

- 5.50 Leytonstone is the second largest retail centre in the borough (in terms of total number of units), and is located approximately 5km to the south east of Walthamstow. The district centre's shopping area is largely linear in form, running north to south along Leytonstone High Road.
- 5.51 There is a large edge-of-centre Tesco store, but there may be opportunities to integrate this store better with the rest of the centre. Whilst there is a large, centrally-located unit occupied by Matalan, it appears to be a lightly used store which contributes little to the wider vitality and viability of the centre. The former Primark – which would have formed a stronger 'anchor' – is now a branch of Poundland, with Primark instead represented at Westfield Stratford City.
- 5.52 We consider Leytonstone to be a functional district centre, which performs well against most of the indicators of vitality and viability. When assessed against the investment which has taken place in some of the other district centres, it does feel though Leytonstone would benefit from further enhancement – although recent improvements around the Church Lane / High Road junction are positive. There is a particular need to improve shop frontages throughout much of the centre.

- 5.53 Notwithstanding this, the centre appears generally healthy and meets local shopping needs. New residential development to the south of the centre will help reinforce its long term vitality and viability over the course of the Council's Plan period.

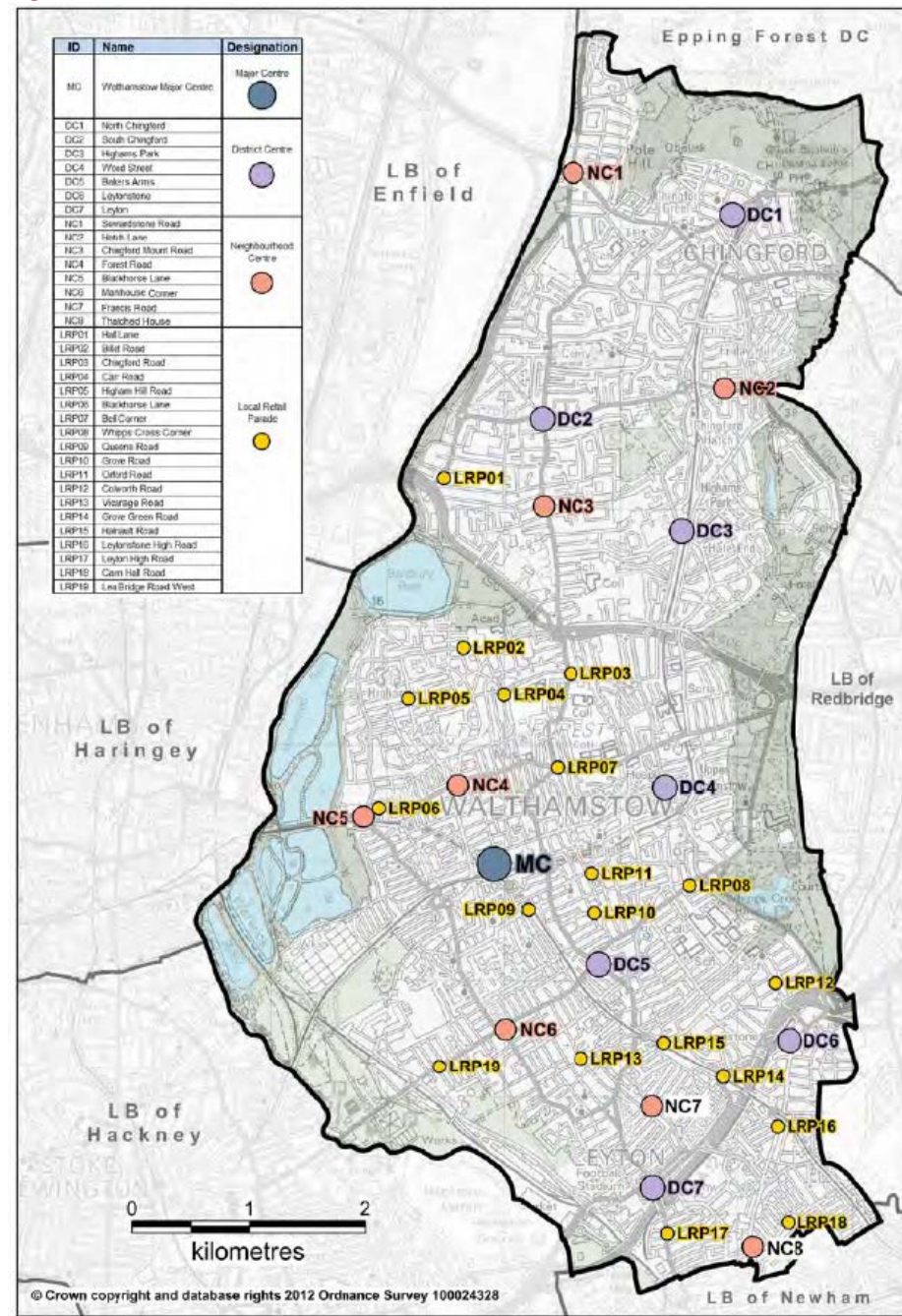
Wood Street District Centre

- 5.54 Located just over 1km to the east of Walthamstow town centre is Wood Street district centre which is a relatively small and linear district centre. The centre's size, attractive appearance and more specialist retail offer lend it a fairly unique feel which differentiates it from the majority of the other centres within the borough.
- 5.55 The diversity of uses can be considered sufficient to meet most residents' day-to-day needs, and has improved through the recent opening of a Tesco Express store to the north of the centre. Whilst there is also a small Co-Operative store centrally located within the centre, the absence of a larger foodstore is likely to mean that not all local residents will use the centre for convenience goods shopping, however. The household survey results reveal that many of those who visit Wood Street most often to shop do so daily (31.6%).
- 5.56 Comparison goods retail includes a number of niche retailers and we consider this type of retailing has scope to develop further. The vast majority of the retail offer is taken up by independent retailers. There is however a handful of gaps in the retail services offer, most notably the absence of a bank (although there are cash points located in the centre).
- 5.57 The highest footfall was recorded outside Tesco Express (12-20 Wood Street), at the far northern boundary of the town centre, outside the primary and secondary shopping frontages. Throughout the rest of the town centre, the 2015 PMRS footfall survey demonstrates that footfall is fairly evenly distributed with no specific area of 'higher activity'.
- 5.58 Perhaps the strongest asset of the centre is its environmental quality. There has been substantial investment in the centre in recent years with pavement widening, public realm enhancements, and shopfront improvements, and this, combined with the more specialist retail offer in the centre, lends the centre a pleasant, relaxed environment, with noticeably less noise and 'bustle' than the other district centres across the Borough. 10% of survey participants who visit Wood Street most often to shop stated specifically that the environment was a strong asset of the centre.
- 5.59 Therefore, although there are a small number of gaps in its retail and services offer, we hold the view that Wood Street displays positive signs of vitality and viability.

Neighbourhood Centres

5.60 The London Borough of Waltham Forest has undertaken site surveys and audits of seven neighbourhood centres across the borough, including Sewardstone Road, Hatch Lane, Chingford Mount Road, Forest Road, Markhouse Corner, Francis Road and Thatched House. The location of each is marked on the map below, taken from the adopted Development Management Policies Local Plan Adopted Version, October 2013. GVA has not undertaken site visits.

Figure 5.2: Retail Locations in Waltham Forest



5.61 We summarise the audits in Table 5.3 below. Tables 5.3 and 5.4 analyse neighbourhood centre composition by the number of units in each use class, and includes vacancy rates also. Markhouse Corner and Thatched House are the largest centres with 76 and 73 units respectively. All centres appear to have a strong A1 retail offer, with a reasonably balanced mix of uses throughout. Hatch Lane, Chingford Mount Road and Forest Road have a relatively high proportion of fast food take-aways, and only Forest Road has a public house (Use Class A4) within the neighbourhood centre designation.

Table 5.3: Neighbourhood Centre Audits 2015 by USE CLASS, Unit Number

	Sewardstone Road	Hatch Lane	Chingford Mount Rd	Forest Road	Markhouse Corner	Francis Road	Thatched House
A1	11	16	28	16	45	20	49
A2	0	1	2	2	4	4	3
A3	3	1	4	2	12	1	6
A4	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
A5	1	4	6	4	5	3	5
D1	1	2	1	2	4	3	3
Vacant	2	1	0	1	6	3	7
TOTAL UNITS	18	25	41	28	76	34	73

Table 5.4: Neighbourhood Centre Audits 2015 by USE CLASS, % Composition (by Unit Number)

	Sewardstone Road	Hatch Lane	Chingford Mount Rd	Forest Road	Markhouse Corner	Francis Road	Thatched House
A1	61%	64%	68%	57%	59%	59%	67%
A2	0%	4%	5%	7%	5%	11%	4%
A3	16%	4%	10%	7%	16%	3%	8%
A4	0%	0%	0%	4%	0%	0%	0%
A5	6%	16%	15%	14%	7%	9%	7%
D1	6%	8%	2%	7%	5%	9%	4%
Vacant	11%	4%	0%	4%	8%	9%	10%
TOTAL UNITS	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

5.62 Tables 5.5 and 5.6, below, analyse the same centres by retail category, and demonstrate the dominance of service sector retailing over food and non-food operators. The proportion is at least 38% in every centre, with a 50% composition in Sewardstone Road and 46% in Chingford Mount. This is not necessarily a cause for concern given the need for neighbourhood centres to offer everyday service and retail requirements, but should be monitored moving forwards

given the need to ensure sustainable town centres through a quality mix and choice for consumers.

Table 5.5: Neighbourhood Centre Audits 2015 by RETAIL CATEGORY, Unit Number

	Sewardstone Road	Hatch Lane	Chingford Mount Rd	Forest Road	Markhouse Corner	Francis Road	Thatched House
Convenience	4	8	8	7	9	5	15
Comparison	2	3	11	5	20	6	17
Service	9	10	19	11	34	13	28
Non-Retail	1	3	3	4	7	7	6
Vacant	2	1	0	1	6	3	7
TOTAL UNITS	18	25	41	28	76	34	73

Table 5.6: Neighbourhood Centre Audits 2015 by RETAIL CATEGORY, % Composition (by Unit Number)

	Sewardstone Road	Hatch Lane	Chingford Mount Rd	Forest Road	Markhouse Corner	Francis Road	Thatched House
Convenience	22%	32%	20%	25%	12%	15%	21%
Comparison	11%	12%	27%	18%	26%	18%	23%
Service	50%	40%	46%	39%	45%	38%	38%
Non-Retail	6%	12%	7%	14%	9%	20%	8%
Vacant	11%	4%	0%	4%	8%	9%	10%
TOTAL UNITS	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

5.63 We have undertaken a broad comparison with the Council audits and analysis set out in the 2009 Retail and Leisure Study. We draw the following broad conclusions:

- Sewardstone Road has experienced a substantial fall in the proportion of comparison operators with a corresponding increase in service uses. Vacancy rates have fallen marginally and the level of convenience provision remains largely unchanged;
- Hatch Lane has experienced a substantial fall in the proportion of comparison operators with a small increase in the convenience, vacant and service categories;
- In Chingford Mount, the proportion of comparison operators is unchanged, and the proportion of convenience operators has increased, whilst the proportion of vacant units has fallen;
- Forest Road has experienced an increase a large increase in convenience goods operators and a fall in comparison, service and vacant units;
- Markhouse Corner has experienced a substantial fall in the proportion of convenience goods operators and vacant units, with a small increase in comparison operators and a substantial increase in service operators;
- In Francis Road, the proportion of comparison goods operators has increased substantially, while the proportion of vacant units has fallen significantly and the proportion of convenience operators has fallen marginally;

- Thatched House has experienced a decrease in both comparison and service categories, and an increase in the convenience and vacant categories.

5.64 Table 5.7 below sets out the number of betting shops in each neighbourhood centre. This should be monitored moving forwards.

Table 5.7: Neighbourhood Centre Audits 2015 – Sui Generis Betting Shops

	Sewardstone Road	Hatch Lane	Chingford Mount Rd	Forest Road	Markhouse Corner	Francis Road	Thatched House
Sui Generis Betting Shops	1	2	1	2	2	0	2

Out-of-Centre Retail Floorspace

5.65 The main concentrations of out-of-centre retail floorspace in the Borough are located in the Chingford area, which falls within the North Sub-Area, as summarised above. There is more limited provision in the South Sub-Area, chiefly at Leyton Mills - however this location falls within the defined boundary of Leyton town centre and therefore we have included an assessment of uses as part of our wider health check of this centre (also summarised above). Elsewhere across the South Sub-Area there is a standalone Homebase store at Fulbourne Road, Walthamstow (in close proximity to Wood Street district centre), which has recently been refurbished to introduce concessions from Habitat and Argos. A second branch of Homebase at the southern end of Leytonstone High Road closed in 2015 and has been re-occupied by B&M Bargains. There are also branches of B&Q and Screwfix on Lea Bridge Road, Leyton.

Summary

- Our assessments of the centres in the Borough has confirmed they are generally performing well; no centre is particularly struggling, and all centres are able to meet residents’ day-to-day convenience shopping, local services and some comparison goods shopping needs. In terms of the balance of uses and economic mix, all centres seem well balanced aside from Wood Street which is heavily dominant in the A1 category, and Highams Park which has a strong proportion of A5 fast food take-away uses. A more mixed use ‘café culture’ is likely to evolve in Wood Street through evident gentrification, but the Council may wish to restrict Use Class A5 from secondary frontages in Highams Park moving forwards.
- In the North Sub-Area, North Chingford is performing strongly, with the centre having an upmarket feel and a range of boutiques and independent stores, as well as a strong

pub/restaurant offer. The centre is one of only two in the Borough where there is not a medium/large format foodstore within walking distance of the centre (the other being Wood Street) and this therefore represents a gap in the retail offer. South Chingford is performing adequately but northern parts of the centre appear to be underperforming and the centre suffers from something of a utilitarian feel. Highams Park has benefited from significant recent investment in the form of a new Tesco foodstore, however the smaller units created as part of this development remain empty and there is scope to ensure the rest of the centre capitalises on the presence of this store to a greater extent.

- In the South Sub-Area, Walthamstow town centre has been enhanced through the opening of the new cinema and commercial dining development, addressing two key qualitative gaps in the offer of the town centre. The town centre now needs to capitalise on this new role and further develop its offer, particularly in respect of further enhancements to the café and restaurant offer, to ensure it draws as wide a customer base as possible. The investment in the environmental improvements around the station and new development need to be extended to the rest of the centre.
- Recent improvements to the interior of The Mall shopping centre have refreshed the quality of the comparison goods retail offer in Walthamstow, but further improvement, extension and modernisation of this centre will be required over the course of the Council's Plan period in order for the centre to remain competitive. The retail offer of the town centre remains firmly mid-market. The centre does, however, have important assets in its extensive street market and the presence of two strongly-performing foodstores.
- The planned further enhancement of the retail and leisure offer at Westfield Stratford City (and the imminent improvements of accessibility to this location by residents in the Walthamstow area) means the town centre cannot afford to stand still, and further investment in, and enhancement of, its retail and commercial leisure offer, should be considered a priority.
- Elsewhere in the South Sub-Area, centres continue to perform generally well. Leyton and Bakers Arms have both seen substantial investment in their appearance in recent years, and Leyton in particular appears to be 'on the up' with a noticeable bar/café culture emerging. The presence of Leyton Mills Retail Park to the south of the centre means that the centre has an unusually high presence of national comparison goods retailers, but the Retail Park itself presents a clear opportunity for intensification, given its proximity to the centre and Underground station. Should the Council intend to retain the Retail Park within any future review of its centre boundaries, improvements to linkages with the 'traditional' district centre will be required.

- Wood Street has also benefited from investment in recent years and benefits from a strong environmental quality, with a noticeably calmer pace than many of the other centres in the Borough. There is however a need to improve convenience shopping facilities, and there are a number of qualitative gaps in the comparison goods offer. Leytonstone is generally performing well, but certain parts of the centre, particularly to the north, require investment to improve environmental quality and shop frontages.
- The main out-of-centre retail offer is the Cork Tree Retail Park, a number of trade counter operations and two large foodstores operated by Sainsbury's and Morrisons. There are a handful of standalone stores elsewhere in the Borough (B&Q at Lea Bridge Road, Homebase at Fulbourne Road). When considered alongside the facilities located just outside the Borough in the Edmonton area (including most notably Ikea), we do not consider there to be any qualitative gaps in out-of-centre retail provision.

