



Wyre Council

Town Centre Boundary Review

September 2017

Contents

1. INTRODUCTION.....	3
2. PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK.....	3
3. TOWN CENTRE METHODOLOGY.....	5
4. ANALYSIS OF TOWN CENTRES.....	7
Cleveleys	7
Fleetwood	9
Garstang.....	11
Poulton-le-Fylde	13

1. INTRODUCTION

Scope and Purpose

1.1 The council is currently preparing a new Local Plan that will set out a vision for the growth and development of the entire borough to 2031. The Local Plan has to be informed by a robust evidence base and this study forms part of the evidence base in support of the retail policies.

1.0 This paper provides an overview of the process that the council has undertaken to review and define town centre boundaries, primary and secondary frontages and primary shopping areas as required under paragraph 23 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

1.1 In seeking to define such areas, Annex 2 of the NPPF provides the following definitions:

- **Town Centre** – an area including the primary shopping area and area predominantly occupied by main town centre uses within or adjacent to the primary shopping areas;
- **Primary Shopping Area** – defined area where retail development is concentrated (generally comprising the primary and those secondary frontages which are adjoining and closely related to the primary shopping frontage;
- **Primary frontages** – are likely to include a high proportion of retail uses which may include food, drinks, clothing and household goods; and
- **Secondary frontages** – provide greater opportunities for a diversity of uses such as restaurants, cinemas and businesses.

1.2 The NPPF also defines what is considered to be ‘main town centre uses’, this includes: retail developments; leisure and entertainment facilities; intensive sport and recreational facilities; offices; and art, cultural and tourism developments.

1.3 The application of the above typologies are important when applying the sequential test for main town centres uses and the extent of town centres should be defined on the Local Plan policies map.

2. PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012)

2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was issued in March 2012 and sets out the government’s planning policies and how they should be applied. A key theme of the NPPF is a ‘presumption in favour of sustainable development’. In terms of plan-making, local planning authorities should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of the area with sufficient flexibility to adapt to rapid change.

- 2.2 The NPPF is based upon achieving sustainable development and identifies three dimensions – an economic, social and environment role.
- 2.3 In terms of the economic role, the NPPF emphasises the Government’s commitment to achieve economic growth and places significant weight on achieving this within the planning system. Local planning authorities should plan proactively to meet the development needs of business and support the economy. For town centres this means that local planning authorities should positively promote competitive town centre environments and set out policies for the management and growth of the centres.
- 2.4 Paragraph 23 of the NPPF goes on to say that local planning authorities when preparing Local Plans should recognise town centres as the heart of their communities and pursue policies to support their viability and vitality and define a network and hierarchy of centres that is resilient to anticipated future economic changes.
- 2.5 In order to support a prosperous rural economy, paragraph 28 promotes the retention and development of local services and community facilities in villages, such as local shops.
- 2.6 In terms of the social role, paragraph 70 says that planning policies should guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services where this would reduce the communities ability to meet its day-to-day needs and ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise in a way that is sustainable, and retained for the benefit of the community.
- 2.7 The NPPF requires town centres to be defined on the local authorities proposal map. Reference to town centres applies to district and local centres but excludes small parades of shops of purely neighbourhood significance unless they are identified as centres in the Local Plan. Existing out-of-centre developments do not constitute town centres.

Planning Practice Guidance

- 2.8 The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) was issued in March 2014 and provides technical guidance to supplement the NPPF. PPG ‘Ensuring the Vitality of town Centres’ details how retail and main town centre planning policy should be applied.
- 2.9 In relation to Town Centres, the PPG sets out that the Local Plan should set a positive vision or strategy for town centres that is based on evidence of the current state of the town centre and provide opportunities to meet development needs and support their viability and vitality.
- 2.10 Consideration should be given to identifying the appropriate and realistic role, function and hierarchy of town centres. This will involve auditing existing centres to assess their role, vitality and viability. Paragraph 005 says that the health of the town centre and market signals should be assessed with health indicators, such as assessing diversity of use and retail representation, ground floor vacancy levels, accessibility and state of environmental quality.

