

# **Uttlesford District Council**

## **Retail and Town Centre Monitoring Report**

### **2013-2014**

#### **1. Introduction**

1.1. This report monitors the availability of retail uses across the District and town centre uses within the town and local centres in terms of allocated land and land with planning permission. For the purpose of this report town centre uses are defined as:

Use class A1 – Shops

Use class A2 – Finance and Professional Services

Use Class B1(a) – Office, other than a use within Class A2 (financial services)

Use Class D2 – Assembly and Leisure

For a more detailed description of the use classes please see appendix 1.

1.2. Both in the adopted Local Plan 2005 and the emerging Local Plan, Town and Local Centres have been identified. These are:

- Saffron Walden
- Great Dunmow
- Stansted Mountfitchet
- Thaxted

Please see appendix 2 for maps of the Town and Local Centre boundaries as identified in the emerging Local Plan.

#### **2. Retail Allocations in the Adopted Local Plan 2005**

2.1. In the Uttlesford Local Plan 2005 there are a number of policies which seek to protect existing and encourage new retail uses:

- RS2 – Town and Local Centres
- RS3 – Retention of Retail and other Services in Rural Areas
- Town Centre policies for Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow
- Local Centre Policies for Stansted Mountfitchet, and Thaxted.

- 2.2. Of the allocated sites in the adopted Local Plan the following site allocations make provision for retailing, two of which have been completed and development has commenced on one:

Great Dunmow 2: Land to the rear of 37 to 75 High Street. 0.75 ha site for mixed use development	Completed
Oakwood Park Local Policy 1	Outstanding
Takeley / Little Canfield Local Policy 3 - Priors Green	Completed
Policy SM3 – site on corner of Lower Street and Church Road – 0.2 ha site allocated for mixed use development	Under construction
Policy SM4/BIR1 – Rochford Nurseries	Outstanding

### 3. Planning Permissions

- 3.1. Essex County Council conducts an annual survey of non-residential land on behalf of the District Council. This survey is dated April each year and monitors the planning permissions for non-residential use in the previous year. In addition to any new permissions during the year it also records outstanding retail and town centre use floorspace, floorspace which has been completed, and retail and town centre use lost to other uses. Only schemes above a certain size threshold are included in the monitoring. The threshold is 250sq metres or more involving a gain or a loss.
- 3.2. The table below records the amount of floorspace which has been completed during the years up to April 2014.
- 3.3. Since 1 April 2011 a total of 1471 square meters of retail and town centre use floorspace has been completed.

<b>Completed Town Centre Use Floorspace 2011-2014</b>				
	<b>A1 &amp; A2</b>	<b>B1a</b>	<b>D2</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>2011/12</b>	313	-	-	313
<b>2012/13</b>	-	-	-	-
<b>2013/14</b>	414	744	-	1158
<b>Total</b>	<b>727</b>	<b>744</b>		<b>1471</b>

- 3.4. Appendix 3 lists all of the sites with outstanding planning permission for retail and town centre office use.
- 3.5. Appendix 3 shows that there is 7266 sqm of A1/A2 retail floorspace outstanding. Of which 1508 sqm is within the adopted Local Plan 2005 Local Centre boundaries with land at Emson Close Saffron Walden (555m2) and 2 Lower Street Stansted Mountfitchet (953m2). Outstanding planning permission exists for an extension to Saffron Walden Tesco (1274sqm) and Great Dunmow Tesco (1242m2), and Waitrose Store, Saffron Walden (528m2).

- 3.6. There are no outstanding planning permissions for B1a uses within the town or local centres.
- 3.7. Appendix 3 details the applications involving a loss. The potential total loss of retail and B1a floorspace from the town centres is 783 m<sup>2</sup>. This involves the loss of upper floors to residential and changes of use of offices to residential under the new permitted development rights.