6. Capacity Projections

- 6.1 In this section we set out the performance of the existing retail floorspace across Waltham Forest, split between the North and South Sub-Areas outlined in previous sections, and further split between the performance of the town/district centres within each sub-area, and the performance of each sub area's out-of-centre retail facilities. From this, we establish the quantitative 'need' for additional retail floorspace in the Borough over the study period to 2030, disaggregated to five-year interval periods. The findings of this section should be read in association with the capacity tabulations at **Appendix 3** (for comparison goods) and **Appendix 4** (for convenience goods).
- 6.2 The 'need' for new floorspace is calculated through a conventional and widely-accepted step-by-step methodology, consistent with best practice, which draws upon the findings of the household telephone survey of shopping patterns (as previously discussed) to model the current flows of expenditure to each retail destination within Waltham Forest, and those competing centres in the surrounding area.
- 6.3 The first stage in this exercise is establishing the 'baseline' position, which is developed as follows:
- **Step 1:** Calculate the total amount of convenience and comparison goods expenditure which is available within the postcode sectors comprising the main centres' catchment areas;
 - **Step 2:** Allocate the available expenditure to the convenience and comparison goods shopping destinations visited by residents within these postcode sectors, as defined by the household telephone survey of shopping patterns;
 - **Step 3:** Compare the total expenditure attracted to each shopping destination with the current retail floorspace to assess 'sales densities' (i.e turnover per sq m) in each shopping destination.

Data Inputs

Survey Area and Household Survey

- 6.4 In order to determine residents' current shopping patterns, we have established a 'survey area', covering Waltham Forest in its entirety, and parts of adjacent authorities where some residents may choose to shop at centres within Waltham Forest. A total of 1,000 household

telephone surveys were undertaken by NEMS Market Research across the survey area during March 2015. The survey area was split into 10 survey zones to enable differences in patterns of shopping across the survey area to be accurately captured.

6.5 The household telephone survey results identify shopping habits of households for both convenience and comparison goods, as well as commercial leisure spending (which we discuss separately in this report). For convenience goods, the household telephone survey included questions on 'main food' and 'top-up food' shopping. The results of the two types of food expenditure were then merged through the application of a weight which reflects the estimated proportion of expenditure accounted for by each goods type (70% main food / 30% top-up food). This forms a 'composite' pattern of convenience spending, expressed as a market share for each destination centre or foodstore for each survey zone.

6.6 For comparison goods, the household telephone survey included questions on where respondents normally undertake shopping for the following types of comparison goods shopping:

- Clothing and footwear;
- Furniture, floor coverings and household textiles;
- DIY and decorating goods;
- Domestic appliances;
- Audio-visual equipment;
- Personal and medical goods; and
- Recreational and luxury goods.

6.7 Shopping patterns for each of these types of comparison goods are then combined to produce a 'compose' set of comparison goods shopping patterns, using weighted averages of the household survey responses for each goods type based on the proportion of personal spending ('expenditure per capita') available to residents in the survey area.

Estimates of Population in the Survey Area

6.8 Table 1 in Appendix 3 shows the current and projected population for each of the zones which together comprise the survey area. The total current population in the survey area is 372,525 persons. Based on population projections provided by Experian, this will increase to 439,905 persons by 2030, the end of the study period. This is equivalent to a growth in population of 67,380 persons.

Available Expenditure in the Survey Area

- 6.9 Experian identify a 'per capita' spend on comparison and convenience goods on a zone by zone basis, and these are shown in Table 2 of Appendix 3 for comparison goods, and Table 2 of Appendix 4 for convenience goods:
- Table 2 of Appendix 3 shows that comparison goods per head spend ranges from £1,804 in zone 10 to £3,946 in zone 3.
 - Table 2 of Appendix 4 shows that convenience goods per head spend ranges from £1,489 in zone 10 to £2,289 in zone 3.
- 6.10 It is expected that spend per head on comparison and convenience goods will increase over the course of the study period. Therefore, in Table 2 of Appendix 3 and Table 2 of Appendix 4 we apply an annual growth rate to the 2015 baseline figures (as summarised above), which reflects expenditure growth rate projections set out in Experian's Retail Briefing Note 12.1 (October 2014).
- 6.11 The figures set out in Table 2 of Appendix 3 and Table 2 of Appendix 4 have been discounted to include allowance for 'special forms of trading', such as online shopping. Experian forecast that this currently accounts for 12.5% of comparison goods spending, and 2.8% of convenience goods spending, and expect this to increase over the course of the study period to 15.6% for comparison goods by 2030, and 5.4% for convenience goods by 2030. Table 2 of Appendix 3 and Table 2 of Appendix 4 summarise the 'with' and 'without' expenditure figures, and the deductions we have made for SFT over the duration of the study period.
- 6.12 By applying the population forecasts to the per capita expenditure forecasts, we can gain an understanding of the total amount of spending on comparison and convenience goods which is currently available to residents of the study area, and how much this is expected to increase over the course of the study period. This information is presented at Table 3 of Appendix 3 (for comparison goods) and Table 3 of Appendix 4 (for convenience goods). These tables show that:
- There is currently £941.2m of comparison goods expenditure available to residents of the survey area. This will increase to £1,748.5m by the end of the study period, equivalent to a growth of £807.3m in spending.
 - There is currently £657.9m of convenience goods expenditure available to residents of the survey area. This is expected to increase to £832.8m by the end of the study period, equivalent to a growth of £175.0m in spending.

Sales Efficiency

6.13 It is also necessary to factor in changes in respect of 'sales efficiencies'. These represent the ability of retailers to increase their productivity and absorb higher than inflation increases in their costs (such as rents, rates and service chargers) by increasing their average sales densities. The application of a turnover 'efficiency' growth rate is a standard approach used in retail capacity studies. Although Experian (who are the data providers for the other technical inputs into this study) do not provide clear guidance on sales densities, it is fair to assume that as Experian anticipate that personal spending on both comparison and convenience goods will increase over the study period, so will sales efficiency. Informed by Experian's expenditure growth forecasts, we have therefore adopted the following sales efficiency growth rates:

- Comparison goods: 1.65%, per annum (50% of comparison goods expenditure growth rate of 3.3% per annum);
- Convenience goods: 0.3%, per annum (50% of convenience goods expenditure growth rate of 0.6% per annum)

Floorspace Data

6.14 The comparison and convenience goods floorspace data which we incorporate into our model has been drawn from a range of data sources, including the Institute of Grocery Distribution (IGD), Experian Goad, the Trevor Wood Retail Warehouse Database, and the 2009 NLP Study. Our floorspace assumptions for foodstores make allowance for a proportion of the sales area of the foodstore to be used for the sale of comparison goods (in supermarkets, this may include books, stationery, home entertainment, small electrical items, and so on).

Comparison Goods Shopping Patterns

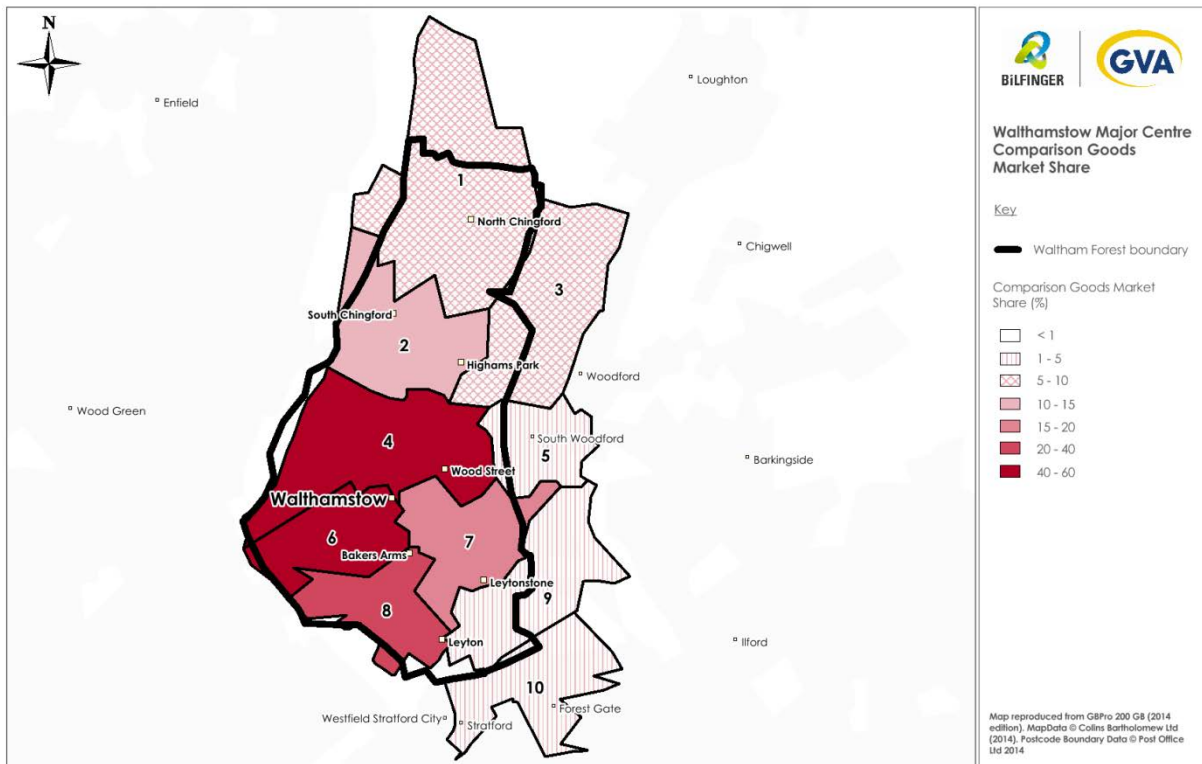
6.15 Of the centres within the study area, Walthamstow town centre has the highest comparison goods turnover, at £163m, accounting for 17% of total comparison goods expenditure available to the study area. In the context of the strong retail and wider entertainment offer of Westfield Stratford City, as discussed above, this is considered to represent a respectable performance.

6.16 Walthamstow town centre's market share largely comes from zones 4 and 6, from which the centre attracts a market share of over 40% (43.5% from zone 4, and 53.2% from zone 6). The centre's location at the boundary of these two zones means it is particularly well-placed to

draw trade from these areas, especially as the other centres within these two zones (Bakers Arms and Wood Street) both offer a much more limited comparison goods shopping function.

6.17 Walthamstow town centre also draws a noteworthy market share from zone 8 (20.3%) and zone 7 (19.6%). For other zones, the trade draw is under 15%, and trade draw is particularly lower from the zones to the south and east of the study area, where residents benefit from good access to Stratford. Figure 6.1 shows the market share of Walthamstow town centre from the study area.

Figure 6.1: Comparison goods market share of Walthamstow town centre by zone



Source: NEMS Household Survey results

6.18 Figure 6.1 shows that, notwithstanding the opening of Westfield Stratford City immediately to the south of the Borough, Walthamstow town centre has a strong market share from those zones immediately closest to the centre, i.e. zones 4 and 6. In Table 6.1 we present an indication of how the market share of Walthamstow town centre has changed between 2009 (when the Council’s previous retail study was undertaken) and 2015¹. Because of differences in the survey and methodological processes between the two studies, the exercise should only

¹ the 2009 Study only presented a combined market share for the centres of Walthamstow town centre and Bakers Arms and Wood Street district centre. However, because the latter two centres only have a limited comparison goods shopping provision, this inclusion does not make a fundamental difference to the total market shares. Notwithstanding this, in order to provide an effective comparison, for consistency we have also added the turnover of these district centres to the turnover of Walthamstow town centre based on the figures set out at Table 5 of Appendix 4.

be considered indicative. Nevertheless, it does show the locations from within the study area from where Walthamstow town centre is likely to have gained and lost market share.

Table 6.1: Comparison goods market share of Walthamstow town centre, 2009 & 2015

Zone	Combined market share of Walthamstow town centre, Wood Street & Bakers Arms district centres, 2009 (%)	Combined market share of Walthamstow town centre, Wood Street & Bakers Arms district centres, 2015 (%)	Difference (%)
Zone 1	9.5	6.3	-3.2
Zone 2	8.9	14.0	+5.2
Zone 3	3.0	7.6	+4.6
Zone 4	47.3	44.9	-2.4
Zone 5	4.6	3.3	-1.3
Zone 6	51.9	53.5	+1.6
Zone 7	29.2	21.6	-7.6
Zone 8	29.9	22.1	-7.8
Zone 9	10.2	5.0	-5.1
Zone 10	4.7	1.2	-3.4

Source: 2009 data sourced from NLP Retail Study, Appendix C, Table 4C (figures for 'Waltham Forest Central', postcode sector and added together to provide aggregate spend for zones listed above). 2015 data sourced from Table 5, Appendix 3 (summed figures for zone 4, zone 6 and Bakers Arms in zone 7, expressed a % of total expenditure available to zone). Figures may not cast due to rounding.

6.19 Table 6.1 shows that:

- Walthamstow town centre has increased its market share from zone 2, and also zone 3, (although as the household survey results have identified the majority of residents in zone 3 travel to Westfield Stratford City for their comparison goods shopping);
- The retention rate in Walthamstow's 'local zone' (zone 6) has also increased marginally relative to the 2009 Study, with an increase in market share of approximately 1.6%;
- With the exception of zone 6, the centre has lost market share from all zones in the South Sub-Area, most significantly from zone 7 and zone 8.

- 6.20 Based on the findings set out in Table 6.1, we consider that Walthamstow town centre's performance, in the light of the opening of such a large competing scheme within easy reach of many residents' of the Borough, to be respectable. The centre has managed to increase market share from a number of survey zones within immediate proximity, and the losses of market share, whilst not insignificant, suggest that Walthamstow town centre has largely remained resilient.
- 6.21 The main out-of-centre shopping facility in the Borough, Cork Tree Retail Park in Chingford, draws £38m of comparison goods expenditure, and therefore achieves a turnover in excess of any of the district centres in the Borough.
- 6.22 North Chingford has the second-highest comparison goods turnover of any centre in the Borough at £33m, which is considered a strong performance and one which is likely to reflect the more upscale retail offer in this centre. North Chingford attracts a market share of 20% from its 'local' zone, the strongest performance of any of the district centres in the Borough aside from Leyton.
- 6.23 A similar comparison goods turnover is achieved by Leytonstone (£31m), which attracts a market share of 13% from zone 9, and 9% from zone 7, but has very limited influence over shopping patterns in the rest of the survey area. A slightly lower turnover is achieved by Leyton (£24m), although it should be noted that if the turnover of Leyton Mills Retail Park (£34m) is added (owing to the inclusion of the Retail Park within the defined policy boundary of the centre), Leyton achieves the second-highest turnover of any centre in the study area. Analysis of the household survey results indicate that both Leyton and Leytonstone draw significant levels of trade from residents who live outside Waltham Forest. South Chingford achieves a comparison goods turnover of £22m, and attracts a market share of 16% from its 'local' zone, as well as minor market shares from zones 1, 4 and 6.
- 6.24 The remaining district centres (Highams Park, Bakers Arms and Wood Street) have extremely limited comparison goods market shares, reflecting the fact they principally function as service centres, whilst Bakers Arms and Highams Park also have important convenience goods shopping functions. The comparison goods market share for Highams Park and Bakers Arms is between 1 and 5%, whilst for Wood Street is under 1%. These low market shares are not considered surprising given the proximity of higher order centres (Walthamstow) or larger district centres (Leyton and Leytonstone) within easy reach of these centres. However, these market shares demonstrate that there may be, for each of these three centres, a need for improvements to day-to-day comparison goods provision in these centres.

Comparison Goods Performance Analysis

6.25 We have assessed the eight town and district centres in the Borough by considering the shopping patterns (as identified by the household telephone survey) and the performance of existing comparison goods floorspace within each centre. Using the market shares attributed to each centre from the household survey, and the baseline estimates of expenditure available to the survey area, we can calculate the comparison goods turnover of each of the main centres. Below, we discuss the performance of each of the town and district centres, set out by sub-area.