3. TOWN CENTRE METHODOLOGY

Introduction

- 3.1 The adopted Wyre Borough Local Plan 1999 defines town centre boundaries for four main centres within the borough – Cleveleys, Fleetwood, Garstang and Poulton-le-Fylde (Policy TC1). Within the town centres, primary shopping area (Policy TC2) and secondary shopping area (Policy TC7) are also defined. For the purposes of this assessment, the existing boundaries have acted as a starting point, albeit based upon the new terminology¹ set out within the NPPF and also includes the identification of primary shopping areas. Consideration has also been given to the proposed town centre and primary shopping area boundaries proposed in the Core Strategy Preferred Options March 2012.
- 3.2 The Fylde Coast Retail Study 2011 and 2013 update has been reviewed and used as the main point of reference in relation to the detailed health check reports for the four town centres.
- 3.3 The council undertakes town centre shop surveys on a biannual basis, which includes monitoring changes in businesses within the centre, including the ground floor unit use class and vacancy rates. The April 2016 monitoring forms the basis for this assessment and this has enabled a spatial distribution of retail units to be considered. This has been supplemented by the January 2017 Springboard Annual vacancy rate survey to consider for ground floor vacancies in the town centres.
- 3.4 Alongside this, consideration has also been given to existing town centre retail commitments that provides a useful snapshot of how each centre may change and develop.
- 3.5 When considering the town centre boundary, consideration was given to key features that contributed to the town centre, this included considerations of:
- Local key anchor stores within the centre and the implications for surround shops and services;
 - Location of key services and facilities, such as libraries and community centres;
 - Understanding the location of key public transport nodes and routes into the centre, such as rail stations, bus and tram stops;
 - Location of public car parks that are used to support the town centre;
 - Potential sites and areas of land that could be redeveloped to meet any future retail needs or rationalisation of existing shops and facilities;
 - Avoiding the inclusions of large areas of existing residential development at ground floor level, whilst acknowledging that residential development plays an important role in ensuring the vitality of centres; and
 - Natural boundaries based upon distinctive and recognisable features, such as road or railway lines, ensuring that the boundaries are logical and easy to identify on the ground.

¹ The Wyre Borough Local Plan 1999 defines primary and secondary shopping areas. The NPPF requires definition of primary and secondary frontages.

- 3.6 When considering primary and secondary frontage, consideration was primarily given to the concentration and location of existing A1 retail uses in accordance with the NPPF definition, with primary frontages containing a high proportion of retail uses and secondary frontages including a greater diversity of non-A1 retail uses. It is acknowledged that in some instances, the extent of the existing frontages within the block may not fully accord with proportions proposed in Local Plan policy EP6, however the location of particular units are considered prime and naturally forms a continuation of frontages and/or function.
- 3.7 In establishing the primary shopping area, this is defined based upon the full extent of primary and secondary frontage. This is considered appropriate as the secondary frontage is closely related to the primary frontage within the four town centres. The primary shopping area also includes the curtilage of the buildings within the primary and secondary frontage.

