

## 15 RETAILING

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### Retailing Facts

- o Newport is the main shopping centre on the Island.
- o 60% of people shop by car.
- o 72% of people from the rest of the Island use Newport for non-food retailing.
- o Only 15% of shoppers use mainland stores regularly (monthly).
- o There is still growing demand for retail space in Newport.

### Introduction

15.1 Shopping is an important part of everyone's lives, being both a necessity and, increasingly, a leisure activity. The provision of adequate and accessible shops on the Island is essential if it is to be an attractive place both to live and work. Future growth of retailing, if properly planned, can produce more jobs, better prospects for businesses generally and better facilities for shoppers.

15.2 Until recently, a hierarchy of shopping served the Island, based on the two county towns of Ryde and Newport. These were the main centres of population, but district and neighbourhood centres in other towns served smaller communities. In common with the mainland, retailing on the Island has undergone a dramatic change as small independent shops have come under pressure from the large multi-nationals. The consumer led boom of the 1980s has turned

into recession in the early 90s, however the pressure for retail growth has continued and PPG6 makes it clear that the Council should identify sufficient land within the UDP to meet the demand for growth in the retail sector.

15.3 Although recent reports have suggested that the development of out-of-town superstores at a national level has reached saturation point, partly due to the development of larger regional shopping parks, on the Island there still appears to be pressure for development, particularly around Newport, which has benefitted from recent investment in the shape of Marks and Spencer, BHS and Currys. The Island, however, is a captive market and the potential for further growth is limited. Investment therefore needs to be channelled where it can provide the best overall result for both the consumer and the retail trade as a whole.

15.4 In view of the amount of vacant floor space, potential redevelopment sites, and the dispersed pattern of Island shopping centres, there appears to be little need to allocate land for retail growth outside the existing town centres. Government advice has now firmly placed the emphasis on the need to promote town centre development and this, coupled with the existing provision and retail opportunity, would support restricting further out-of-town development. In summary, the prime consideration is a need to promote town and local centres and ensure new development supports their vitality and viability as defined in government guidance, together with producing integrated transport and land use policies to achieve sustainable retail development.

#### Islandwide Retail Study

15.5 The Isle of Wight Council, together with consultants, has carried out a comprehensive retail study of the Island. The terms of reference include an assessment of the broad levels and type of development which could be supported in the Plan period on the basis of estimated expenditure growth, together with an examination of the role, capacity and vulnerability of the main centres.

15.6 Newport operates as the principal retailing centre on the Island and boasts an impressive retail offer. Its retail mix is well balanced and has been complemented by the recent opening of a BHS store. Newport's emergence as the dominant centre has largely been at the expense of Ryde which is experiencing trading difficulties. A number of the other centres appear also to be experiencing problems, but these problems are less acute than those affecting Ryde. For example, there is presently some 2,863 sq m of vacant floorspace in Ryde which is equivalent to approximately 14% of the total floorspace in the centre. The comparable figures for Newport are 2,197 sq m and 6%, respectively.

15.7 The Island's other centres generally suffer from the heavy volume of through traffic on their main shopping streets, an increase in dependence on tourism and related uses, and consequently, strong seasonality with some shops in prime frontages closing out of season. These problems are clearly evident in Shanklin and Ventnor.

#### Survey

15.8 A household survey was carried out across the Island as a whole. In brief, it highlights the importance of the main centres for food and most forms of non-food shopping, as well as the leakage of expenditure to the mainland. Some 55% of residents visit the mainland for shopping and 15% of them travel across on a monthly basis. The survey also illustrates the importance of mail-order shopping.

15.9 The survey reveals the attitudes and preferences of the Island's residents towards their local shopping centres. The survey identified issues such as the poor range of shops in most centres (excluding Newport); absence of particular shops/services (most centres); the topography of a centre (Ryde); and parking difficulties (Sandown).

#### Retail Capacity

15.10 The survey provided the basis for a retail capacity study which seeks to determine how much additional food and non-food floorspace the Island could absorb over the Plan period. In summary, there is scope for both forms of development. In the food sector, it is estimated that there is capacity for one additional foodstore with a net sales area of around 3,187.5 sq.m (34,310 sq ft). In the non-food sector, there is likely to be greater pressure for development - around 6,317.4 sq.m (68,000 sq ft) of town centre type retailing or 9,011.6 sq.m (97,000 sq ft) of retail warehousing. It is suggested that this non-food capacity should be absorbed within existing centres and with limited retail warehouse development.

15.11 Demand from national retail multiples is primarily concentrated on Newport and reflected by the current foodstore proposals from both Tesco and Sainsbury and the recent arrival of BHS, HMV and Intersport.

#### Retail Strategy

15.12 The Plan should seek to direct new development to town centre sites. This should be complemented by environmental and management initiatives to enable the centres to enhance and maintain their vitality and viability.