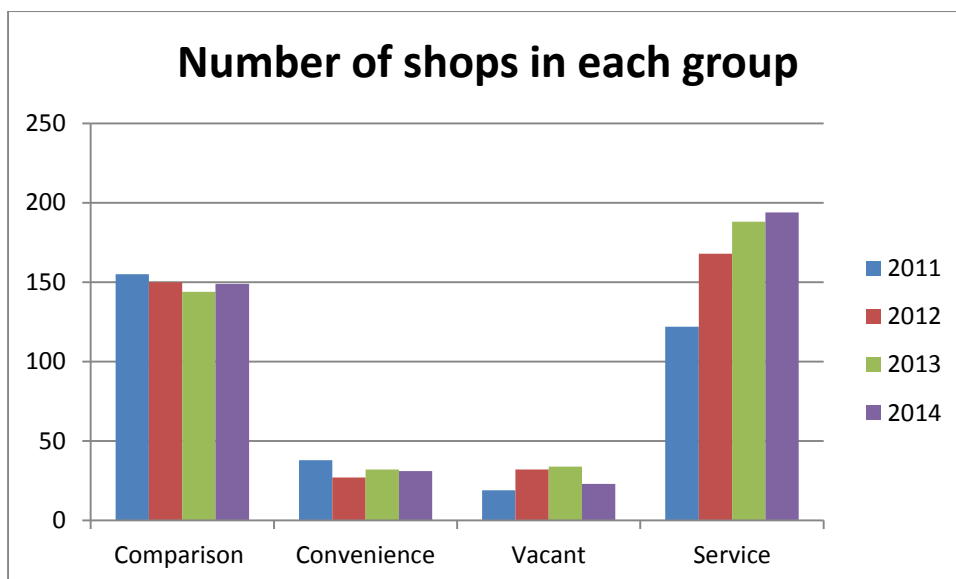
#### 4. Town/Local Centre Survey October 2014

4.1. Every year a retail survey is carried out. The following table shows the retail floorspace in the four main centres as defined on the adopted proposals map:

- Saffron Walden
- Great Dunmow
- Stansted Mountfitchet
- Thaxted

Retail Trade Group		Saffron Walden	Great Dunmow	Stansted Mountfitchet	Thaxted
Comparison	No of shops	99	39	5	6
	Net floorspace	7212	2336	345	
Convenience	No of shops	10	10	8	3
	Net floorspace	1683	1569	677	
Service	No of shops	81	68	33	11
	Net floorspace	7556	3882	1743	
Vacant	No of shops	15	5	1	2
	Net floorspace	466	175	151	

- 4.2. The survey of shops shows that over the last year the number of shops in each trade group has generally remained the same. Stansted Mountfitchet has seen the most significant reduction in vacant shops from 11 last year to only 1 this year.
- 4.3. The graph below shows historical data on how the number of shops the four main centres collectively have changed. Over the past four years the number of comparison shops has generally remained steady. The number of convenience stores fell in 2012 but has since remained steady. After an increase in the number of vacant shops in 2012 and 2013 the number has fallen in 2014. The number of shops offering a service has steadily increased over the last four years.



## 5. National Planning Policy Framework

5.1. The NPPF advocates a town centre first approach and requires planning policies to positively promote competitive town centre environments and manage the growth of centres over the plan period.

## 6. Permitted Development Rights

6.1. In May 2013 and April 2014 changes were made to the permitted development rights. Some of the changes will affect town and local centres, as listed below:

- Retail to residential – change of use from a small shop or provider of professional/financial service (A1 and A2 uses) to residential use (C3) up to 150sqm of retail space will be able to change to residential.
- Retail to banks and building societies – change of use from a shop (A1) to a bank or building society.
- Buildings with A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, B1, D1 and D2 uses will be permitted to change use for a single period of up to two years to A1, A2, A3 and B1 uses.

## 7. The Emerging Local Plan

7.1. The retail strategy in the emerging Local Plan, as set out in Policy SP5, is to support new retail, leisure and other town centre uses and to focus these uses in the town and local centres. SP5 details the amount of retail floorspace needed in the main centres thought the plan period; 3,713m<sup>2</sup> of convenience floorspace and 2,973m<sup>2</sup> of retail warehousing.

