

**Committee:** Local Plan Leadership Group  
**Title:** Retail Capacity Study  
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## Summary

1. This report sets out the retail evidence base to inform the emerging Uttlesford Local Plan.

## Recommendations

2. To note the findings of the work and to utilise it in the development of the emerging Local Plan.

## Financial Implications

3. This work is within the 2021/22 budget.

## Background Papers

4. N/a

## Impact

- 5.

|                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Communication/Consultation      | The timetable builds in three stages for people to make representations on the draft Local Plan.           |
| Community Safety                | N/a  |
| Equalities                      | Forthcoming policies will be subject to an Equalities and Healthy Impact Assessment (EqHIA).               |
| Health and Safety               | N/a  |
| Human Rights/Legal Implications | Preparation of a local plan is a statutory duty. It needs to meet legal tests and comply with regulations. |
| Sustainability                  | Forthcoming policies will need to meet the sustainability objectives of the Council and                    |

|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
|                       | the Local Plan will be subject to a Sustainability Appraisal. |
| Ward-specific impacts | All   |
| Workforce/Workplace   | N/a   |

## Situation

6. The emerging Local Plan will allocate land to meet the development needs of the district. The study examines the latest retail trends, and draws on empirical research in order to advise the Council on an appropriate policy basis for the plan period to 2040.
7. The Study incorporates a series of health-checks across the District's four main centres of Saffron Walden, Great Dunmow, Stansted Mountfitchet and Thaxted. It also incorporates the findings of a household telephone survey of 1,002 households. The survey findings enable a detailed assessment of current shopping patterns, as well as a qualitative assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of each centre
8. The Study concludes that, broadly speaking, the centres of the District are in reasonably good health. It also shows that the District has retained a broadly similar percentage of its own residents spending since the last surveys were carried out in 2016. This means that there is little evidence of any increase in 'leakage' to destinations elsewhere. What is evident though, is that there has been some switching away from town centre destinations in the District, to out-of-centre destinations in the District, particularly in Saffron Walden.
9. The Study concludes that there is quantitative capacity for new convenience goods floorspace in the District. This is largely as a result of the over-trade of existing foodstores. The Study concludes that the Council may wish to consider a further foodstore in Great Dunmow to meet this identified capacity. Importantly though, any proposals should follow the sequential test and notwithstanding the capacity identified, applicants would need to provide justification for the impact of the proposals on existing centres in line with both local and national guidance.
10. The Study finds very limited capacity for comparison goods floorspace, and only then, towards the end of the Plan period.
11. A series of recommendations are provided for meeting growth, preparing development management policy, and monitoring retail health.

## Risk Analysis

12.

| Risk | Likelihood | Impact | Mitigating actions |
|------|------------|--------|--------------------|
|------|------------|--------|--------------------|

|  |   |                                       |   |
|--|---|---------------------------------------|---|
| If the Council does not have an NPPF compliant evidence base the plan could be found unsound | 2 | 4 – delays in adopting the Local Plan | Professional evidence developed in line with the NPPF and PPG |
|--|---|---------------------------------------|---|

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.