#### Summary And Conclusions

15.13 Retailing on the Island has experienced significant qualitative improvements in recent years, but it is clear that shoppers still look to the mainland for a proportion of their non-food spending. Newport has experienced the greatest improvements and this has highlighted the relative decline in Ryde.

15.14 The dependence of certain towns on expenditure by tourists is clear and this has resulted in the emergence of a number of tourist-related shops, such as gift shops. These shops close out of season and this can undermine the vitality of these centres. Many of the centres suffer also from the volume of through traffic passing through the centre. This creates noise and congestion which undermine the quality of the shopping centre.

15.15 The capacity analysis has identified scope for additional retail development and a number of retailers are interested in establishing representation on the Island. There is scope for one additional foodstore of some 3,158.7 sq.m (34,000 sq ft), and 6,317.4 sq.m (68,000 sq ft) of town centre type retailing or 9,011.6 sq.m (97,000 sq ft) of retail warehousing.

15.16 This floorspace should be allocated where there is the greatest demand, ie.

Newport. Bucking the market by trying to deflect this demand to smaller centres is unwise and would result in unplanned growth around Newport, which would deflect from the centre vitality and viability.

15.17 PPG6 suggests that a sequential test be applied in assessing sites to meet retail needs. Land should first be considered in existing town centres and if no suitable sites are available then edge-of-centre sites should be considered. Only after this stage should out-of-centre sites be considered. Development of out-of-centre sites should be a last resort.

15.18 The UDP seeks to accommodate retail growth in a balanced strategy which allows for new development, but at the same time enhances and maintains the vitality and viability of the existing centres using environmental and management initiatives. The plan recognises the long-term proposal for retail development at George Street, Ryde and also puts forward a number of sites in Newport which could meet demand over the plan period (Policy R3), for both food and non-food shopping.

### **Objectives:**

In pursuing the objectives below, the plan:

- recognises Newport as the main retailing centre on the Island and allocates sites for retail growth accordingly;
- seeks to promote other Island towns and their retail function through environmental improvements and other means.

The objectives of this section are:

- to promote the viability and vitality of the Island's other town centres for the benefit of both local people and tourists;
- to ensure the adequate provision of sites for retail growth;
- to provide for local shopping needs;
- to promote the town centre as focal point for the community;
- to ensure new retail growth promotes access by modes of transport other than the car.

## Existing Town Centres

**R1 Planning proposals that protect and maintain and/or enhance the retail function of defined town centres as a whole will be acceptable in principle.**

15.19 The traditional High Street still exists in many towns on the Island although, in certain locations, the viability of these centres has increasingly come under threat from competition from more viable centres, in particular Newport, and from out-of-town stores. The ample car parking and good shopping environment that these stores provide, together with a growing reliance on the motor car, have led the move away from the High Street, resulting in vacant shops and undermining the competitiveness of remaining businesses. Recent government advice seeks to promote the viability and vitality of town centres and whilst opportunities for retail investment exist, the Council will continue to promote this theme.

15.20 In August 1995, out of a total 105,549 sq.m of shops in town centres, 8,241 sq.m were empty, representing a vacancy level of around 8%. The general economic downturn has led to a lack of investment and, in turn, deterioration in the appearance of many Island towns. This is of concern, as town centres are not only a focus of economic activity but also play an important role in the community.

15.21 It is considered that the need to revitalise High Street shopping should be given priority over the development of additional out-of-town stores.

## New Retail Development

**R2 Planning proposals for new retail developments will be acceptable in principle provided they take place within defined town centre shopping areas. Outside of the defined shopping areas, planning applications for small shops will be approved provided they:**

- a serve a local need only;**
- b are located within existing village settlements, or are ancillary to a tourism or farming operation, or are associated with an existing service station.**

**Applications involving the loss of local shops and pubs will not be approved where it is shown that this will have a damaging impact on the local community.**

15.22 The Council considers a prime objective of its strategy for shopping to be the continued promotion and enhancement of the Island's existing town centres in order to ensure their viability and vitality. In the 1980s, when there was a great deal of out-of-town development on the mainland, local planning authorities on the Island continued to fight against out-of-town stores, recognising the threat to existing centres. However, a number of out-of-town stores were approved and built.

15.23 Central Government advice (through PPG6 and PPG13), is now to ensure that new retail development promotes existing town centres and that development plans should provide for required shopping growth over the plan period.

15.24 The basis for the location of new shops for both food and non-food retailing, will be the defined town centre shopping

boundaries shown on the Proposals Map. This definition is based broadly on the existing town centre shopping areas shown on existing local plans extended to take account of recent development adjoining the historic cores. It is the Council's intention to draw the boundaries and provide planning briefs so that sufficient provision for new shopping can be identified within town centres.