7.2. The following site allocation policies make provision for retail and town centre uses:

Saffron Walden 1 – convenience retail and retail warehousing

Saffron Walden 2 – Retail warehousing and discount foodstore

Saffron Walden 8 – Development Opportunity Site for town centre uses

Great Dunmow 5 – retail floorspace

Great Dunmow 12 – Development Opportunity site for town centre uses

Stansted Mountfitchet 1 – Land at Lower Street, mixed use development of retail, medical centre and residential

Stansted Mountfitchet 7 – Development Opportunity Site for town centre uses

- 7.3. In the emerging Local Plan local centres have been identified with primary and secondary shopping frontages (appendix 2), this will help give our four local centres (Saffron Walden, Great Dunmow, Stansted Mountfitchet and Thaxted) some extra protection.

## **8. Conclusions**

- Development Opportunity Area allocations are being put forward in the emerging Local Plan which will help meet the anticipated retail need in the local centres of Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow
- The emerging Local Plan has allocated sites for retail warehousing and large convenience shops, which will meet the anticipated need
- Overall the number of vacant shops in the four main retail centres has fallen.
- The permitted development rights have brought about challenges and changes to our town/local centres can and have happened that we have no control over. However, the emerging Local Plan makes provision to protect and enhance our main centres.

## Appendix 1

### Use Class Definitions

#### A1 –

##### A1 Convenience

These are shops where the goods on sale are purchased frequently. The convenient location of the shops is a high priority to the customer when making purchases. Such shops include supermarkets, newsagents and off licences.