North Sub-Area

6.26 **Table 7b** of Appendix 3 shows that as an aggregate, comparison goods floorspace in the North Sub-Area achieves a turnover of £5,337 per sq m. In the context of the composition of the comparison goods offer of these centres, which is characterised by small, in some cases historic premises, each with a relatively limited comparison goods offer, we consider the comparison goods floorspace in this part of the Borough to be performing well.

6.27 The performance of floorspace across the centres in the North Sub-Area varies somewhat, however:

- **North Chingford** has approximately 2,900 sq m net of comparison goods floorspace, and draws a turnover from the study area of £33m. This generates a sales density of £11,270 per sq m, suggesting that the comparison goods floorspace in the town centre is performing particularly strongly. This is likely to in part reflect that the centre has a particularly strong boutique / specialist comparison goods retail offer, raising its popularity relative to what might typically be expected from a district centre.
- **South Chingford** has approximately 4,400 sq m net of comparison goods floorspace, and draws a turnover from the survey area of £22m. In other words, despite having a greater amount of comparison goods floorspace than North Chingford, the overall turnover of the centre is considerably lower, resulting in a sales density of c. £5,100 per sq m. We consider this figure to be reasonable, however, and more reflective of a particularly strong performance of North Chingford rather than any fundamental areas of concern with South Chingford. Investment in modernising existing retail floorspace in South Chingford would be expected to deliver an upturn in performance.
- **Highams Park** achieves a comparison goods turnover of £4m from residents of the study area. There is c. 1,300 sq m of comparison goods in the centre, resulting in a sales density

of £8,200 per sq m, which we consider to be a strong performance. It is possible that some of this comparison goods spend can be attributed to the non-food offer within the new Tesco store, as our assessment has identified that the comparison goods offer elsewhere in the centre is relatively limited.

Sub-Area: South

6.28 **Table 7c** of Appendix 3 shows that, as an aggregate, comparison goods floorspace in the South Sub-Area achieves a turnover of £4,555 per sq m. This reflects the fact that, with the exception of Walthamstow town centre, most of the centres in this part of the Borough have a relatively limited comparison goods function.

Walthamstow Town Centre

6.29 As we have previously identified, Walthamstow's 'core catchment' can be considered to be zones 4 and 6 of the survey area – the town centre attracts a 44% market share from zone 4, and 53% market share from zone 6. It also attracts smaller shares of 20% from each of zones 7 and 8, and minor market shares from elsewhere across the Borough. Based on these shopping patterns, we estimate that the town centre achieves a turnover of £163m, equivalent to a sales density of approximately £5,600 per sq m when applied to the 29,100 sq m of net comparison goods sales floorspace in Walthamstow town centre.

6.30 In our capacity projections for future Borough-wide comparison goods floorspace, we have adopted a 'baseline' sales density of £6,000 per sq m, which is considered to represent a likely sales density of a robustly-trading centre. Walthamstow's sales density falls slightly below this, suggesting that some of the comparison goods retail floorspace in the town centre may be underperforming.

6.31 It should be noted that these figures do not take into account 'inflow' of expenditure from beyond the survey area, and if this were included, the performance of floorspace would be higher. However, there is no doubt that, as the highest order centre in the Borough, and reflecting the Borough / Local Plan identification of the role and function of Walthamstow as a 'major' centre, there is scope for this trading performance to be improved.

District Centres

6.32 Turning to the district centres in the South Sub-Area, the following conclusions on trading performance can be observed:

- **Bakers Arms** has an estimated comparison goods turnover of £2.7m, and approximately 7,400 sq m of comparison goods floorspace, which equates to a sales density of just £365 per sq m. This suggests a weak performance, and one which is reflective of the relatively limited comparison goods shopping facilities in the centre, as well as the close proximity to Walthamstow town centre. However, our qualitative assessment identified that the centre is seeing increased representation from national comparison goods retailers, and on this basis we would have expected a slightly higher sales density than that which has been achieved. It may be possible that once the trading patterns for the new comparison goods stores becomes more established, turnover will increase. Ultimately however, when considering the role and function of the centre and the close proximity of Walthamstow town centre, the scope for Bakers Arms to achieve a strong comparison goods performance will inherently be limited.
- **Leyton** has an estimated comparison goods turnover of £23.6m, but has a relatively limited amount of comparison goods floorspace (1,300 sq m), resulting in a sales density of £18,100 per sq m. This is a strong performance, significantly over and above what would 'typically' be expected for a district centre. Our qualitative assessment has identified that the comparison goods offer in Leyton is relatively limited – in common with other district centres, the offer is more orientated towards convenience retail, and services such as cafes and bars. We therefore assume that much of this performance can be explained by respondents referring to the adjacent Leyton Mills Retail Park (which forms part of the defined district centre) in the household telephone responses (although the Retail Park was listed as a separate response in the household survey questionnaire).
- **Leytonstone** has an estimated comparison goods turnover of £30.9m, and an estimated 6,800 sq m of net comparison goods floorspace. This is equivalent to a sales density of £4,500 per sq m, which we consider to be a strong performance for a district centre. Whilst not explicitly identified in the household telephone survey results, we expect that much of this turnover will be accounted for by the Tesco supermarket, which our household telephone survey has identified to be trading particularly strongly.
- **Wood Street** has, as our assessment has identified, a limited function as a comparison goods shopping location, with just under 3,000 sq m of comparison goods floorspace and a turnover of £0.78m, equivalent to a sales density of 262 sq m.

Comparison Goods Capacity Forecasts

6.33 Having undertaken the above assessment of trading performance, we are in a position to establish the quantum of new comparison goods floorspace which the Council will need to

plan for. In assessing capacity for future comparison goods floorspace, we have assumed that existing comparison goods floorspace stock in the Borough will improve its sales efficiency (turnover per sq m) at a rate of 1.65% per annum throughout the study period. We have assumed that new comparison goods floorspace should achieve sales in the region of £6,000 per sq m net, as an average across the Borough. **Table 6.2** sets out our 'baseline' projections for new comparison goods floorspace in the Borough over the period to 2030, as well as projections for the individual sub-areas.

6.34 We are not aware of any 'commitments' for new comparison goods floorspace (i.e. developments with planning permission which have not yet been implemented) which should be deducted from the capacity forecasts set out below.

Table 6.2: Baseline forecasts for comparison goods floorspace

	2020 (sq m net, rounded)	2025 (sq m net, rounded)	2030 (sq m net, rounded)
Borough-wide capacity	7,000	16,900	28,000
North Sub-Area capacity	2,100	5,000	8,300
South Sub-Area capacity	5,000	11,900	19,700

Source: Tables 7a, 7b and 7c, Appendix 3. Figures may not cast due to rounding.

6.35 Table 6.2 shows that the Council needs to plan for up to 28,000 sq m net of additional comparison goods floorspace in the Borough over the period to 2030, split between 19,700 sq m net in the South Sub-Area and 8,300 sq m net in the North Sub-Area. Included within these overall figures are short term requirements for up to 5,000 sq m net comparison goods floorspace in the South Sub-Area and 2,100 sq m net comparison goods floorspace in the North Sub-Area over the period to 2020.

Convenience Goods Shopping Patterns

6.36 Our assessment has identified that there is £657.9m of convenience spend available to residents of the survey area. Of this, £395.7m is retained within the survey area; the remainder is spent at surrounding stores and centres outside the survey area (Table 4.3). We have also reviewed the levels of expenditure retention within the two Sub-Areas; this is summarised in **Table 6.3**.

Table 6.3: Convenience Goods Market Share by Borough and Sub Area

	Survey area	North Sub-Area	South Sub-Area
Total available spend (£m)	£657.9m	£183.8m	£474.1m
Convenience goods trade draw to Waltham Forest (£m)	£395.7m	£110.8m	£284.9m
Retention rate (%)	60.1%	60.2%	60.1%

Source: Table 5, Appendix 4

North Sub-Area

- 6.37 The main centres in the North Sub-Area are North Chingford (zone 1), South Chingford (zone 2) and Highams Park (also zone 2). Convenience goods spending is largely dominated by three large foodstores – the recently-opened Tesco at Highams Park, which attracts the highest ‘main food’ shopping market share from zone 1; Morrisons at Chingford, which attracts the highest ‘main food’ market share from zone 2, and Sainsbury’s at Walthamstow Avenue, Chingford (**Table 6.4**).
- 6.38 The location of the Tesco store in close proximity to Highams Park district centre (which includes a train station) means that it also fulfils a top-up shopping role, whereas the large Morrisons and Sainsbury’s stores, which are located out-of-centre, have much less of a top-up shopping role. The smaller Sainsbury’s store at Hall Lane, Chingford (within South Chingford district centre) also has a dual ‘main’ and ‘top up’ shopping function, and attracts the second-highest market shares from residents in zone 2.
- 6.39 Table 6.4 also shows that there is a network of smaller-format foodstores which principally account for ‘top-up’ shopping market share; for residents in zone 1 the main stores fulfilling this role are the Co-Operative and Budgens stores in North Chingford district centre, as well as other local shops in North Chingford district centre and Chingford Hatch local centre. For residents in zone 2, the aforementioned larger stores in South Chingford (Sainsbury’s) and Highams Park (Tesco) account for most top-up shopping spend, with local shops in South Chingford district centre and Chingford Mount Road local centre accounting for lower market shares.
- 6.40 The bottom section of Table 6.4 identifies the locations outside the Borough to which residents are travelling to for convenience goods shopping. It can be seen that from zones 1 and 2, there is very limited loss of expenditure to outside the Borough, with the exception of modest amount of ‘leakage’ to Waitrose in Buckhurst Hill from residents in zone 1, and Tesco in

Edmonton from residents in zone 2. The majority of zone 3 of the survey area falls outside Waltham Forest and appears to be relatively self-contained in terms of convenience goods shopping. However, there is some trade attracted from this zone to Tesco at Highams Park, and Sainsbury's in South Chingford.

Table 6.4: North Sub-Area convenience shopping patterns

Foodstore / Centre	Zone 1 (%)		Zone 2 (%)		Zone 3 (%)	
	Main Food	Top-up	Main Food	Top-up	Main Food	Top-up
Individual stores in Waltham Forest (North Sub-Area)						
Tesco, Highams Park	24.00%	12.20%	15.70%	17.50%	7.10%	4.40%
Sainsbury's, Walthamstow Avenue, Chingford	17.60%	2.90%	16.80%	7.40%	0.60%	0.90%
Morrisons, Chingford	12.10%	5.40%	30.00%	13.70%	1.90%	-
Co-op, Chingford	-	17.40%	-	4.50%	0.80%	-
Budgens, North Chingford	0.60%	8.90%	-	-	-	-
Iceland, Chingford	0.60%	0.70%	1.40%	4.60%	-	0.00%
Co-op, Station Road, Chingford	4.30%	9.70%	-	-	-	-
Sainsbury's, Hall Lane, Chingford	10.90%	3.20%	23.00%	20.90%	7.50%	-
Centres in Waltham Forest (North Sub-Area)						
South Chingford District Centre	-	-	-	6.70%	-	-
North Chingford District Centre	-	8.00%	-	-	-	-
Chingford Mount Road	-	3.80%	3.10%	6.50%	-	-
Chingford Hatch	-	10.80%	-	5.60%	-	3.70%
Stores/centres outside Waltham Forest						
Tesco, Upper Edmonton	0.80%	1%	5.60%	3.50%	-	0.70%
Sainsbury's, South Woodford	-	-	-	-	8.90%	1.60%
Sainsbury's, Woodford Green	0.60%	0.70%	-	-	17.70%	18.60%
Woodford Town Centre	-	0.70%	-	-	-	13.60%
Waitrose, Buckhurst Hill	2.00%	2.00%	-	-	20.10%	19.10%
Budgens,, Woodford Green	-	-	-	-	1.90%	18.80%
Sainsbury's, Loughton	-	-	-	-	8.50%	1.60%

Source: NEMS Household Survey results

South Sub-Area

6.41 The main centres in the South Sub-Area which fall within the Waltham Forest Borough boundary are Walthamstow (zone 4), Wood Street (zone 4), Bakers Arms (zone 8), Leytonstone

(zone 7) and Leyton (zone 8). The centres of South Woodford (zone 5), Forest Gate (zone 10) and Stratford (zone 10) are also located in the south sub-area, but fall outside the Waltham Forest Borough boundary. As **Table 6.5** (below) highlights, convenience goods spending is relatively well-spread across a number of stores, however, there are some that attract particularly high market shares. This includes the Tesco on Gainsborough Road in Leytonstone which attracts 42.5% of zone 9 and 21% of zone 7's 'Main Food' market share and the Asda in Leyton Mills Retail Park, Leyton, which attracts 44.5% of zone 8's 'Main Food' market share.

6.42 Table 4.6 also highlights that the Sainsbury's and Asda stores located in Walthamstow Town Centre, and the Tesco at 825 High Road, Bakers Arms, all attract a reasonably consistent main and top-up food market share across the south sub-area zones. The smaller stores within the south sub-area tend to predominantly provide a top-up food service, such as the Tesco Expresses in Leyton and Walthamstow, and the Co-ops in Walthamstow and Wood Street.

6.43 The bottom section of Table 6.5 identifies the locations outside the Borough to which residents are travelling to for convenience goods shopping. It can be seen that from zones 6 and 8, there is very limited loss of expenditure to outside the Borough, with the exception of modest amount of top-up food 'leakage' to Central London from residents in zone 8. Approximately half of zone 9's survey area falls outside Waltham Forest. Consequently, there is a modest amount of leakage to Sainsbury's in South Woodford, Waitrose in Stratford City, stores within Wanstead and the Morrisons in Stratford.

Table 6.5: South Sub-Area convenience shopping patterns

Foodstore / Centre	Zone 4 (%)		Zone 6 (%)		Zone 7 (%)		Zone 8 (%)		Zone 9 (%)	
	Main Food	Top-up	Main Food	Top-up	Main Food	Top-up	Main Food	Top-up	Main Food	Top-up
Individual stores in Waltham Forest (South Sub-Area)										
Sainsbury's, Walthamstow	19.60%	1.80%	33.70%	21.40%	8.00%	0.90%	2.50%	-	-	-
Tesco, Leytonstone	2.30%	0.70%	0.60%	-	21.00%	9.80%	6.50%	-	42.50%	11.30%
Tesco, 825 High Road, Bakers Arms	0.80%	-	12.00%	4.90%	22.40%	11.70%	26.80%	11.10%	4.40%	-
Tesco Exp, 401 High Road, Leyton	-	-	0.90%	-	0.70%	3.50%	0.70%	10.10%	-	3.60%
Tesco, Lea Bridge Road, Leyton	-	0.70%	2.10%	4.40%	0.70%	4.50%	-	1.10%	-	-
Tesco, 617b Forest Road, Walthamstow	0.60%	5.30%	-	-	1.10%	3.40%	-	-	-	-
Tesco, 82-84 Forest Road, Walthamstow	1.80%	7.50%	0.60%	-	0.70%	-	-	-	-	-

Tesco, 43-45 St James Street, Walthamstow	-	-	-	6.10%	-	-	-	-	0.70%	-
Tesco, Hoe Street, Walthamstow	-	0.70%	3.00%	5.80%	-	6.30%	-	-	-	-
Asda, Walthamstow	14.30%	11.60%	6.60%	5.20%	3.10%	0.90%	3.90%	2.90%	2.30%	0.90%
Co-op, Walthamstow	-	-	2.00%	8.70%	-	-	-	0.80%	-	-
Lidl, Walthamstow	5.60%	2.30%	4.00%	11.20%	2.20%	-	0.50%	1.00%	0.60%	-
Co-op, Wood Street	2.20%	7.80%	-	-	-	1.60%	-	-	-	-
Asda, Leyton Mills, Leyton	2.60%	-	8.20%	-	7.40%	1.60%	44.50%	18.70%	6.30%	4.30%
Centres in Waltham Forest (North Sub-Area)										
Walthamstow Town Ctr	2.80%	23.50%	2.60%	17.00%	4.00%	8.70%	1.20%	3.90%	0.70%	0.70%
Leyton District Centre	-	-	-	-	-	5.30%	-	4.80%	-	0.90%
Leytonstone High Rd	-	-	-	-	-	5.00%	-	-	1.50%	11.80%
Leyton High Road	-	-	-	2.40%	-	2.70%	-	12.10%	-	-
Orford Road	-	2.90%	-	-	-	8.30%	-	-	-	-
Individual stores in Waltham Forest (North Sub-Area)										
Morrisons, Chingford	11.30%	0.7%	3.50%	-	1.30%	-	1.10%	-	0.70%	-
Sainsbury's, Hall Lane, Chingford	9.60%	0.6%	5.20%	2.4%	3.50%	-	2.20%	-	2.20%	-
Tesco, Highams Park	5.90%	4.50%	-	-	1.40%	-	0.70%	-	-	-
Stores/centres outside Waltham Forest										
Sainsbury's, South Woodford	1.40%	-	-	-	-	-	0.50%	-	7.20%	-
Waitrose, South Woodford	2.60%	-	-	-	7.90%	-	0.50%	-	5.60%	-
Waitrose, Stratford City	-	-	-	-	2.90%	-	-	-	0.70%	7.40%
Other Stores outside study area	2.40%	7.60%	-	0.70%	1.30%	2.70%	-	-	-	1.60%
Co-op, Wanstead	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.60%	24.90%
Wanstead	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3.40%	10.70%
Central London	1.80%	2.20%	-	-	1.10%	1.60%	-	6.20%	-	-
Morrisons, Stratford	-	-	0.60%	-	-	-	-	-	7.70%	-

Source: NEMS Household Survey Results

Convenience Goods Performance Analysis

6.44 Using the findings of the household telephone survey, and the baseline estimates of convenience goods expenditure which is available to the Borough, we have calculated the convenience goods turnover of the main foodstore provision in the Borough. As before, we set out our analysis by Sub-Area. Our comments in this section should be read in conjunction with Table 6 of Appendix 4, which provides a detailed assessment of the trading performance of each major foodstore/centre in the survey area.