15.25 Village and local shops play a vital role in rural areas as they provide an alternative to shopping in the main towns as well as a much needed service for the less mobile. This includes the elderly, people with disabilities and those who do not have access to a car or convenient public transport. The village shop also plays an important part in the social network of the settlement as a meeting place, notice board, post office and general hub of village life.

15.26 Although there is continued competition from large stores who can offer a wide variety of choice as well as cheaper prices, village stores still cater as a convenience market often operating long opening hours for those last minute or forgotten items. On the Island, where some settlements are not well connected by public transport, the loss of the village shop could have disastrous consequences for the community as a whole and certain disadvantaged groups in particular. The Council therefore considers it important to resist the loss of local shops particularly to residential uses, where there are no suitable

alternatives close by. In dealing with applications involving the loss of local community facilities including shops and pubs the Council will expect evidence to be submitted to show that the business is not able to be commercially viable and that all alternative means for its retention have been explored. This will require an assessment of the viability of alternative uses, the continued local support for such a community need, the presence of similar facilities in the locality and their accessibility to local people and the impact on other elements of the local economy, ie tourism.

#### Sites for Retail Development

*R3 Planning proposals for major shopping developments will be acceptable in principle on the following sites identified on the proposals map:*

- a George Street Car Park site, Ryde;*
- b Coppins Bridge Lower Car Park site, Newport;*
- c Fire Station site, Newport;*
- e Bookers site, Petticoat Lane, Newport;*
- f Corralls Yard site, Riverway, Newport.*

15.27 To meet the expected demand for retail growth over the plan period the Council has allocated a number of sites in the Newport and Ryde areas for possible retail development. These have been identified within defined town centre shopping areas, on the basis of the sequential test, so that schemes can contribute to the vitality and viability of the centre. The sites are also considered to be within easy walking distance of the retail core, so that they promote access by foot from the centre and can be easily served by a variety of means of transport. Due to the availability of retail units in Ventnor, Cowes, East Cowes, Shanklin, Sandown and Freshwater and the limited likely demand for major development, specific sites have not been identified in these centres. However, the retail boundaries have been drawn to enable sites to be developed as and when necessary.

George Street, Ryde

15.28 Previously considered for a mixed food and non-food retail development, a planning application has recently been approved for a single food store with car parking of approximately 2,000m<sup>2</sup> by Somerfield.

Coppins Bridge Lower Car Park Site,

Newport

15.29 The site, which is bounded by St Georges Way, Furrongs and South Street, is considered suitable for non-food retail development or an alternative town centre use which would be beneficial in promoting the vitality and viability of Newport town centre as a whole. Given the site's location on the main road network, any development should continue to provide an appropriate level of public parking to encourage linked trips and reduce traffic movements through the historic core of the town. This site has now been developed.

Fire Station Site

15.30 Adjacent to Coppins Bridge, this includes a number of properties and land uses, including ATS Tyres, the Publican public house and residential and commercial land. With site amalgamation this could prove to be suitable for retail development, either independently or linked to proposals for Coppins Bridge car parks. The site measures approximately 1.16 ha. Any redevelopment proposal involving the Fire Station will only be able to proceed following the relocation of the facility to a new site to the satisfaction of the Council.

Bookers site, Petticoat Lane, Newport

15.31 This site, which currently operates as a cash and carry facility has recently received planning approval for approximately 3,900m<sup>2</sup> of non-food retailing floorspace and a subsequent planning application has now been received for a Sainsbury's foodstore of approximately 4,500m<sup>2</sup>.

Corralls Yard, Riverway, Newport

15.32 This site adjoins the recent Currys superstore development and has an outstanding consent for approximately 2,000 sq.m of retail warehousing floorspace. The land is now being proposed for a road link and petrol filling station in association with the Sainsbury's proposal at Petticoat Lane.

#### Development on Unidentified Sites

*R4 Planning proposals for retail development will be acceptable in principle when they are located within defined town centre shopping areas. Where no suitable town centre sites are available to meet an identified need, sites on the edge of town centres may be considered where it can be clearly demonstrated that no other sites with better access to a town centre are available or likely to become available., there is an overriding need for the scheme, the scheme does not have an unacceptable impact on the vitality and viability of existing centres and the overall proposal accords with the Council's overall strategy for sustainable development, in particular in respect of the use of means of transport other than the car. In addition proposals will only be permitted when they:*

- a will not result in the loss of identified employment land;*
- b do not have an unacceptable detrimental impact on the historic character of the town;*
- c provide appropriate parking and highway elements which contribute to the effective management of the town in accordance with the Council's overall strategy for sustainable development.*

15.33 As well as those sites identified under R3 there is also a need for the plan to make provision for retail proposals that may come forward on unidentified sites within the town centres. This will enable settlements that do not have current pressure for development to respond to future changes in the market without sterilising land within town centres which could provide for a range of uses which would promote the area. Equally, where current pressure exists for shopping, the Council would wish to provide a degree of flexibility in terms of site selection and development, enabling the market to identify needs within the principles laid down by this plan. There is a presumption against the loss of allocated employment land which should be retained for job creation and business uses.