##### A1 Comparison

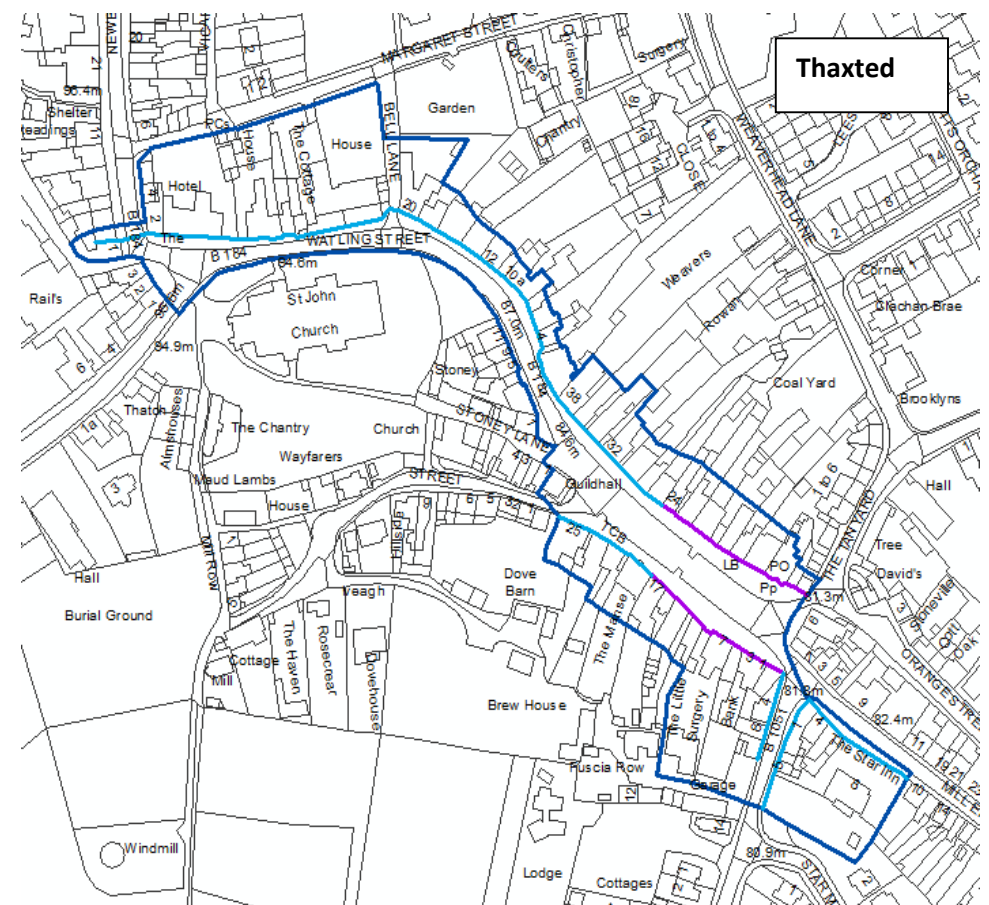
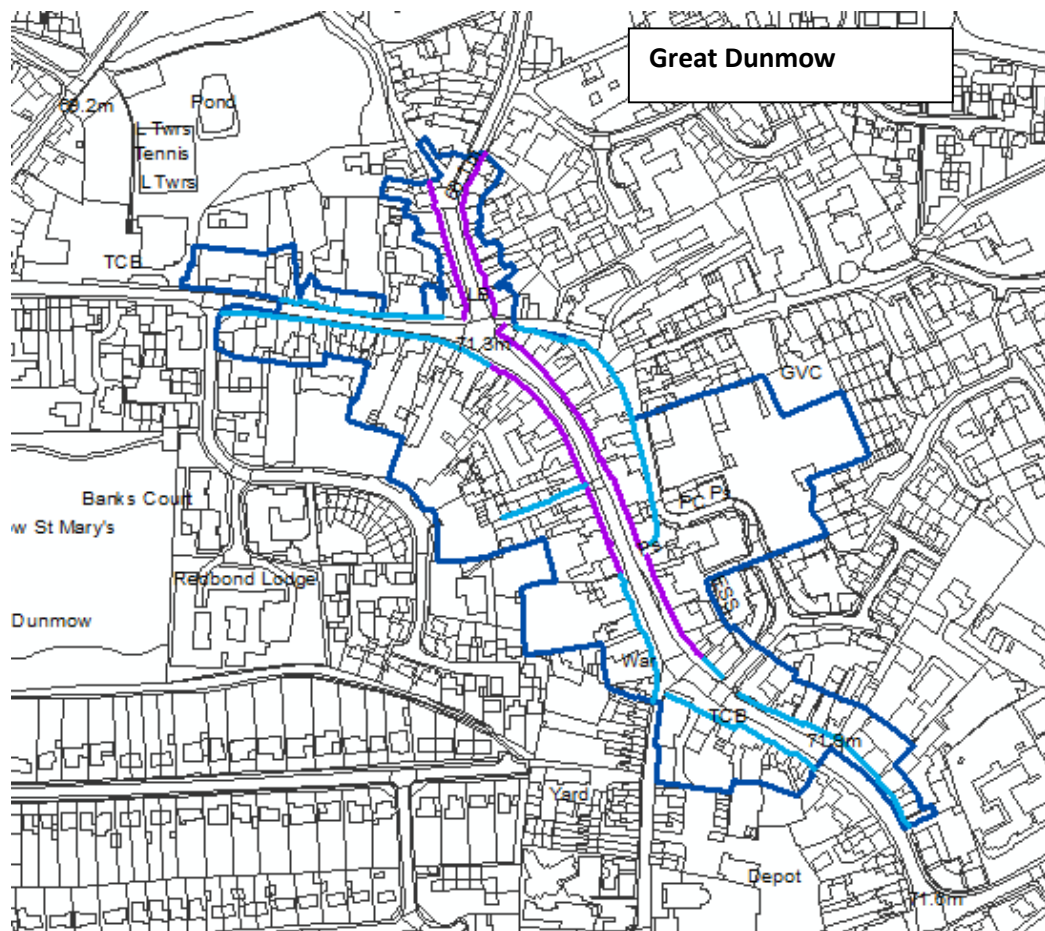
These are shops selling durable goods which are purchased at irregular intervals. A customer would probably not make a purchase until a comparison has been made with other shops. Examples of these shops are clothes shops, electrical shops and jewellers.

#### Town Centre Uses:

Use Class	Use Type
<b>A1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Retail sale of goods other than hot food</li><li>• Post office</li><li>• Sale of tickets or as a travel agency</li><li>• Sale of sandwiches or other cold food (consumption off the premises)</li><li>• Hairdressing</li><li>• Direction of funerals</li><li>• Displaying of goods for sale</li><li>• Hiring shops</li><li>• Dry cleaners</li><li>• Reception of goods to be washed, cleaned or repaired</li><li>• Internet café</li></ul>
<b>A2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Financial services</li><li>• Professional services (other than health or medical services)</li><li>• Any other services (including use as a betting office)</li></ul>
<b>B1(a)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• As an office other than a use within class A2</li></ul>
<b>D2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A cinema or concert hall</li><li>• Bingo hall</li><li>• Dance hall</li><li>• Swimming bath</li><li>• Skating rink</li><li>• Gymnasium</li></ul>
<b>Sui generis – a term referring to a class on its own</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Garages and car showrooms</li><li>• Launderettes</li><li>• Veterinary clinics</li><li>• Tanning studios</li></ul>