Sub Area: North

North Chingford District Centre

6.45 We estimate there to be approximately 1,900 sq m of net convenience goods floorspace in North Chingford, of which approximately 1,100 sq m is accounted for by small/local retailers. The total convenience turnover of the centre from the survey area is £7.1m. The two small foodstores in the centre – Budgens and Co-Operative, both appear to be performing slightly below company average levels.

South Chingford District Centre

6.46 South Chingford has a convenience goods turnover of £36.3m from the survey area, the vast majority (£32.7m) of which is accounted for by the Sainsbury's store on Hall Lane. The findings of the household survey suggest that this store is performing particularly strongly, with a turnover approximately £15m above company average levels. It would appear that the smaller format convenience goods floorspace in the centre is noticeably under-trading however, achieving a turnover of £1.2m, compared to a 'benchmark' of £11.2m (based on an assumed sales density of £4,000 per sq m), suggesting that investment may be needed in these units in order to improve their trading performance.

Highams Park District Centre

6.47 Highams Park draws a convenience goods turnover of £1.1m from the survey area, with a total net sales area of 912 sq m. Again, it appears that the local convenience shopping facilities are under-performing, as based on an assumed sales density of £4,000 per sq m we would expect these facilities to achieve a turnover in the region of £3.8m. The edge-of-centre Tesco store, however, is trading approximately £3m above company average levels.

Out-of-Centre Retail Floorspace

- 6.48 The out-of-centre foodstores in the North Sub-Area are both located in close proximity to one another, off the North Circular in Chingford, and are operated by Sainsbury's and Morrisons. Whilst the Morrisons store appears to be trading at company average levels, the Sainsbury's store at Walthamstow Avenue is performing considerably below 'benchmark' levels, drawing a convenience goods turnover of approximately £26.1m from the survey area, compared to a benchmark of £45.4m. We have undertaken additional analysis of the household survey findings in respect of this store to verify this trading performance, which indicates that the store's catchment has been significantly constrained to the east on account of the opening of the new Tesco store at Highams Park.

Sub-Area: South

Walthamstow Town Centre

- 6.49 Our assessment of the performance of Walthamstow town centre has confirmed the importance of convenience goods shopping to the wider performance of the town centre. The town centre has a total convenience goods turnover of £99m, of which £73m is accounted for by the Asda, Sainsbury's and Lidl foodstores which act as anchor stores at various points along the centre's High Street.
- 6.50 All three of these stores are trading considerably above company average levels, with Sainsbury's' turnover approximately £14.6m above company average levels; Lidl's turnover approximately £10m above average, and Asda approximately £8m above average. The strong performance of these stores is slightly tempered by an under-performance of local/independent convenience shops, but nevertheless the aggregate trading performance of Walthamstow town centre is very strong.

Bakers Arms District Centre

- 6.51 The convenience goods offer in Bakers Arms is anchored by the Tesco store on the High Road. The store is trading strongly, achieving a turnover approximately £18.1m in excess of company average turnover levels. The smaller foodstores in the centre (Iceland, Morrisons Local) are also trading well, but again the strong trading performance of these stores is slightly offset by a more subdued trading performance of smaller stores.

Leyton District Centre

- 6.52 Leyton district centre achieves a convenience goods turnover of £12.3m from the survey area. The small foodstores in the district centre are trading well, with the Tesco Express on Leyton High Road performing particularly strongly, drawing a turnover of £7.7m from the study area, against a 'benchmark' turnover of £1.1m.

Leytonstone District Centre

- 6.53 Leytonstone district centre achieves a convenience goods turnover of £10.2m from the survey area. As with a number of other centres in the Borough, the local/independent stores in Leytonstone district centre appear to be underperforming, suggesting that investment may be needed to enhance their trading prospects. The national retailer-operated foodstores within the centre (Sainsbury's Local and Iceland) are trading marginally above and marginally below company average levels respectively.

Wood Street District Centre

- 6.54 Convenience goods provision in Wood Street is currently limited to small Co-Operative and Tesco Express stores, which achieve a combined turnover of £8.1m. The former of these is trading strongly, drawing a turnover of £4.9m, approximately £3.3m above 'benchmark' levels. The Tesco Express appears to be trading slightly below 'benchmark' levels.

Out-of-Centre Retail Floorspace

- 6.55 The only major out-of-centre foodstores in the South Sub-Area are the Asda at Leyton Mills and Tesco at Leytonstone. Whilst the stores fall within the policy boundary of Leyton and Leytonstone district centres respectively, both are outside the defined primary shopping frontage in their respective centres, and therefore are, when assessed against the NPPF, 'out-of-centre'. Tesco in Leytonstone draws a convenience goods turnover of £50.9m from the survey area, and we estimate this store is trading approximately £9.2m above 'benchmark' levels. Our assessment identifies the Asda store at Leyton Mills to be 'under-trading', but in practice we expect this store will draw significant trade from the Stratford and Forest Gate areas of Newham, which fall outside the survey area.

Convenience Goods Capacity Forecasts

- 6.56 Having undertaken the above assessment of trading performance, the quantum of additional convenience goods floorspace which the Council will need to plan for is set out in **Table 6.3**

(set out as a Borough-wide figure, and for the two Sub-Areas). As with our comparison goods forecasts, we have assumed that existing retail floorspace will improve its sales efficiency over the course of the study period; for convenience goods we assume sales efficiency growth of 0.3% per annum over the duration of the study period. We have assumed that new convenience goods floorspace should achieve a turnover in the region of £12,000 per sq m, as an average across the Borough. Again, we are not aware of any 'commitments' which should be deducted from our assessment.

Table 6.3: Baseline forecasts for convenience goods floorspace

	2020 (sq m net, rounded)	2025 (sq m net, rounded)	2030 (sq m net, rounded)
Borough-wide capacity	5,500	7,600	10,000
North Sub-Area capacity	-900	-200	600
South Sub-Area capacity	6,500	7,900	9,400

Source: Tables 7a, 7b and 7c, Appendix 4. Figures may not cast due to rounding.

6.57 Table 6.3 shows that there is a requirement for approximately 10,000 sq m net additional convenience goods floorspace across the Borough over the period to 2030. The majority of this requirement falls within the South Sub-Area, and in quantitative terms there is no need to provide for any additional convenience goods floorspace in the North Sub-Area until the end of the study period.

Summary

6.58 Our assessment has identified that:

- The total current population in the survey area is 372,525 persons. Based on population projections provided by Experian, this will increase to 439,905 persons by 2030, the end of the study period. This is equivalent to a growth in population of 67,380 persons.
- There is currently £941.2m of comparison goods expenditure available to residents of the survey area. This will increase to £1,748.5m by the end of the study period, equivalent to a growth of £807.3m in spending.

- There is currently £657.9m of convenience goods expenditure available to residents of the survey area. This is expected to increase to £832.8m by the end of the study period, equivalent to a growth of £175.0m in spending.
- Based on the anticipated growth in population and expenditure, and having regard to residents' shopping patterns and the performance of centres, we have identified a need for up to 28,000 sq m additional net comparison goods floorspace in the Borough over the period to 2030 (8,300 sq m net in the North Sub-Area, 19,700 in the South Sub-Area).
- We have also identified a need for up to 10,000 sq m additional net convenience goods floorspace in the Borough over the period to 2030 (600 sq m in the North Sub-Area, 9,400 sq m in the South Sub-Area).
- Capacity projections are subject to increasing levels of uncertainty over the Study period and should therefore be regularly updated.

7. Commercial Leisure

7.1 Emerging trends suggest that commercial leisure uses are playing an increasingly important role in the vitality and viability of centres by providing complementary uses that strengthen both the daytime and evening economies. Due to the changing nature of high-street shopping, leisure uses can often represent a significant proportion of a town centre's overall turnover.

7.2 This section of the report considers the current provision and performance 'health check' assessments of leisure uses throughout the study area, including patterns of visits to restaurant, café, cinema, entertainment venues and cultural facilities, and identifies any qualitative 'gaps' in the provision of these facilities. The results are informed by qualitative assessments of centres carried out by GVA and the findings of the household telephone survey undertaken in support of this study in March 2015.

7.3 As an overview, the key findings from the household survey are as follows:

- Eating in evening restaurants is the most popular leisure activity undertaken by 61% of residents in the study area. This is followed by visiting the cinema (60%), going to the theatre, museums or art galleries (55%) and going to cafes/restaurants (45%).
- 40% of participants stated they go to pubs/clubs and 35% of participants visit health and fitness clubs. 17% of participants stated that they visit children's soft play venues and 18% of participants visit various entertainment venues including ten-pin bowling, ice skating and bingo.
- 12% of survey respondents did not partake in any of the above leisure activities.

7.4 We briefly discuss the key findings in each of these categories below.

Daytime Cafés/ Restaurants

7.5 The results of the household survey identified that:

- Going to daytime cafés/restaurants was amongst the most popular leisure activities for residents in the survey area, with 45% of all respondents taking part in this form of leisure activity.
- This figure varied across the study area considerably, ranging from 61% in zone 5 (South Woodford) to 30% in zone 8 (Leyton).

- Walthamstow was the location that most people go to for visiting daytime cafés/restaurants (23%). North Chingford was the second most visited location (8%) and Central London was the third (7%) for their type of leisure activity.
- The household survey results indicate that Walthamstow draws principally from zone 6 (77%), zone 4 (60%) and zone 7 (45%).
- The household survey results indicate that North Chingford draws principally from zone 1 (61%) and zone 2 (24%) but very limited trade from the remainder of the study area.
- The household survey results indicate that central London draws principally visits from zone 8 (26%), zone 3 (11%) and zone 5 (10%).
- Leytonstone (4%), Leyton (3%), Bakers Arms (1%), Wood Street (2%) and Highams Park (2%) were less popular for cafés/ daytime restaurants, reflecting the more limited offer in these centres.

Evening Restaurants

7.6 The results of the household survey identified that:

- Going to evening restaurants was the most popular leisure activity for residents of the study area, with 61% of all respondents taking part in this form of leisure activity.
- This figure varied across the study area considerably, ranging from 56% in zones 1 (Chingford North) and 2 (Chingford South and Highams Park), to 75% in zone 9 (South Leytonstone).
- Walthamstow was mentioned the most as the location that people go to for visiting evening restaurants (18%) and we would expect that recent enhancements to the offer in the town centre to have assisted in improving the market share. Central London was the second most visited location (18%) and Westfield Stratford City was the third (8%) – both of which locations are outside of the study area. North Chingford was the fourth most visited location (7%), reflecting the strength of the offer in this centres as identified in our health check assessment.
- Bakers Arms (0.3%), Leyton (2%), Highams Park (2%) and South Chingford (3%) were the least visited centres for evening restaurants.
- The household survey results indicate that Walthamstow draws principally visitors from its local zone (zone 6; 60%), as well as zone 4 (43%) and zone 7 (37%).

- The household survey results indicate that North Chingford attracts a strong market share from local residents, with a 51% market share from its local zone (zone 1) as well as 23% market share from zone 2.
- The household survey results indicate that Leytonstone draws principally visits from zone 9 (21%) and zone 7 (7%), but no significant trade beyond this.
- The household survey results indicate that South Chingford draws principally visits from zone 2 (25%) and zone 1(6%), but no significant trade beyond this.

Cinemas

- 7.7 Going to the cinema was the second-most popular leisure activity amongst survey respondents, with 60% stating that it was a leisure activity that they partake in. However, again there are considering differences in the proportion of residents who visit the cinema from different parts of the survey area - ranging from 73% in zone 5 (South Woodford) and 72% in zone 3 (Buckhurst Hill), to 44% in zone 8 (Leyton), possibly reflecting the limited provision available in the immediate vicinity of many local residents.
- 7.8 The most visited cinema across the survey area was Empire Cinemas in Walthamstow, accounting for 24% of cinema visits across the study area. Vue in Westfield Stratford City was the second most visited location (22%), followed by Odeon in South Woodford (16%) – both of which locations are outside the study area.
- 7.9 The household survey results indicate that Empire Cinema in Walthamstow draws principally visits from zone 6 (63%), zone 4 (63%) and zone 7 (30%), zone 8 (21%) and zone 1 (17%), suggesting that despite opening recently it has already established a firm catchment area which extends across much of the borough.
- 7.10 The market share of the Empire Cinema is noticeably lower from zone 2, despite Walthamstow being relatively accessible from this zone, and zones 3 and 5, where residents use the Odeon in South Woodford, which is in closer proximity. The market share is also low from zones 9 and 10, where most residents visit the Vue and Picturehouse facilities in Stratford. From zone 2, Odeon at Lee Valley Leisure Complex draws 50% of the market share, and Cineworld at Southbury Leisure Park in Enfield draws 26%.
- 7.11 Looking at the zonal patterns of visits, for the majority of the survey zones there is a clear dominant cinema which attracts the majority of market share from any one given zone. There are two zones where market shares are more evenly split, however – in zone 7, 30% of residents visit Empire in Walthamstow and 25% visit Vue in Stratford. In zone 8, 21% of residents visit

Empire, compared to 44% for Vue in Stratford and 17% for Picturehouse in Stratford. The market share in these zones can therefore be considered 'up for grabs' and a strengthened broader commercial leisure offer in Walthamstow town centre might enable a greater amount of trade to be drawn from these parts of the survey area.

Theatres, Museums and Art Galleries

- 7.12 Visiting theatres, museums or art galleries is the third most popular leisure activity for residents in the survey area. 55% of respondents stated that they took part in at least one of these cultural activities. The location visited most often to partake in any of the above activities was Central London (47%) clearly reflecting the leading cultural offer available to residents within relatively easy reach, and specifically the West End (a further 37%). As would be expected, the cultural offer within the study area is relatively limited in comparison, but the William Morris Gallery in Walthamstow was identified by 4% of residents and the Theatre Royal in Stratford East by 3%.
- 7.13 There are emerging proposals by Soho Theatre to reintroduce theatre facilities into Walthamstow town centre; the group are working with the Council and the Waltham Forest Cinema Trust to develop the former Granada building on Hoe Street into an entertainment venue including comedy, theatre and independent cinema facilities, as well as cultural education and café facilities. We understand that progress in the realisation of these proposals has been complicated by the sale of the premises to a pub group, but nevertheless consider that a mixed use entertainment facility at this location would be extremely positive for the wider vitality and viability of the town centre and should be encouraged.