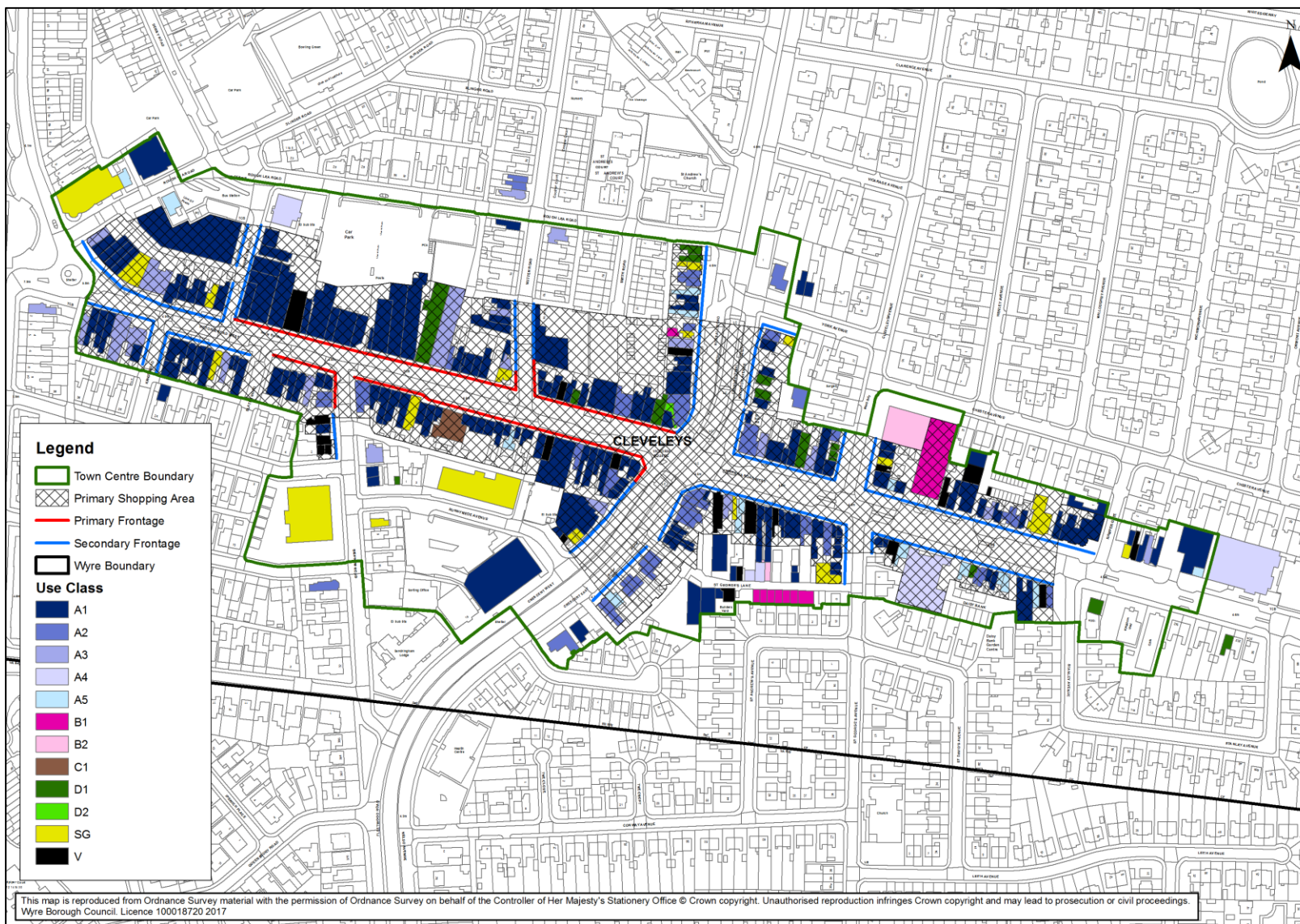
4. ANALYSIS OF TOWN CENTRES

Cleveleys

- 4.1 The existing town centre boundary for Cleveleys is linear and focused around the existing commercial development and the surrounding areas of Victoria Road West and Rossall Road. The town centre also extends west to include Promenade South and surrounding residential streets that extend north and south.
- 4.2 The Fylde Coast Retail Study (FCRS) health check identified that on a whole, Cleveleys is a vital and viable centre which benefits from strong footfall, a strong convenience sector and well represented in café and food outlets that typically cater for tourism. In contrast, the comparison offer in the centre is slightly weaker, and overall the comparison offer is focused towards the lower end of the retail spectrum. The health check recommends that due to the long and linear nature of the town centre, the council should consider encouraging the contraction of the centre to provide a more focused retail core whilst enabling the change of use of less viable retail units or vacant units located on the centres periphery.
- 4.3 The Springboard High Street Vacancy Rate Data for Cleveleys in January 2017 indicates a vacancy rate of 10.4%, which is below the North West rate of 13.2% but slightly above the UK rate of 9.4%.
- 4.4 The existing town centre boundary includes substantial areas that are primarily residential in nature, located to the north and south of Victoria Road West. The town centre boundary has therefore been amended to remove such areas, this includes the removal of land to north of Rough Lea Road and land around Coronation Road, Ellerbeck Road, Kingsway and residential properties to the south of St George's Lane and Daisy Bank area. To reflect recommendations contained in FCRS, the town centre has also been contracted to focus the town centre on the retail core.
- 4.5 The existing secondary shopping area extends along Victoria Road West, Rossall Road and Crescent East/West. To reflect the recommendations in the FCRS and analysis of shop survey records, the secondary frontage has been contracted along all roads. A new area of secondary frontage has also been created on Victoria Road East (western extent), Kings Road, Bispham Road and Nutter Road – these areas were previously within either the primary holiday area (TREC7) or Area of Mixed Town Centre use (TC8)² in the 1999 Wyre Borough Local Plan and the areas are considered to be primarily retail in nature and justified for inclusion within the secondary frontage.
- 4.6 The existing primary shopping area is focused on Victoria Road East, from Princes Road in the north west; Slater Road in the south east; and to Rossall Square in the east. To also reflect the contraction of the centre, the existing primary shopping area on Princes Street, Rossall Road and Crescent West is now identified as secondary frontage.
- 4.7 Other minor modifications and anomalies have also been made to the town centre, primary and secondary frontage. The primary shopping area reflects the curtilage of properties now identified as primary and secondary frontage.