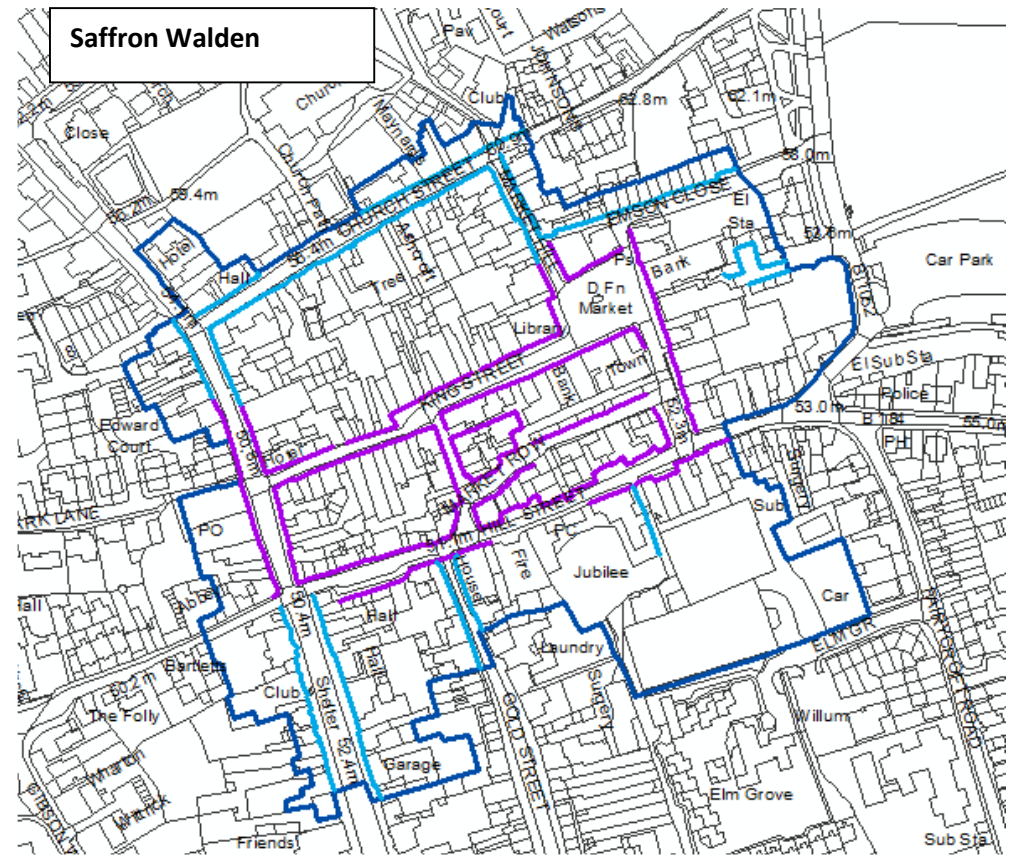
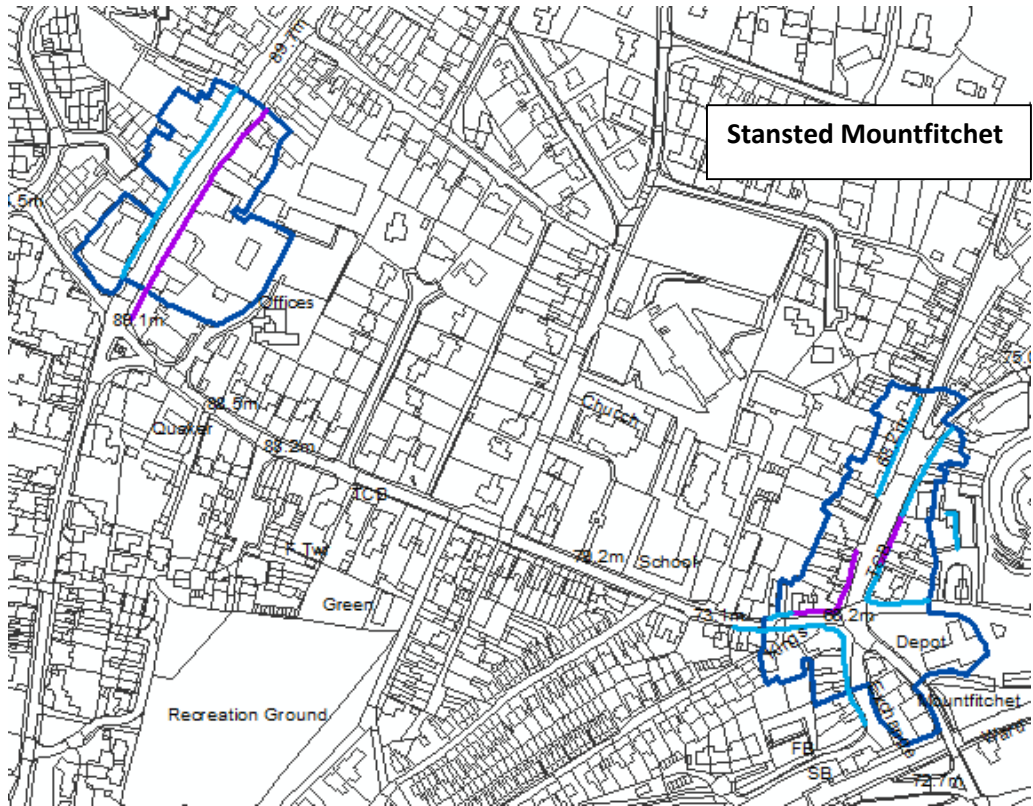
## Appendix 2