Entertainment Venues

- 7.14 For the purpose of our analysis, the umbrella term 'entertainment venues' has been used to incorporate a number of leisure activities including ten-pin bowling, ice skating and bingo. Our household survey identified that:
- Only 18% of all survey participants stated that they took part in at least one of the entertainment venue activities.
 - Popular destinations for survey respondents All Star Lanes at Westfield Stratford City (28%), Lee Valley Ice Centre in Leyton (15%) and Roller Bowl in Romford (9%) – all of which locations are outside the study area.
 - The household survey results indicate that All Star Lanes at Westfield Stratford City draws principally visits from zone 9 (50%), zone 3 (47%), zone 5 (44%) and zone 7 (44%), and a

strong trade from the east and the south of the study area. It is noteworthy that the market shares it draws from zones 4 and 6 – those closest to Walthamstow – are very low, and in the case of zone 6, 0%. From zone 6, 51% of respondents stated they don't visit entertainment venues – the highest of any of the zones in the study area. There were also high 'don't do' figures for zone 2 (41%) and zone 4 (35%), suggesting that the absence of facilities in the immediate local area (i.e. within/around Walthamstow) means residents simply do not participate in them. By way of comparison, for those zones closest to Stratford, the 'don't do' figure reduces to 10% (zone 9) and 6% (zone 10).

- The household survey results indicate that Lee Valley Ice Centre in Leyton draws principally visits from zone 4 (32%), zone 2 (31%) and zone 1 (22%).
- The household survey results indicate that the Rollerbowl in Romford draws principally visits from zone 1 (26%), zone 2 (14%) and zone 7 (13%).
- It is therefore plausible to conclude that there is a qualitative gap in the provision of 'entertainment venues' within the study area. While there is a good range of facilities available in the centres surrounding the study area, the distance involved in travelling to these facilities from some parts of the Borough means that residents are simply choosing not to use them.

Health and Fitness Facilities

7.15 The household survey found that 35% of residents in the survey area use health and fitness facilities. **Table 7.1** illustrates the main locations that respondents visit most often. It should be noted that the Council Pool and Track leisure is currently being re-built and will shortly provide a quality new leisure centre and swimming pool just to the north of Walthamstow town centre.

Table 7.1: Health and Fitness Facilities

Venue/Location	Usage by Household Survey Respondents (%)
Most Popular Facilities	
Leyton Gym, High Road, Leyton	14%
Larkwood Leisure Park, Chingford	10%
Nuffield Health & Fitness Centre, Chingford	8%
Leytonstone Leisure Centre, Cathall Road, Leytonstone,	8%
Walthamstow Leisure Centre, Markhouse Road, Walthamstow	7%

Selected Other Facilities	
Other locations, Walthamstow	5%
Central London	4%
Fitness First, Leyton Mills, Leyton	4%
Bannatyne's Health Club, Morrison Avenue, Chingford	2%
Raw Fitness London, Lea Bridge Road, Leyton	1%

Source: NEMS Household Survey Results

7.16 The most popular facility for residents in the study area is Leyton Gym, which attracts a market share of 14%. Leyton Gym recently reopened following a major refurbishment as part of the Council's regeneration plans to improve all the leisure centres in the borough. Other council-operated leisure facilities in Leytonstone and Walthamstow account for 8% and 7% of the market share respectively. In addition, it is likely many survey respondents will use specialist fitness classes, personal trainers and small, independent services which are not accounted for by the list of locations in the household survey.

Summary

7.17 We have considered the current commercial leisure facilities provision within the study area. By using the results gathered from the household telephone survey, we have also been able to identify the usage patterns of the various commercial leisure uses, and the potential qualitative need for additional leisure facilities. This has identified that:

7.18 The household survey results identify that:

- Eating in restaurants is the most popular leisure activity undertaken by 61% of the survey participants. This is followed by visiting the cinema (60%), going to the theatre, museums or art galleries (55%) and going to cafes/restaurants (45%).
- 40% of participants stated they go to pubs/clubs and 35% of participants visit health and fitness clubs. 17% of participants stated that they visit children's soft play venues and 18% of participants visit various entertainment venues including ten-pin bowling, ice skating and bingo.
- Walthamstow stands out as the survey area's most popular location for commercial leisure uses. In particular, Walthamstow is the most visited centre for daytime cafés and restaurants, evening restaurants and cinemas.

- It is apparent from the household survey results that the new cinema has already established a clear catchment area, 'plugging the gap' in provision which existed for those residents of Waltham Forest not in close proximity to facilities in Stratford or elsewhere outside the Borough. It is considered that there is scope for the facility to increase its trade draw from those zones equidistant between Walthamstow and Stratford, but this would likely require further enhancement of complementary commercial leisure facilities in Walthamstow town centre, e.g. family restaurants. Further enhancement would help to diversify the consumer base using the centre and increase dwell-time.
- Related to the above, there is a clear qualitative gap in other types of 'family entertainment' facilities in Walthamstow town centre, as witnessed by the considerably higher levels of patronage to these type of facilities from zones in the south of the Borough, where there is strong provision in Stratford, relative to levels of patronage from the rest of the Borough. A 'micro-bowling' complex, along the lines of All Star Lanes in Stratford, or Brooklyn Bowl at the O2 in Greenwich, may be a suitable type of facility which would further enhance the leisure offer in the centre and capitalise on the recent cinema/restaurant enhancement.
- There is relatively little in the way of higher-end cultural offer, such as theatres, museums, art galleries etc – although the William Morris Gallery is a hugely important cultural asset to the Borough. Realistically, the proximity of central London will inherently limit the market appetite for substantial investment in facilities of this nature, but it is considered that further small-scale theatre uses could be supported. The plans by Soho Theatre to create a new comedy, theatre and independent cinema venue on Hoe Street, which are being progressed in partnership with the Council and the Waltham Forest Cinema Trust, are therefore welcomed.
- North Chingford performs a stronger role than might typically be expected for a district centre in terms of its popularity as an evening economy pub/restaurant destination; our health check assessment identified that there is a particularly strong offer in the centre in this respect, and further enhancement of this would be beneficial provided it does not undermine the retail function of the centre.
- The remaining district centres fulfil a more limited commercial leisure function. Whilst our qualitative observations on Leyton identified an increasing 'café culture' in the centre, this was not particularly reflected in the household survey results. These type of uses can play an important contributory role in the vitality of centres and therefore enhancement of this provision in the district centres should be, where possible, encouraged.

- Similarly, Bakers Arms, Leyton, Highams Park and South Chingford would benefit from an increase in café and evening restaurant offer in their town centres. Such developments should be encouraged to help strengthen the respective centre's daytime and evening economy, and provide overall enhancement to its vitality and viability.

8. Conclusions and Recommendations

- 8.1 The main objective of this study is to provide up-to-date evidence that will support and underpin the Council's Local Plan in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The information contained within this report will also be at the Council's disposal to assist in the future determination of relevant planning applications.
- 8.2 This section brings together the analysis of previous sections and set out our conclusions and key recommendations. First we provide an overview of national, regional and local policy objectives, and highlight the key national trends emerging which will directly impact upon retail and town centre development and change throughout the borough. We also review the regional positioning of the borough and hierarchy of centres, and highlight the key local and sub-regional factors directly influencing the borough's network of town centres and resident shopping patterns.
- 8.3 Second, we conclude our overall findings in respect of the two Sub-Areas, and set out Key Recommendations which will underpin policy formulation and development control decisions. This will enable the local authority to 'plan' for growth and change moving forwards.

Policy Framework

- 8.4 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was adopted in March 2012 and replaces the suite of national Planning Policy Statements, including PPS4. The NPPF maintains the general thrust of PPS4 and advocates a 'town centres first' approach. It requires planning policies to positively promote competitive town centre environments and manage the growth of centres over the plan period.
- 8.5 The London Plan seeks to co-ordinate development within the network of town centres to ensure that they provide the main foci for commercial development, are conveniently accessible, and provide a sense of place and local identity. The Upper Lee Valley is identified as an Opportunity Area, and includes Blackhorse Lane - a strategic growth area in Waltham Forest.
- 8.6 The Core Strategy promotes Walthamstow as the main destination for comparison shopping, and the district centres of North Chingford, South Chingford, Highams Park, Wood Street, Bakers Arms, Leyton and Leytonstone as providing main and bulk convenience food shopping and a reasonable range of comparison shopping facilities. The overarching strategy for the

network of town centres is the encouragement of distinctiveness, complimentary roles, differentiation and specialisation.

8.7 Four key growth areas are identified in the Core Strategy in which the Council will seek to accommodate new housing and jobs: Blackhorse Lane, Walthamstow Town Centre, the Northern Olympic Fringe (including Leyton), and Wood Street. The headline points of relevance from the respective AAP's/SPD include:

- Adopted Walthamstow Town Centre AAP: encourages retail led mixed-use development at Selbourne Walk, Sainsbury's and Grove Road; and the encouragement of leisure/entertainment uses at eastern and western (St James Quarter) end of the High Street;
- Adopted Blackhorse Lane AAP: allocates a new neighbourhood centre alongside housing, businesses and public open spaces. Sites for retail / mixed-use include the 'Station Hub and Waterfront' site and 'Webb's Industrial Estate'. The AAP acknowledges scope for a flagship retail development in excess of 500 sq m in order to 'kick-start' the centre and to ensure it is the main focus of activity in the locality;
- Preferred Options, Wood Street AAP: encourages the rejuvenation of the Plaza at the heart of Wood Street (Development Site 11); mixed use development including active ground floor uses and a supermarket;
- Preferred Options Northern Olympic Fringe AAP: Seeks to strengthen the retail offer of Lea Bridge and Leyton as well as enhancing the cultural and entertainment services provision. Opportunity to redevelop Leyton Mills Retail Park to provide higher density mixed use development and better linkages to adjoining areas/transport interchanges.
- Adopted South Grove/St James SPD: Identified as significant opportunity area within Walthamstow town centre with the ability to shape development and change. The site, which has poor quality linkages with the town centre, is identified as a residential-led site, with some smaller scale and local retail, restaurants and cafes if appropriate.

Permitted Development

8.8 The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 has introduced greater flexibility to enable a more straightforward change of use within shopping frontages. Of particular relevance, the amendments allow permitted change from retail premises (A1) to financial services (A2), and restaurants and cafes (A3) without a time limit on that change of use. The Council's policy framework has previously protected and enhanced

retail frontages, and we recommend the proactive consideration of legislative controls to prevent such a change of use where considered inappropriate and harmful to the vitality and viability of the shopping frontage – i.e. the dilution of A1 uses underpinning footfall and connectivity across a centre.

National Market Trends

- 8.9 The ‘traditional’ high street continues to face a number of challenges stemming from the impacts of the recent economic downturn, the tightening of retail spending in recent years, and continued significant changes in consumer shopping behaviour. The growth in online shopping, including multi-channel retailing, acts as tough competition for the high street, but also presents an opportunity for the high street to capitalise, by maximising the opportunities arising from services like ‘click & collect’, and retailers moving towards a seamless transition between store-based and virtual shopping experiences.
- 8.10 Out-of-centre retailing remains an ever-present source of competition, and market evidence suggests that many retail parks have performed well during the economic downturn, and are becoming increasingly attractive to ‘high street’ retailers. Portfolio aspiration is generally to increase footfall through a greater product offer and mix of uses to encourage footfall and longer dwell times.
- 8.11 Town centre strategies which support the continued evolution of the high street are therefore considered ever more vital. This may involve providing a high quality shopping ‘experience’, maximising the benefits of tourist trade, and improving the mix of retail and non-retail outlets to increase length of stay and spend. Walthamstow town centre has benefited from recent investment in this respect which will be important in securing its long term vitality and viability; however the other centres in the Borough will not be immune from the pressures set out in this section.
- 8.12 It will be important, therefore, for town centres to be well positioned to be able to adapt to on-going changes in the retail and leisure sector over the development plan period and to reaffirm their unique selling points which differentiate their retail offer from other centres, allowing them to differentiate themselves from – rather than directly compete with – higher order centres. Heritage, tourism assets and other ‘unique selling points’ should be capitalised on, and robust place marketing strategies put in place.
- 8.13 The funding available for ‘cosmetic’ improvements has been eroded substantially in recent years, but the net positive gain from implementing such measures should not be underestimated. They seek to enhance an area, encouraging both an increase in visitor

numbers and a more stable and quality operator representation. This effect has been demonstrated consistently across UK town centres and despite funding constraints and greater challenges in securing such measures, this should remain a priority action for all local authorities in respect of the future vitality of their town centres.

Location Context

- 8.14 Waltham Forest is an outer London borough in the North East of London which lies adjacent to Epping Forest and the London Boroughs of Redbridge, Newham, Hackney, Haringey and Enfield. It sits alongside major destinations such as the Olympic Park and Stratford City development, and provides a pivotal link between two of Europe's largest regeneration areas: The Thames Gateway and the London-Stansted-Cambridge-Peterborough corridor.
- 8.15 The Borough forms a green edged corridor from the edge of London's Green Belt in the north, to the heart of the Olympic Park and 'Urban Waltham Forest' in the south; the North Circular (A406) broadly divides the Borough into these two distinctive areas. The south comprising Leyton, Leytonstone and Walthamstow has a predominantly urban, higher-density form. In contrast, the north of the Borough comprising the district centres of North and South Chingford and Highams Park is generally more open in character with a lower-density built environment and a greater number of open spaces. Population density in the south of the borough is double that in the north.
- 8.16 The Borough is served by two overground railway lines. The Chingford to Liverpool Street line runs in a north/south direction through the borough, stopping at St James Street, Walthamstow Central, Wood Street, Highams Park and Chingford. The Gospel Oak to Barking line runs through the borough east/west; whilst the Victoria line links Walthamstow and Blackhorse Road with Central London; and the Central Line enters the borough in the south, linking Leytonstone and Leyton to Stratford and Central London.
- 8.17 Underground and overground lines through the borough will provide quick and easy access to Crossrail at Stratford from 2017. The re-opening of Lea Bridge Station in Spring/Summer 2016 will assist in these travel movements, and provide those living in Zones 6 and 8 of the survey area with improved access to Westfield Stratford City.

Sub-Regional Context

- 8.18 According to the 2015 household survey, Waltham Forest's eight main centres collectively capture £280m of comparison goods expenditure from across the survey area, equating to a market share of 30%. When out-of-centre floorspace is factored in, comparison goods

floorspace across the borough has a market share of 35%. Zones 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, and 9 better reflect the borough boundary, and the analysis demonstrates that the eight main centres retain only 39% of available comparison goods expenditure with the Borough. This reflects reasonably high levels of leakage and confirms the overall strategy to focus on consolidating and improving trade retention over the plan period.

- 8.19 The 2015 survey has identified Westfield Stratford, Central London, Ilford, Stratford town centre, Lakeside and South Woodford as the main competing destinations in the wider sub-region. These centres collectively capture c.£422.9m of available comparison goods expenditure in the survey area (Zones 1-10), equating to a combined market share of 45%; this is 15% greater than the borough town centres across Zones 1-10. The remaining 25% is accounted for by other centres and out-of-centre comparison provision both within and beyond the survey area.
- 8.20 Within those zones that better reflect the borough boundary (1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9), the key competing centres capture c.£246.7m of comparison goods expenditure, from a total of £674.9m. This equates to a trade leakage from the borough to these key competing centres of 37%. Westfield, Stratford has opened since the evidence base underpinning the Core Strategy was produced, and this analysis demonstrates the influence of this international shopping destination. Westfield draws £206.4m of comparison goods trade from the survey area (Zones 1-10) (22% market share), compared to Walthamstow (£163.1m / 17% market share). Westfield draws primarily from the eastern part of the borough, reflecting the route of the Central Line underground service.
- 8.21 The influence of destinations outside of the borough should be monitored given a number of proposals to increase and enhance floorspace. Westfield, Stratford, for example is preparing plans for a major residential and commercial expansion including c.10,000 sq m of retail floorspace, plans continue for the redevelopment of Unity Square in Ilford, and Lakeside has major expansion plans highlighted by planning permission to extend the retail offer by c.40,000 sq m. Located just 1km from Waltham Forest borough boundary to the west, the Tottenham Area Action Plan is guiding the implementation of a large-scale district centre at Tottenham Hale.