² Please note Policy TC8 is not a saved 1999 Local Plan policy.

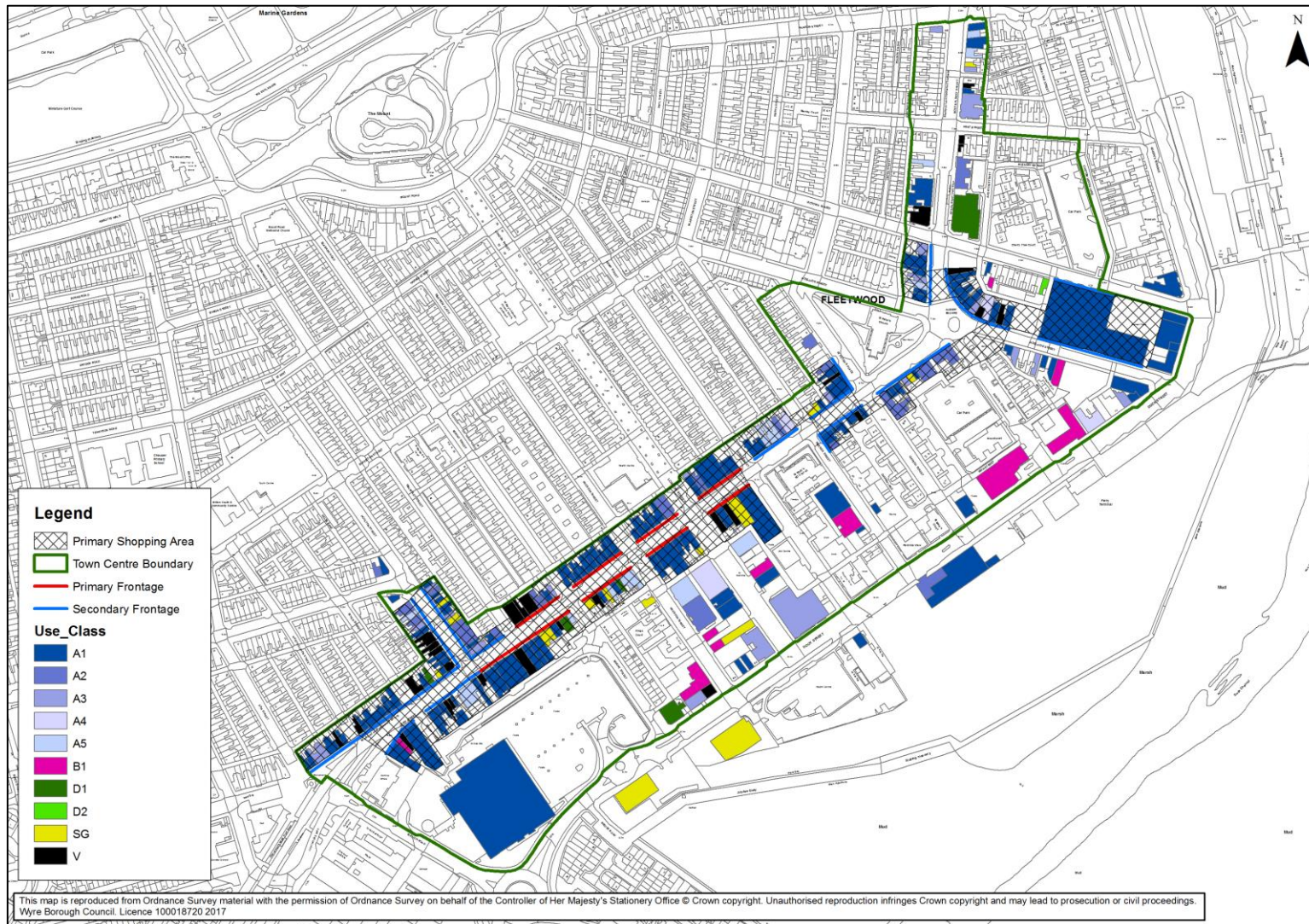
Cleveleys Town Centre – retail composition, town centre boundary, retail frontage and primary shopping area