### Local Centres and Primary and Secondary shopping areas



#### Legend

- Secondary\_Frontages
- Primary\_Frontages
- TownLocal\_centre\_boundary





### Appendix 3

#### Completions – Retail uses and Town Centre uses

UTT Ref	Site	Development Description	Completed Floorspace (sqm)
2116/10	Former Council Offices, 46 High Street Great Dunmow	Change of use of former District council offices to 2 no offices and residential	744
2092/10	Priors Green Centre, Takeley	Erection of local centre retail parade comprising a convenience store (A1), with 6 further units for use class A1, A2 A3 & A5 or D1.	414
	14 Cambridge Road	Retail unit demolished	-319
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>839</b>

#### Outstanding Retail uses and Town Centre uses

UTT Ref	Site	Development Description	Outstanding Floorspace (sq m)
13/1123	Land at Webb Road/Hallett Road Little Dunmow	1 retail unit	386
0609/11	Land at Emson Close Saffron Walden	Retail units	555
1323/09	Radwinter Road Saffron Walden	Extension to Tesco	1274
13/0268	Thaxted Road	Demolish existing building and redevelop comprising retail and discount food store	1125
		Demolish existing building and redevelop retail warehousing and associated garden centre	2973
1522/12	2 Lower Street Stansted	Demolition of existing commercial buildings and development of 1 retail unit, medical centre and 14	953

1928/11/REN	Tesco Store Stortford Road, Great Dunmow	residential apartments Renewal of planning application UTT/1850/06/FUL extension of existing Class A1 retail store and alterations to existing car park	1242
<b>2012/10/FUL</b>	Waitrose Store, Saffron Walden	Single storey extension	528
Total			<b>7266</b>

#### Potential Retail or town centre losses to C3 residential 2013-2014 –

UTT Reference	Address	Description	Floorspace lost
<b>0280/12</b>	8-10 King Street	Change of use of upper floors (A1 retail ) and storage to 8 flats	475
<b>13/1796 (permitted development)</b>	R/o 56 High Street Saffron Walden	Change of use of office to residential	90
<b>13/3313 (permitted development)</b>	R/o 56 High Street Saffron Walden	Change of use of offices to 3 dwellings	90
12/6109	8B Cross Street Saffron Walden	Change of use of first floor office space to residential	128
Total			<b>783</b>