Quantitative Capacity Forecasts

- 8.22 Overall, the population of the Survey Area is forecast to grow by 18%. Convenience goods expenditure is forecast to grow by 27% and comparison goods expenditure is forecast to grow by 86% to the period 2030.

- 8.23 In terms of convenience goods, our analysis has demonstrated surplus expenditure to support 5,530 sq m net by 2020, growing to 7,646 sq m net by 2025, and 9,985 sq m net by 2030. This is based on a baseline borough market share of 60%.
- 8.24 In terms of comparison goods, our analysis has demonstrated surplus expenditure to support 7,043 sq m net by 2020, growing to 16,917 sq m net by 2025, and 28,015 sq m net by 2030 across the borough. This is based on a baseline borough market share of 40%.

Table 8.1: Quantitative Need: Borough-Wide

2020	2025	2030
Convenience Goods Need		
5,530 sq m	7,646 sq m	9,985 sq m
Comparison Goods Need		
7,043 sq m	16,917 sq m	28,015 sq m

- 8.25 Cork Tree Retail Park has a greater turnover than any of the district centres in the borough, and is now an established shopping destination, absorbing a strong proportion of expenditure. It should be emphasised that need identified moving forwards should be directed to town centres in the first instance before less central sites are considered. The Council should in the first instance resist similar out-of-centre proposals, and ensure a strong policy framework to assess all proposals against (i.e. clear and robust sequential and impact test requirements). This section clearly sets out the range of suitable sites to meet the full extent of need identified.
- 8.26 These need figures are baseline, and it would be possible to increase market share through new development of an appropriate scale and composition; i.e. to support floorspace in excess of these baseline need thresholds. Any such proposal would need to demonstrate compliance with the national, regional and local policy framework.
- 8.27 Development/redevelopment opportunity sites are discussed later in this section, but if the Council are to help enable the implementation of need, they will need to take a pro-active approach to attracting developers to certain sites. There will be a range of potential approaches depending on whether the land is publicly or privately owned, and may include the preparation of Development Briefs, consideration of CPO, financial packaging, demonstration of financial viability, and appropriate marketing for sale, for example. Each

site will vary depending on location, planning framework and land ownership issues and further advice should be sought for those more complex opportunities.

The Leisure Sector

- 8.28 It is apparent from the household survey results that the new cinema has already established a clear catchment area, 'plugging the gap' in provision which existed for those residents of Waltham Forest not in close proximity to facilities in Stratford or elsewhere outside the Borough. It is considered that there is scope for the facility to increase its trade draw from those zones equidistant between Walthamstow and Stratford, but this would likely require further enhancement of complementary commercial leisure facilities in Walthamstow town centre, e.g. family restaurants. Further enhancement would help to diversify the consumer base using the centre and increase dwell-time.
- 8.29 Related to the above, there is a clear qualitative gap in other types of 'family entertainment' facilities in Walthamstow town centre, as witnessed by the considerably higher levels of patronage to these type of facilities from zones in the south of the Borough, where there is strong provision in Stratford, relative to levels of patronage from the rest of the Borough. A 'micro-bowling' complex, along the lines of All Star Lanes in Stratford, or Brooklyn Bowl at the O2 in Greenwich, may be a suitable type of facility which would further enhance the leisure offer in the centre and capitalise on the recent cinema/restaurant enhancement.
- 8.30 'Micro/Boutique Bowling' is becoming increasingly popular providing a high-end leisure experience, and attracting users from large catchment areas. They generally offer high quality design 50's style retro interiors with bowling, pool, karaoke, and good quality bars/restaurants. Such venues typically seek sites between 7,500 sq ft (c.700 sq m) – 20,000 sq ft (c.1,858 sq m). Walthamstow would substantially benefit from this type of addition to the leisure offer, meeting a variety of leisure needs across all age categories. Whilst is not necessary to be prescriptive at this stage in respect of location, we recommend the Council seeks and facilitates investment of this type where the appropriate town centre opportunity arises (in Walthamstow).
- 8.31 There is relatively little in the way of higher-end cultural offer, such as theatres, museums, art galleries etc – although the William Morris Gallery is an important cultural asset to the Borough. Realistically, the proximity of central London will inherently limit the market appetite for substantial investment in facilities of this nature, but it is considered that further small-scale theatre uses could be supported. The plans by Soho Theatre to create a new comedy,

theatre and independent cinema venue on Hoe Street, which are being progressed in partnership with the Council and the Waltham Forest Cinema Trust, are therefore welcomed.

- 8.32 North Chingford performs a stronger role than might typically be expected for a district centre in terms of its popularity as an evening economy pub/restaurant destination; our health check assessment identified that there is a particularly strong offer in the centre in this respect, and further enhancement of this would be beneficial provided it does not undermine the retail function of the centre.
- 8.33 The remaining district centres fulfil a more limited commercial leisure function. Whilst our qualitative observations on Leyton identified an increasing 'café culture' in the centre, this was not particularly reflected in the household survey results. These types of uses can play an important contributory role in the vitality of centres and therefore enhancement of this provision in the district centres should be, where possible, encouraged.
- 8.34 Similarly, Bakers Arms, Leyton, Highams Park and South Chingford would benefit from an increase in café and evening restaurant offer in their town centres. Such developments should be encouraged to help strengthen the respective centre's daytime and evening economy, and provide overall enhancement to its vitality and viability.

Retail/Town Centre Frontages & Boundaries

- 8.35 National policy confirms that primary and secondary frontages comprise the Primary Shopping Area or 'Town Centre' in retail policy terms. Any development/sites/units outside the primary and secondary shopping frontages are edge or out-of-centre, even if they fall within a town or district centre boundary. We recommend that the local policy framework removes the District Centre (DC) boundary to ensure clarity for development control purposes.

Sub-Area: North

- 8.36 The North Sub-Area includes Zones 1, 2 and 3 (Plan 1); North Chingford is located in Zone 1, and South Chingford and Highams Park are located in Zone 2. There is no major change or development planned in the North Sub-Area at present. In terms of trade retention, convenience goods floorspace in the North Sub-Area retains £97.7m of convenience goods expenditure available in the North Sub-Area, compared to a total expenditure available of £183.8m. This equates to a market share of 53%, demonstrating a 47% leakage of expenditure to destinations outside the Sub-Area.

- 8.37 It is apparent, when analysing the larger foodstores that the Sainsbury's (Chingford District Centre), and Tesco, Highams Park (Edge-of-Centre) are performing well, above expected company averages. The out-of-centre Morrison's, Chingford, is performing in line with company averages, but the out-of-centre Sainsbury's, Chingford is not performing well even when taking account of trade 'in-flow' into the survey area.
- 8.38 Within the North Sub Area, our analysis has demonstrated negligible capacity for additional convenience goods floorspace to the period 2025, growing to just 573 sq m net by 2030.

Table 8.2: Quantitative Need: Sub-Area North

2020	2025	2030
Convenience Goods Need		
-931 sq m net	-218 sq m net	573 sq m net
Comparison Goods Need		
2,084 sq m net	5,016 sq m net	8,312 sq m net

- 8.39 Existing large foodstores/superstores in the north of the borough are located in Zone 2, in and around Chingford South and Highams Park. In contrast, there are no larger foodstores in Zone 1, and North Chingford residents instead have access to Budgens and Co-Op located within the district centre. Zone 1 residents are travelling south to the larger foodstores in Zone 2 for their main food shopping, highlighted by the fact that North Chingford has a Zone 1 market share of just 12%. In contrast, convenience goods floorspace in Zone 2 (Chingford South/Highams Park) has a 50% Zone 1 market share.
- 8.40 We conclude that North Chingford would benefit from a new medium-sized foodstore of c.1,500 sq m net. This is above the baseline need forecasts, but implementation would be underpinned by claw-back and improved trade retention, consequently leading to a more sustainable distribution of uses for the North Chingford catchment area. Further advice is set out below under Key Recommendations.
- 8.41 In terms of comparison goods trade retention, comparison goods floorspace in the North Sub-Area retains £88.5m of comparison goods expenditure available in the North Sub-Area, compared to a total expenditure available of £296.1m. This equates to a market share of 30%, demonstrating a 70% leakage of expenditure to destinations outside the Sub-Area.

- 8.42 Trade retention is driven by Chingford North, Chingford South, Highams Park, and the Cork Tree Retail Park. Each of the town centres are performing well in their roles as district centres in terms of floorspace performance/efficiency, with North Chingford achieving the strongest performance level, followed by Highams Park and South Chingford. Within the North Sub-Area, our analysis identifies surplus need to support 2,084 sq m net of comparison goods floorspace by 2020, rising to 5,016 sq m net by 2025, and again to 8,312 sq m net by 2030.
- 8.43 We recommend this surplus need is directed to the three district centres in the first instance. There are no apparent development sites in North Chingford or Highams Park, but clearly both should seize an opportunity to improve and enhance the quality/intensification of floorspace, provided proposals comply with policy. South Chingford is performing well, albeit the weakest of the three district centres. There are clear opportunities to redevelop and improve the quality of floorspace which would in turn absorb a proportion of the identified residual expenditure. The Iceland block is identified as a prominent development site opportunity.
- 8.44 There is no clear need to enhance market share in the north sub-area, with three centres performing more localised roles in the wider network. They should not be expected to radically change their offer to take a step change upwards in the retail hierarchy, and the focus should be on meeting the local need arising as identified and quantified.

Sub-Area: North, Key Recommendations

North Chingford

- N1. The most northerly of the borough centres, located in Zone 1. The district centre has a convenience goods Zone 1 market share of just 12%, with local residents travelling to the larger foodstores in Zone 2 in the vicinity of South Chingford and Highams Park. If the opportunity arises, a new medium-sized foodstore in North Chingford might be appropriate (c.1,500 sq m net).
- N2. New foodstore proposals should comply stringently with the sequential and impact test, particularly given the strong representation of independent convenience goods operators in the district centre. These underpin the strong health of the centre and should be protected over the plan period.
- N3. Comparison goods floorspace should be directed to the network of town centres in the first instance, including North Chingford if the opportunity arises. At the current time, we do not identify any clear opportunity to bring forward additional comparison goods floorspace in terms of redevelopment/extension of the district centre.

- N4. North Chingford is performing well, with a strong mix of retail operators serving a more affluent, suburban catchment area. Vacancy rates are low. North Chingford should not become the 'forgotten' centre, however, and should continue to receive investment to retain the quality and performance of the centre when the need arises. This should be identified through continued monitoring.
- N5. North Chingford is popular for those living in Zone 1 and Zone 2 for daytime cafes/restaurants (61% / 23.9% respectively). This role should be supported moving forwards, and restricted to A3 uses.
- N6. Likewise, North Chingford is popular for evening restaurants (Zone 1: 50.9% / Zone 2: 22.8%), as well as attracting small numbers of people from elsewhere (Zones 3/4/5/6/7/8). This role should be supported moving forwards, and restricted to A3 uses.
- N7. We recommend no change to the policy allocated shopping frontages.

South Chingford

- N8. South Chingford is located in Zone 2. Sainsbury's is the key anchor retailer in South Chingford, achieving a 20.9% market share in Zone 2. The representation of this store should be protected and supported, and Sainsbury's encouraged to invest in the external visual appearance of the store which is currently sub-standard and detrimental to the district centre environment.
- N9. Residents are also served by the Highams Park edge-of-centre Tesco, and out-of-centre Morrisons, Chingford, and Sainsbury's, Chingford. We conclude that there is no need for further foodstore development in or around South Chingford.
- N10. Comparison goods floorspace should be directed to the network of town centres in the first instance, including South Chingford. The prominent Iceland/Superdrug block should be identified for redevelopment to improve the quality and appearance of floorspace/frontages in the centre.
- N11. The retention of existing shop floorspace across the centre should be encouraged; we do not envisage a need for the retraction of the centre.
- N12. Substantial investment has been made in the bus interchange on the junction of Hall Lane/Old Church Road. This has brought visual improvement to the centre, but the longer term strategy should be to introduce a more pedestrian friendly environment on

Albert Crescent, removing the bus interchange area from the centre of the district centre.

- N13. The periphery of the centre, at all entrance points, suffers from a poor physical environment and run-down/vacant shop frontages/buildings. The centre would benefit from substantial investment in these areas, encouraging a strong quality of operator throughout the centre and not just in the core central area.
- N14. The household telephone survey has identified an ethnic food retailing role in South Chingford. The district centre has an 18.5% market share in Zone 1, and 42.4% market share in Zone 2 for ethnic food retailing. Given the envisaged growth of ethnic groups across the borough over the next 20 years, South Chingford could evolve into a centre of choice in the north of the borough for this goods type in order to meet the needs of a growing population.
- N15. Within Zone 2, residents are choosing South Chingford more frequently than nearby Highams Park for daytime cafes/restaurants. South Chingford has a Zone 2 market share of 40.4% compared to 6.5% for Highams Park. This role in South Chingford is clearly strong and popular, and should be encouraged - and restricted to A3 uses.
- N16. South Chingford is the most popular destination for those living in Zone 2 for evening restaurants (25.1% market share). For comparison, North Chingford has a Zone 2 market share of 22.8%, Highams Park has a 17.1% market share, and Woodford town centre an 8.6% market share. This offer is not as strong as daytime cafes/restaurants, but should be encouraged over the plan period, and restricted to A3 uses.
- N17. We recommend no change to the policy allocated shopping frontages.

Highams Park

- N18. Highams Park is located in Zone 2, and is the smallest district centre in the borough by a considerable margin. It performs a localised shopping function, enhanced in recent months through the development of a new Tesco foodstore.
- N19. The district centre has recently benefitted from the development of a new Tesco foodstore in an edge-of-centre site, i.e. not forming part of the existing primary/secondary frontages, but being located within 300 metres from them. Tesco is the key anchor retailer forming part of the wider 'district centre', and has a market share of 19.7% in Zone 1 and 17% in Zone 2. Given the location of further major

foodstores (Sainsbury's South Chingford, Sainsbury's Chingford, Morrisons Chingford), we do not consider there is a need for additional foodstores in Highams Park.

- N20. The comparison goods offer is particularly limited in the district centre, having a floorspace of only 505 sq m net, and a Zone 2 market share of just 2.3%. If the opportunity arises, the growth of comparison goods floorspace in/adjoining the district centre should be encouraged. We consider it unlikely that Highams Park will perform a strong comparison role of the plan period, and the focus should remain on enhancing this role in Chingford North and Chingford South.
- N21. Highams Park suffers from traffic congestion as a consequence of the railway level crossing closing eight times an hour – separating Tesco from the rest of the district centre retail area. Tesco offers free parking, and the level crossing closures are relatively swift, but investment in ensuring integration and connectivity between Tesco and the rest of the district centre should be continued to be encouraged. Investment in the public realm and pedestrian environment around Tesco has extended into the centre, but this should be enhanced further and spread throughout the entire centre.
- N22. Highams Park has a small daytime eating/drinking role, achieving a 6.5% market share in Zone 2, and a 4.9% market share in Zone 4. This role should be protected over the plan period, encouraging linked trips and longer dwell times.
- N23. In terms of the balance of uses and economic mix, all centres seem well balanced aside from Wood Street which is heavily dominant in the A1 category, and Highams Park which has a strong proportion of A5 fast food take-away uses. The Council may wish to restrict Use Class A5 from secondary frontages in Highams Park moving forwards.
- N24. The vacant unit previously occupied by Budgens should be considered for new comparison goods or daytime café/restaurant uses.
- N25. Highams Park has a reasonably strong evening restaurant market share (17.1% Zone 2), likely a consequence of public house representation in and around the district centre. A key opportunity to enhance the daytime and evening role of the district centre is the vacant cinema which is being considered for refurbishment and re-opening. If implemented this would provide the second cinema in the borough, offering a more art based/independent film offer.