Fleetwood

- 4.8 The existing town centre boundary for Fleetwood is linear and focused around the existing commercial development and surrounding areas of Lord Street, North Albert Street and Adelaide Street. The town centre boundary also extends north to Blakiston Street, west to Ash Street and Station Road, south to Dock Street and northeast to Pharos Street.
- 4.9 The Fylde Coast Retail Study (FCRS) health check identified that on a whole, Fleetwood is a reasonable vital centre, benefiting from strong convenience goods and service sector and healthy levels of footfall. In contrast, Fleetwood is deficient in comparison goods offer and has limited representation from national multiples so that many residents choose to travel to Freeport, on the edge of the town centre. The health check also identified in 2011 a slightly higher than national vacancy rate at 15.7%. The health check observed that vacancies located on the outer part of the town centre could be re-used for more viable uses so as to encourage a more focused and viable retail core.
- 4.10 The Springboard High Street Vacancy Rate Data for Fleetwood in January 2017 indicates a vacancy rate of 15.4%, which is above both the North West (13.2%) and UK (9.4%) rate. This indicates that vacancy levels have fallen since 2011, but this is still above the UK average.
- 4.11 The existing town centre boundary includes substantial areas that are primarily residential in nature, located to the north of Lord Street and the north and south of North Albert Street. The town centre boundary has therefore been amended to remove such areas and contracted to focus the town centre on the retail core as recommended in the FCRS health check. The town centre boundary remains along North Albert Street to the junction with Pharos Street, this is considered to provide a gateway into the town centre when approached from Fleetwood promenade to the north.
- 4.12 The existing secondary shopping area extends along North Albert Street, Adelaide Street (south of Lord Street), Lord Street (eastern extent) and on Poulton Road (southern extent). To reflect the recommendations in the health check and analysis of shop survey records, the secondary frontage has been contracted along North Albert Street to the junction with Victoria Street.
- 4.13 The existing primary shopping area is focused on Lord Street from Kemp Street to Ash Street. To also reflect the contraction of the centre, the existing primary shopping area between Ash Street and Poulton Road junction (on south of Lord Street) and up to No. 150 on Lord Street (on north of Lord Street) is now identified as secondary frontage.
- 4.14 Other minor modifications and anomalies have also been made to the town centre, primary and secondary frontage. The primary shopping area reflects the curtilage of properties now identified with primary and secondary frontage.