- N26. The physical environment throughout Highams Park should be monitored and investment in frontages considered when the opportunity arises. The introduction of Tesco alongside a localised shopping function, café/pub offer, an improved physical appearance, and potential new art-house cinema would ensure a strong and viable future role for Highams Park.
- N27. We recommend that the unit previously occupied by Budgens is removed from the Primary Shopping Frontage. Tesco should remain outside of the retail frontages and Primary Shopping Area; there would seem no planning merit to justify its inclusion.

Sub-Area: South

- 8.45 The South Sub-Area includes Zones 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 (Plan 1); Walthamstow is located on the boundary of Zone 6 and 7, Wood Street in Zone 4, Bakers Arms and Leyton in Zone 8, and Leytonstone in Zone 7. The south of the borough is more reflective of central London socio-economic and physical characteristics with a population double the density of the north of the borough, and a stronger ethnic diversity. The built form is dense and the need to support growth greater.
- 8.46 The south of the borough benefits from inward and outward borough movement via the Victoria and Central underground lines, and via the Gospel Oak to Barking, and Chingford to Liverpool Street over-ground lines. The adopted Blackhorse Lane AAP allocates a new neighbourhood centre alongside housing, businesses and public open spaces. Sites for retail / mixed-use include the 'Station Hub and Waterfront' site and 'Webb's Industrial Estate'. The AAP acknowledges scope for a flagship retail development in excess of 500 sq m in order to 'kick-start' the centre and to ensure it is the main focus of activity in the locality.
- 8.47 A summary of quantitative need for the South Sub-Area is detailed in Table 8.3 below.

Table 8.3: Quantitative Need: Sub-Area South

2020	2025	2030
Convenience Goods Need		
6,462 sq m net	7,864 sq m net	9,412 sq m net
Comparison Goods Need		
4,959 sq m net	11,902 sq m net	19,704 sq m net

- 8.48 In terms of trade retention, convenience goods floorspace in the South Sub-Area retains £337.1m of convenience goods expenditure available in the South Sub-Area, compared to a total expenditure available of £474m. This equates to a market share of 71%, demonstrating a 29% leakage of expenditure to destinations outside the Sub-Area.
- 8.49 It is apparent, when analysing the performance of the larger foodstores that the Sainsbury's and Asda in Walthamstow town centre, the Tesco superstore and Morrisons local in Bakers Arms, and the out-of-centre Tesco in Leytonstone, are all performing strongly. We have identified the Asda at Leyton Mills to be performing marginally under expected company average levels.
- 8.50 Within the South Sub-Area, our analysis has demonstrated capacity to support an additional 6,462 sq m net convenience goods floorspace by 2020, growing to 7,864 sq m net by 2025 and again to 9,412 sq m net by 2030. We would caution against long-term forecasting and recommend a 'need' figure of 6,500 sq m net over the plan period with a recommendation to review in the medium term (3-5 years).
- 8.51 Existing foodstore provision is reasonably well distributed throughout the South Sub-Area, and floorspace is performing strongly. In terms of meeting the identified need, we recommend the following development opportunities:
- Blackhorse Lane Neighbourhood Centre (c.1,500-2,000 sq m net) – to keep under review;
 - Wood Street District Centre, AAP Development Site 11 (1,000-1,500 sq m net);
 - Leyton Mills Retail Park, Leyton (1,500-2,000 sq m net);
 - Former Homebase unit, junction of High Road, Leytonstone and Beachcroft Road; now occupied by B&M Bargains (up to 2,000 sq m net). This site lies within an Employment Area, but its continued use for retail has been established in recent months. The Council's Employment Study notes that it could be used as employment workspace in the future;
 - The remainder should be directed towards the network of town centres in the first instance, and in accordance with the impact and sequential test, it may appropriate to introduce additional out-of-centre provision between Bakers Arms, Leytonstone and Leyton given the strong trading performance of stores in this area and the expected increase in population. Any such proposal should be tested stringently against the key provisions of the NPPF before being judged as acceptable.

- 8.52 The Blackhorse Lane Neighbourhood Centre will benefit from a larger anchor foodstore in this location to ensure the delivery of a sustainably new centre for the existing and emerging new residential community. At this stage we recommend a medium sized foodstore of up to 2,000 sq m net, but this should be kept under review with the potential to deliver a larger unit if the reasoning is presented and justified at a future point in time.
- 8.53 In terms of comparison goods trade retention, floorspace in the South Sub-Area retains £237.3m of comparison goods expenditure available in the South Sub-Area, compared to a total expenditure available of £645.1m. This equates to a market share of 37%, demonstrating a 63% leakage of expenditure to destinations outside the Sub-Area.
- 8.54 Within the South Sub-Area, our analysis identifies surplus need to support 4,959 sq m net of comparison goods floorspace by 2020, rising to 11,902 sq m net by 2025, and again to 19,704 sq m net by 2030. Given the influence of competing centres, and pipeline development schemes in the sub-region, we recommend the Council plans to accommodate the full extent of need in order to respond to growing competition and to meet the needs of a growing population.
- 8.55 In terms of development opportunities and meeting the identified need, we recommend that the majority of floorspace is directed to Walthamstow town centre in the first instance. The key development sites identified in the AAP, and which remain available for retail uses, include The Mall (up to 10,000 sq m) and the Sainsbury's supermarket (up to 4,000 sq m). Alternative identified sites in Walthamstow could also accommodate small amounts of additional retail floorspace.
- 8.56 Based on our detailed and strategic analysis, we recommend the remainder of identified need should be directed to the redevelopment/intensification of the Leyton Mills retail park, Wood Street AAP Site 11, South Grove/St James development opportunity, Blackhorse Lane (local retailing), redevelopment of the bus station and Poundstretcher site in Bakers Arms, and central site opportunities in Leytonstone District Centre.

Sub-Area: South, Key Recommendations

Walthamstow

- S1. Walthamstow is located on the boundary of Zones 4, 6 and 7. In terms of convenience goods floorspace, the town centre has representation from Sainsbury's, Asda and Lidl foodstores, all of which are trading strongly, above expected company average levels. The smaller Tesco Express and Iceland stores are also performing well. We

conclude that there is no qualitative need for additional foodstore representation in the town centre, albeit the Council should proactively support appropriate proposals for refurbishment / expansion of existing stores. Small scale opportunities for new convenience goods floorspace should also be encouraged provided they comply with national and local policy. There are gaps in operator representation including, for example M&S Food, Waitrose, and Aldi, and the Council should help facilitate their introduction should the appropriate town centre opportunity arise.

- S2. We recommend that the majority of comparison goods floorspace need is directed to Walthamstow town centre in the first instance, in order to support its role as a Major Centre in the Core Strategy and London Plan.
- S3. The Walthamstow AAP identifies The Mall, Grove Road and the Sainsbury's site as key retail led development opportunities. Morrisons have recently withdrawn from taking forward Grove Road, and it is now unlikely to come forward for retail development. The AAP confirms that The Mall and Sainsbury's site could accommodate up to 14,000 sq m of retail floorspace – a significant proportion of identified need to the period 2030 (19,704 sq m). We recommend these two sites continue to be prioritised for development moving forwards.
- S4. As noted in paragraph 8.45, the South Sub-Area experiences a comparison goods leakage of 63% to competing shopping destinations. We recommend that the Council supports additional comparison goods floorspace development throughout Walthamstow town centre above the level that could be supported at The Mall / Sainsbury's site (14,000 sq m).

Proposals would need to comply with policy and present opportunities to accommodate larger units (300-500 sq m) in order to attract major national non-food multiples (clothing/footwear retailers) currently not represented in the centre. If the Council wish to attract new national multiple retailers to Walthamstow town centre the conditions and opportunity will need to be created and presented, i.e. appropriate and good quality units in prominent positions. This may be through new development, i.e. extension to the Mall, or through the pro-active merging of two or more units.

- S5. The majority of retailers in Walthamstow are 'mid-market' rather than high end/luxury boutique. This is not necessarily a weakness, and many of these retailers are strong footfall drivers. The overall objective should be to retain a strong proportion of A1 comparison goods operators alongside other town centre uses to ensure strong footfall and dwell time. Given proximity to Central London and Westfield Stratford City,

Walthamstow should continue to focus on this complementary mid-market offer for the local catchment, seeking to enhance it where opportunities arise.

- S6. The Council should encourage and facilitate the provision of larger shop units throughout the centre in order to accommodate a greater range and quality of major national multiple retailers. This could be through the merging of existing smaller units, consolidation, and modernisation. A key operator and major footfall driver not currently represented in Walthamstow is Primark, and the Council should seek to deliver accommodation for such strong high street anchors.
- S7. The redevelopment and extension of the Mall should be considered a strategic priority in order to continue to compete with the improving offer in the wider sub-region. One option could be to increase density by extending upwards as well as outwards. This is a key opportunity to provide the larger unit sizes discussed in key recommendations above.
- S8. As noted in Section 3, the 'Click and Collect' market is the largest on-line growth sector in the UK at the current time, and its importance should not be under-estimated. It can be used as an important tool in helping town centres to continue to have an important role and function, by being a footfall generator in its own right. Click and Collect opportunities are available throughout Walthamstow within individual businesses; but we recommend the Council supports further click and collect opportunities in the town centre, including, for example, 'Click and Collect cafes' or a 'Click and Collect Hub', perhaps within the Mall Shopping Centre.
- S9. Westfield, for example, has launched 'Click and Collect Hubs', in partnership with Collect+, allowing shoppers to pick up their online orders from their centres. The dedicated hubs allow shoppers to try on their purchases to know if they are suitable before taking them home, and offers a returns service. This provides shoppers with access to over 260 retailers signed up to the Collect+ service, including John Lewis, Amazon and Asos, and would help encourage footfall within Walthamstow town centre, leading to linked trips. Westfield view it as an opportunity to respond to shoppers' needs and ultimately help deliver a seamless experience for customers shopping on-line and in-store.
- S10. The Council should continue to monitor the impact of Westfield Stratford City, particularly following the re-opening of Lea Bridge Station, and the Westfield expansion proposals being brought forward.

- S11. Walthamstow is the most popular destination for ethnic food products in the borough, with Walthamstow Market, Walthamstow Town Square and Walthamstow 'elsewhere', being cited as popular destinations throughout the town centre. This role should be protected and promoted as a key marketing/brand feature to ensure a competitive positioning above competing destinations in the wider sub-region. Ethnic food retailing should be viewed as a key selling point and key attractor, particularly given the identified increase in this sector of the population over the next 20 years.
- S12. Since adoption of the town centre AAP the Council have helped deliver a leisure and entertainment hub at the eastern end of the High Street, anchored by an Empire multiplex cinema. The Council should continue to promote the extension and evolution of the leisure economy in Walthamstow town centre at the eastern end and through the AAP aspiration to create the St James Quarter at the western end.
- S13. Walthamstow is a popular destination for daytime cafes/restaurants across the borough, but particularly for those living in Zones 2, 4, 6, 7, 8 and 9. This role should be encouraged within the appropriate policy frontages, and restricted to A3 uses.
- S14. Walthamstow is reasonably popular for evening restaurants, although less so than for daytime cafes/restaurants. The town centre has the greatest draw from Zone 4, 6 and 7, and to a lesser extent, Zone 8. Central London and Westfield Stratford City are the key competing destinations for this use type. We recommend the offer in Walthamstow should be extended to provide a greater range of quality operators similar to those adjacent to the Empire Cinema.
- S15. It is evident from the survey results that the Entertainment Venue, 'All Star Lanes', in Westfield Stratford is popular across the survey area, except Zones 1, 2, 4 and 6, i.e. those zones not yet on a public transport route direct to Westfield. We recommend the Council facilitates the introduction of an All Star Lanes type of destination, offering an upmarket, retro, 'cool brand', enhancing the leisure attraction and encouraging linked trips with nearby eating/drinking destinations. Facilities often also include karaoke booths.
- S16. Walthamstow town centre has benefited from substantial investment in the public realm in recent years, which has made a significant improvement to the quality of the environment. The Council should continue to invest ensuring all parts of the centre are enhanced in a consistent and uniform manner, ensuring the improved health of the town centre as a whole.

S17. We recommend no change to the retail frontages and town centre boundary.

Bakers Arms

S18. Bakers Arms is located in Zone 8, close to the boundary with Zone 6 and 7, and in close proximity to Walthamstow town centre – linked by road (A112). Tesco is the major anchor foodstore, supplemented with Iceland, Morrisons and a good selection of independent operators, all of which are performing well. We do not recommend a need for additional foodstore provision in Bakers Arms, although existing provision is over-performing and additional floorspace should be encouraged if the opportunity arises.

S19. The Tesco store provides a long blank wall onto the main shopping street, with the main entrance to the rear of the store accessed from the car park. Tesco should be encouraged to provide a new entrance onto the High Road, closer to the main cross-roads junction. This would improve the performance of the Tesco store, whilst integrating the unit more effectively with adjoining and nearby shop frontages.

S20. The district centre has benefited from public realm investment, particularly at the main cross-roads. The Council should continue to maintain this investment, and also seek to secure further funding to improve more peripheral areas, and shops frontages/signage.

S21. The bus station and existing Poundstretcher unit should be considered as a key development site opportunity to provide larger and better quality units.

S22. Bakers Arms has a low response rate for both daytime eating/drinking and evening restaurants. This is perhaps a consequence of proximity to Walthamstow town centre. We do not recommend Bakers Arms seeks to grow an evening economy, but the provision of daytime eating/drinking destinations should be encouraged in order to assist in longer dwell times and vitality.

S23. We recommend no changes to the policy defined retail frontages.

Leyton

S24. Leyton is located in Zone 8, to the far south of the borough, and just one stop on the Central Line underground from Westfield Stratford City. Together with Bakers Arms, also in Zone 8, the two district centres and the out-of-centre Asda store at Leyton Mills Retail Park has a strong market share of 64.4% in Zone 8. We recommend that Leyton could

accommodate a further small-medium sized foodstore (up to 1,500 sq m net), accommodated within the Leyton Mills Retail Park.

- S25. We recommend that Leyton Mills Retail Park continues to be identified for higher density, retail-led mixed use re-development. The two key strategic sites in Walthamstow town centre are not sufficient to absorb the full extent of identified need in the South Sub-Area, and we identify Leyton Mills Retail Park as being appropriate for non-food retail intensification/re-development. Leyton Mills Retail Park should be allocated as the second priority location in the South Sub-Area for comparison goods development.
- S26. Leyton District Centre and Leyton Mills Retail Park perform different functions and are not well integrated. Both have qualitative strengths and both should be protected and enhanced moving forwards. We recommend the production of a Development Brief for the Leyton Mills Retail Park, which takes into consideration the location and role of Leyton District Centre. A development brief would consider the overall vision for the site, building design and site layout principles, community and infrastructure needs, and accessibility, for example.
- S27. Leyton District Centre has benefitted from substantial investment from the south of the centre northwards to Sidmouth Road and Coronation Gardens. The Council should continue investing in the frontages north of Coronation Gardens to ensure a high quality and consistent environment throughout, encouraging pedestrian footfall.
- S28. We recommend no changes to the policy defined retail frontages.

Leytonstone

- S29. Leytonstone is located in Zone 7 and close the boundary with Zone 9, in the far south of the borough and just two stops on the Central Line underground from Westfield Stratford City. Given proximity to Westfield Stratford City and Walthamstow town centre, Leytonstone is likely to continue to perform a smaller scale, local top up shopping role for a locally defined catchment area. We do not recommend an aspiration for step change upwards in scale/expansion.
- S30. The small Sainsbury's local, Iceland and 'other' local stores have a combined market share of only 1.8% in Zone 7, compared to a market share of 17% for the out-of-centre Tesco superstore. We recommend that the Council encourages and facilitates

additional foodstore representation in Leytonstone town centre, which will assist in consolidating its role.