Fleetwood Town Centre – retail composition, town centre boundary, retail frontage and primary shopping area

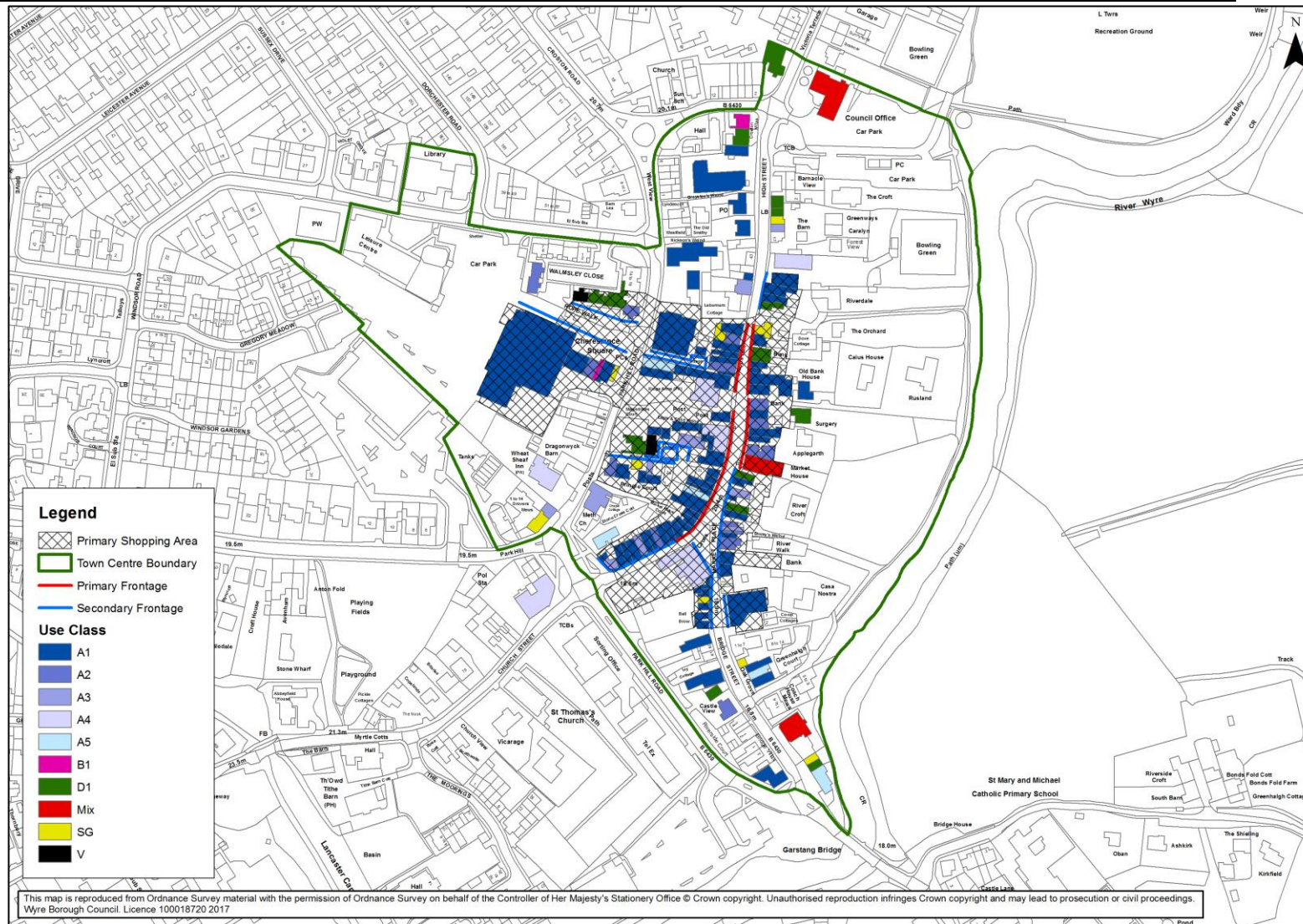


Garstang

- 4.15 The existing town centre boundary for Garstang is focused around the existing commercial development along the High Street, Market Place and Rope Walk. The town centre boundary also extends east and south to the River Wyre to include Sainsbury supermarket and mixed use development, west to Lancaster Canal, north to include the Library on Windsor Road and leisure centre and extends north to include High Street car park.
- 4.16 The Fylde Coast Retail Study (FCRS) identified that Garstang is a vital and viable centre with an attractive town centre environment. There are high levels of footfall and a strong convenience and service sector. In contrast, the comparison offer in terms of diversity and representation from national retailers is limited, but this is not of particular concern due to strength and quality of the independent sector. Vacancy rates were low in 2011.
- 4.17 The Springboard High Street Vacancy Rate Data for Garstang in January 2017 indicates vacancy rate of 3.9%, which is significantly below the North West (13.2%) and UK (9.4%) rate.
- 4.18 The existing town centre boundary has been contracted to the south west to remove an area of mixed use development which also includes residential development and Sainsbury supermarket. This area of land was predominately identified as an Area of Mixed Town Centre Uses (TC8)³ in the 1999 Wyre Borough Local Plan. It is considered that the supermarket is not connected to the main retail core along High Street and is associated with the mix use development area.
- 4.19 The existing secondary shopping area is focused around Rope Walk, Stoops Weind and Thomas's Weind Court with a further area on Market Place/Bridge Street and High Street (western extent). Following analysis of shop survey records, the secondary frontage is contracted on Market Place. Due to a great proportion of non-retail (A1) uses. The secondary frontage has been extended to include the Booths Store on Rope Walk.
- 4.20 The existing primary shopping area is focused on the High Street and stretches from the top of the High Street to the junction with Market place. Following analysis of the shop survey records, the primary frontage is contracted with the creation of a new area of secondary frontage at the northern extent on the High Street. The primary frontage is also contracted further, with an extension to the secondary frontage on Market Place onto the High Street (east side). The Primary frontage is extended on the High Street (south extent) to reflect retail (A1) uses.
- 4.21 Other minor modifications and anomalies have also been made to the town centre, primary and secondary frontage. The primary shopping area reflects the curtilage of properties now identified as primary and secondary frontage.

³ Please note Policy TC8 is not a saved 1999 Local Plan policy.