- S31. We recommend the Council seeks to identify opportunities for redevelopment to intensify otherwise low density sites on Leytonstone High Road. These may include the McDonalds and Matalan, both of which may have the opportunity to accommodate a small foodstore operator in addition to other uses. There is a lack of connectivity throughout shop frontages in Leytonstone District Centre given the adjoining roads linking to the High Road. Higher density mixed use developments will assist in creating a critical mass and higher levels of footfall.
- S32. The Council should continue to invest in the public realm and shop frontages ensuring consistency and uniformity from the underground station through to the High Road. This will assist in linkages and connectivity throughout the centre.
- S33. Leytonstone has an ethnic food retailing role, more so than Leyton, with a market share of 25% in Zone 7 and 41.7% in Zone 9. Like South Chingford, this role could form a focus within a wider town centre strategy, helping to define a specific and targeted offer. This in turn could capture trade from further afield, whilst also consolidating a core catchment.
- S34. Leytonstone has a reasonably strong performance in the daytime eating/drinking sector with a market share of 14.8% and 18.7% in Zone 7 and 9 respectively. We recommend the council aims to enhance this type daytime provision, in order to encourage visits and dwell time, supporting the daytime economy. Whilst evening restaurants should not be discouraged, we do not recommend that this forms part of the priority vision for the centre given proximity to Westfield and Walthamstow.
- S35. We recommend the primary shopping frontage is extended southwards to include Iceland on the western side and the units to Barclay Road on the eastern site. Larger box units are limited in Leytonstone town centre, and we recommend these units are protected for retail moving forwards.

Wood Street

- S36. Wood Street is located in Zone 4 in a central part of the borough. Foodstore provision is limited to Tesco Express and Co-Op, equating to a combined market share of just 6.5%. Zone 4 trade is primarily directed to Walthamstow (44%) and the four major

foodstores in the North Sub-Area (21%). We recommend that the Council proactively plans for a new foodstore in Wood Street District Centre.

- S37. Wood Street has a Zone 4 market share of just 0.16% for comparison goods, which is perhaps consistent with its lower order role, acting to serve the everyday needs of a local catchment area. Nevertheless, the introduction of new unit shops to accommodate comparison goods retailers should be encouraged as part of any mixed use development, or redevelopment of existing stock within the town centre. Whilst the comparison goods offer should be enhanced in Wood Street, we envisage this being of an appropriate scale consistent with the centres current role and physical scale.
- S38. In terms of the balance of uses and economic mix, all centres seem well balanced aside from Wood Street which is heavily dominant in the A1 category, and Highams Park which has a strong proportion of A5 fast food take-away uses. A more mixed use 'café culture' is likely to evolve in Wood Street through evident gentrification, and A3/A4 uses should be encouraged.
- S39. The AAP allocates the Plaza for retail intensification, and Site 11 to the south of the railway line for mixed use development including a small foodstore. Whilst not promoting town centre 'expansion', we recommend that these town centre opportunities are retained moving forwards, underpinned by the need to reflect the artisan character, uniqueness and low key nature of the district centre. The catchment is transforming to higher earning socio-economic class, and this should be reflected in the town centre strategy moving forwards. The Travis Perkins site could be identified for retail/mixed use redevelopment; albeit the Council's Employment Land Study suggests new B Class activity might be appropriate.
- S40. We recommend no changes to the policy defined retail frontages.

Town Centre Living

- 8.57 Alongside retail and leisure uses, town/city centre living is becoming increasingly available and accessible as densities continue to increase. This type of change, if brought forward appropriately, can contribute substantially to the vitality and vibrancy of a town centre, contributing to footfall and visitation rates. We recommend this type of town centre activity is encouraged by the Council through the local policy framework, within retail frontages, where the opportunities are apparent.

8.58 There are likely to be a number of opportunities for the intensification and conversion to residential across the borough's town centres, provided the retail frontages are protected as part of an overall scheme. Policy support should be underpinned by the wider housing and employment evidence based studies to ensure the economy and mix of uses – outside of and above retail frontages – is maintained. The control of this mix has, in recent months, been eroded by the introduction of permitted development from office to residential uses, and this may be an area the Council may need to give further consideration to in terms of restricting the loss of employment uses whilst enhancing the overall balance of the economy and town/city living.

Impact Floorspace Threshold

8.59 When assessing applications for retail, leisure and office development outside of town centres, which are not in accordance with an up-to-date Local Plan, local planning authorities should require an impact assessment if the development is over a proportionate, locally set threshold (if there is no locally set threshold, the default threshold is 2,500 sq m). Paragraph 27.5 (p.166) of the Development Management Policies (October 2013) sets a local threshold of 200 sq m. The Council justifies this on the following grounds:

The Council considers that many small developments can cumulatively impact on the vitality and viability of the designated centres/parades. This threshold is considered necessary to implement the Council's planning objective as expressed in the Core Strategy to consolidate town centre activities in the designated centres, support the vitality and viability of the designated centres and manage the proliferation of retail and other town centre uses throughout the Borough. In applying this threshold, the Council wishes to ensure that vulnerable centres/local parades do not experience further decline from trade diversion arising from the development of out of centre retail, leisure and office developments.

8.60 We recommend the threshold of 200 sq m **NET** is carried forward. To put this into context, the Sainsbury's in Walthamstow has a floorspace of 2,765 sq m net, the Asda store in Selborne Walk has a floorspace of 1,562 sq m net, whilst smaller Tesco Express, Iceland and Co-op stores across the borough have a floorspace in the region of 300-400 sq m net. In order to enforce the justification set out above policy must retain a 200 sq m net threshold to avoid the proliferation of units that have the ability to draw strong levels of trade and compete directly with the district centres and those smaller centres lower down in the hierarchy.

Retail Hierarchy

- 8.61 The borough has a well-balanced network of centres and we recommend no change to the retail hierarchy moving forwards. North and South Chingford and Highams Park serve local shopping needs in the north of the borough, although we have noted the need for a main foodstore in North Chingford which would create more sustainable shopping patterns and a more balanced centre.
- 8.62 The south of the borough covers a larger geographical area, but is well served by a network of five centres including Walthamstow as the main town centre, and Leyton, Leytonstone, Bakers Arms and Wood Street as the more local centres, again serving the full extent of the catchment. The 'gap' in town centre floorspace at Blackhorse Lane will be addressed as part of the overall comprehensive mixed use development and we have set out our recommendations above.

Employment Land Study

- 8.63 The Employment Land Study is a key element of the London Borough of Waltham Forest's planning policy evidence base and has been prepared by Bilfinger GVA on behalf of the Council in parallel to this Town Centres and Retailing Study. The purpose of the study is to identify the future growth needs of the local authority area to inform the strategic level spatial strategy to guide future site allocations and ensure the appropriate capacity is available in the most appropriate locations to accommodate employment requirements.
- 8.64 The report provides the technical assessment of the future demand for and supply of employment land within the LB Waltham Forest area. It considers the scale and nature of future employment growth, the resultant requirements for new floorspace, how suitable the existing/identified sites are for meeting this need and any quantitative or qualitative need for additional land to be identified.
- 8.65 The ELS focuses solely on activities that occupy "B Class" employment floorspace, i.e. those employment generating activities that occur within Offices (B1a), Research and Development premises (B1b), Industrial space (B1c and B2) and warehouse buildings (B8). However, it should be recognised that 'non-B class' activities such as education, health, retail and hospitality provide more jobs than B class sectors.
- 8.66 Before considering the employment site characteristics of the supply in each of the sub-market geographical areas – and also key town centres – the key Borough wide characteristics of Waltham Forest's employment land supply are identified in the study. The

Borough has a large amount of small to medium sized light industrial stock, however much of this is rather dated and there is very limited provision of new stock of this type. This provision suits the historic nature of the Waltham Forest economy, and the need for this space is reflected in the high levels of occupancy within most estates.

- 8.67 However, the portfolio within the borough is narrow and there are few purpose-built, modern office and studio spaces provided within the borough's employment sites or the town centres, limiting the opportunity for Waltham Forest to attract new types of business activity. It is also noticeable that there is very little purpose built and operated space for SMEs, again this relates to office and studio space but also small workshops – although these tend to be provided for through other stock such as railway arches and general industrial units.
- 8.68 The Employment Land Study provides a number of conclusions and recommendations in respect of the role of the town centres in accommodating employment floorspace. These are set out below.

Walthamstow

- 8.69 In recent years Walthamstow has seen significant changes to its offer, both through major property development but also resulting from upgrades to the Victoria Line which have improved the speed, frequency and reliability of services to Central London. The leisure and dining offer in particular has evolved with the development of The Scene bringing new 'chain' restaurants to the town, whilst units along Hoe Street have been populated by a number of independent cafes and shops.
- 8.70 At present the employment floorspace hasn't been brought forward in the same way however we expect that over time Walthamstow will become a focus for activity based on its:
- Connections;
 - Scale of place;
 - Amenity provision; and
 - Site opportunities
- 8.71 Based on these characteristics we would expect the town centre, and in particular the area around Walthamstow Central to be attractive for office development in the future, either as part of more comprehensive redevelopment plans for the Mall/Bus Station areas or as standalone development in locations that provide good access to the station such as sites to the south of the station or the east of Hoe Street.

- 8.72 The offer will need to align with the likely nature of the businesses attracted to the area and should be focussed on small to medium sized units and also the provision of co-working or 'club-room' space, which could integrate into a residential development or a straight commercial scheme.
- 8.73 More widely within Walthamstow the scale of development opportunity also suggests that a wider mix of spaces could be provided that link to the core town centre amenity offer, but provide space that is a distinct offer for Walthamstow. Hatherley Mews and The Tramworks has developed into a successful cluster of small businesses supported by a range of leisure/dining activity lying close to the main town centre. It provides a mix of office and studio spaces however has recently come under pressure for conversion to residential under the extension of permitted development rights.
- 8.74 The extension of permitted development rights, which could become a permanent change in future announcements by the government, is a particular challenge for the Council in seeking to protect the types of spaces that are needed to support future economic growth.
- 8.75 As major sites around the town centre and towards St James Street station are brought forward there is the potential to deliver further workspace within similar 'courtyard' style settings. Both major sites to the south of the High Street and smaller infill opportunities to the north could integrate workspaces, which in turn would help support the retail and leisure opportunities in this location.

Wood Street

- 8.76 The district centre at Wood Street is changing significantly in terms of its residential catchment, its inclusion on the Overground network has improved its connectivity to a number of East London's creative and economic hubs. These changes to the residential population and enhanced connections provide opportunities to strengthen the economic and employment role of the area in the future.
- 8.77 Whilst it is always likely to remain a relatively small scale economic centre it has the potential to attract an interesting mix of creative and micro-production businesses if the property offer can be appropriately evolved. Currently space is of relatively low quality providing medium sized light industrial units that are largely occupied by retail and trade counter activity.
- 8.78 It is these sites that, over the plan period, can make a more significant contribution to the Waltham Forest economy, particularly if they are being considered for mixed use development. The provision of small workspaces and studios within any redevelopment, closely linked to the station will help the area (and the borough) capture the on-going

migration of creative businesses out of more central locations such as Hackney. Wood Street would be particularly attractive given the direct Overground connection through Hackney into the City.

- 8.79 The scale of offer will need to be viable in terms of its on-going operation if it is to be a sustainable operation over the long term, this will require a certain scale of space for the managing business to operate in order to cover the management costs. The scale of space provision is therefore likely to have a 'minimum' threshold to make it viable, which will vary depending on the operators business model, however it is common for operators to require at least 2,000-3,000sqm of lettable space (depending on the activity mix and rent levels).
- 8.80 The provision of integrated workspace into the redevelopment of BEAs and other employment generating sites (even if not in B class use) within Wood Street will require proactive planning that sets out the expectations of development in terms of the scale and nature of space. Workspace providers will need to be an integrated part of the planning any development, ensuring that the space provided and its servicing are appropriately designed to meet business requirements.
- 8.81 In helping direct the approach to future development the opportunity exists for the Council to take a more proactive role in promoting opportunities and 'introducing' prospective developers to workspace providers who are interested in operating in the borough. This approach has been adopted in other regeneration areas, in particular drawing on the knowledge of the GLA in terms of workspace providers which, in turn has assisted in securing Mayoral funding for delivery and fit out of space.

Leytonstone

- 8.82 The potential opportunity for Leytonstone relates to the potential to continue the enhancement and use of railway arch units that run through the area. As identified a number of these are already used for employment activity, however they tend to be of lower value and lower employment density such as car related uses and storage.
- 8.83 Some arches have already been (or are in the process of being) refurbished and, where closely allied to the town centre, offer the opportunity to provide accommodation to a range of employment-generating activities that can complement the core town centre function. This could include uses that are more orientated towards B1 activity.
- 8.84 However, outside of the core town centre area it should be recognised that there are issues with accessibility and congestion around some arches, despite this there tends to be very low vacancy levels suggesting they are fulfilling a valuable need in the area. A sensitive

approach to refurbishment is therefore required to ensure vital servicing uses (such as car repairs) are not displaced in all locations given there is a lack of stock across the borough that could accommodate them. Given the wider nature of the area and its relationship to the A12, it is likely new space will attract a range of industrial and warehouse demand.

- 8.85 More widely, and similar to Wood Street, there is an opportunity to provide more B class space through the long term reorganisation and replacement of trade counter uses and other large retail sites (such as the former Homebase). However, given the value of these uses it is unlikely to be a source of new supply in the immediate future.
- 8.86 There are clear challenges to the viability of redevelopment of any existing 'retail' and trade counter activities given the embedded value of activity. However, as noted in the retail study, there are likely to be opportunities over time as the sector reorganises. In many locations this will facilitate mixed use schemes to deliver viable development which, in line with the above comments related to Wood Street, offer the opportunity to deliver integrated workspace.
- 8.87 On-going work considering the future of Leytonstone town centre has also identified a series of currently under-utilised sites that could be redeveloped in order to enhance the offer of the town centre. Those close to Leytonstone station in particular have been identified as offering the potential to integrate some workspace provision in response to changing demand in the area as the population grows and diversifies.
- 8.88 Again, the scale of provision will be determined by what is operationally viable for the provider, with provision planned and integrated at the development design stage. If a cluster of sites are able to be brought forward in Leytonstone it may be possible for them to act as a 'portfolio' for one operator, sharing the management cost across a number of sites and enabling smaller individual provision within each development. To achieve this approach may require support and direction from the Council to help bring operators and land owners together.

Leyton

- 8.89 Our analysis suggests there are limited opportunities to deliver new employment floorspace within Leyton, with the major potential being linked to the future development of BEA 3. This site offer the opportunity to deliver additional commercial floorspace as part of a comprehensive development approach, with considerable capacity if the Council's own land ownership could be include - albeit this would require the relocation of the domestic was site.

- 8.90 The future employment offer of site BEA 3 is likely to be principally influenced by its road links, given it lies some distance from any major public transport hub, with in excess of a 15 minute walk to Leyton station from the centre of the site. This would suggest that, given the access to Orient Way, it would potentially be an attractive location to deliver new light industrial or distribution space.
- 8.91 The delivery of new industrial space at BEA 3 is likely to be a challenge for achieving other aspirations for the site, including the delivery of residential accommodation and a school. The provision of smaller light industrial units could be compatible as part of the comprehensive masterplanning of the site, but it would most likely require the re-siting of the domestic waste facility and the existing water storage infrastructure.
- 8.92 We understand there are significant challenges to viably relocating these pieces of key infrastructure. Should this not be achievable and the infrastructure remains in place the delivery of industrial units could be accommodated alongside it without materially harming the attractiveness of the development to occupiers.
- 8.93 Outside of this major brownfield opportunity there is further potential to create additional employment activity and floorspace in other parts of Leyton. The redevelopment and remodelling of Leyton Mills into a different form of centre could enable the introduction of additional floorspace. If the large format retail activity is retained additional light industrial and warehouse floorspace could provide a 'complementary' offer particularly given the good road access options to the A12 and A106.
- 8.94 If orientated towards a more traditional 'town centre' format it is less likely to be attractive to provide industrial spaces but, given the proximity to Leyton Station, could deliver other forms of workspace as part of the mix of uses.
- 8.95 As identified there are also opportunities to repurpose and intensify the use of existing properties within the Leyton area, most notably in Site 7, Wood Street Goods Yard, where there are buildings with significant character and reasonable connections that could be converted to provide studio and co-working spaces in particular.