Garstang Town Centre – retail composition, town centre boundary, retail frontage and primary shopping area



Poulton-le-Fylde

- 4.22 The existing town centre boundary for Poulton-le-Fylde is focused around the existing commercial development that is enclosed by Queensway, Chapel Street and Queen's Square, including surrounding residential streets, the railway line to the north and Vicarage Park to the east.
- 4.23 The Fylde Coast Retail Study (FCRS) health check identified Poulton-le-Fylde as a vital and viable centre with high pedestrian footfall, an attractive environment and a strong service sector and good convenience sector. Concerns in the health check in 2011 regarding the Teanlowe centre have now been resolved following its redevelopment in 2015. The Springboard High Street Vacancy Rate Data for Poulton in January 2017 indicates vacancy rate of 4.2%, which is significantly below the North West (13.2%) and UK (9.4%) rate.
- 4.24 The existing town centre includes substantial areas that are primarily residential in nature to the south and east (with a small area to the northwest) and the town centre boundary is contracted to remove such areas. The railway line provides a natural town centre boundary to the north and Vicarage Park to the east is also excluded to concentrate the town centre on the retail core and key community facilities, such as the library.
- 4.25 The existing secondary shopping area is focused on Blackpool Old Road and Queens Square with a small area to the west on Ball Street. A new area of secondary frontage has been created on the Chapel Street (northern extent) and Vicarage Road (western extent) – these areas were previously within Area of Mixed Town Centre Use (TC8)⁴ in the 1999 Wyre Borough Local Plan and the area is considered to be primarily retail in nature.
- 4.26 The existing primary shopping area is focused on the Teanlowe Centre, Market Place and Church Street and stretches further north and eastwards onto Ball Street and Breck Road. Following analysis of shop survey records, the secondary frontage now includes Breck Road and east side of Market Place, with greater proportions of non-retail (A1) uses. The secondary frontage is also extended on Ball Street to include the Golden Ball Hotel Public House.
- 4.27 It is important to note that since the survey was undertaken, the former Booths store has been reconfigured, retaining the shop frontage on Ball Street and a new Aldi supermarket provided to the rear. The Aldi supermarket is located within the town centre boundary.
- 4.28 Other minor modifications and anomalies have also been made to the town centre, primary and secondary frontage. The primary shopping area reflects the curtilage of properties now identified as primary and secondary frontage.

⁴ Please note Policy TC8 is not a saved 1999 Local Plan policy.

Poulton-le-Fylde Town Centre – retail composition, town centre boundary, retail frontage and primary shopping area