15.34 Consideration will also need to be given to the likely impact on the historic core of the town centre, particularly in terms of traffic generation, potential loss of existing buildings and loss of amenity to adjoining occupiers and businesses.

15.35 Many vacant sites in the towns are currently used for car parking purposes by both shoppers and workers. The loss of any parking spaces needs to be considered along

with other transport measures, which may be associated with the proposed development, eg. cycle routes, bus facilities, links to the pedestrian and road network etc, before approval can be given. PPG13 suggests that development proposals should consider alternative transport methods to the car. However, this needs to be weighed against the loss of parking facilities in town which may create on-street problems elsewhere. In such cases the Council would only approve development that can take place without additional detrimental impact on the town centre's environment. In line with the need to promote town centres as the focus for retail development and bring brownfield sites back into economic use it is important to ensure that all available site options in town centres are explored when seeking to accommodate new shopping floorspace. In circumstances where sites cannot be identified or due to location, access and impact on the historic core are considered unsuitable for the type of retail development required, edge of centre sites will be the preferred option in line with the sequential approach as set out in PPG6. This will be particularly important in the smaller Island towns where development opportunities are limited.

15.36 Given the contained market and

therefore limited capacity for retail growth on the Island it is considered unlikely that an out of centre proposal could be justifiable through the sequential approach during the plan period and out of centre proposals, by their nature, are likely to conflict with the plans sustainable development strategy. The Council will need to be convinced that all

other options have been explored including the consideration of all existing Island town centres. In such cases, development will only be appropriate in exceptional circumstances where the proposal can be shown to be of overall benefit to the Island given its location.

15.38 The Use Classes Order 1987 sets out

15.37 For the purposes of this plan the following definitions will apply:

- |                |   |  |
|----------------|---|--|
| Town Centre    | - | That area of the town within the defined town centre boundary;   |
| Edge of Centre | - | That area of the town outside but adjoining the defined town centre boundary;                            |
| Out of Centre  | - | That area of the town within the development envelope but removed from the defined town centre boundary. |

### Retail-Only Frontages

**R5** Planning applications within the area of the retail only frontages, will be approved if the development proposed is a retail A1 use on the ground floor. Applications for A2 and A3 will only be approved where:

- a the proposal would benefit the town centre overall and not result in a concentration of non A1 uses to the detriment of the vitality of the area which would remain predominantly A1 in character or there is a level of vacancy which threatens the vitality and viability of the town and/or the unit has been and is likely to remain vacant for some time and;
- b provision is made for an appropriate window display and shop frontage in keeping with the character of an area, and
- c there will be no detrimental effect on the environment, character and amenities of the area through smell, litter or noise.

Applications which would create a dead frontage or otherwise no contribute to the character and vitality of the shopping area will be refused.

those uses associated with shopping areas into three categories:

15.39 Currently, through the GPDO, permission is required to change from A1 to

- |         |   |   |
|---------|---|---|
| A1 uses | - | including shops, hairdressers, undertakers, travel agencies, pet shops, sandwich bars and post offices. |
| A2 uses | - | banks, building societies, estate agencies, etc.  |
| A3 uses | - | restaurants, pubs, bars, cafes and shops for the sale of hot food.                                      |

A2 or A3 use. However, A3 can change to A1 or A2 and A2 can change to A1 without consent. Shops selling motor vehicles, laundrettes, and taxi hire premises do not fall within any of the above categories and are known as sui generis uses requiring planning permission in every case.

15.40 The high streets of Island towns remain a vitally important element of the retail function of the town centre, despite the arrival of larger stores on the edge of the historic core. Although the Council cannot control the change of use from one type of retailing to another, (eg. grocers to clothes shop) it can

protect A1 retailing in the core areas from being dominated by from associated A2 and A3 uses in town centres, such as banks, building societies, cafes, restaurants and estate agents. These uses can often afford higher rentals than traditional shops, which if allowed to flourish in the core retail area, could lead to a diminished A1 retail function to the detriment of shoppers and the variety of the town centre itself. The location and size of the defined retail-only frontages have been determined according to the particular characteristics of each town centre. There may still be opportunities to provide for A2 and A3 uses, in Retail Only Frontages, but these need to support retailing rather than compete against it. In some cases, an

appropriate representation of A2 and A3 uses in the core areas could assist in supporting a vulnerable centre which would benefit the wider town centre businesses and the local community as a whole.

15.41 As a guideline, the Council would not expect to see more than 30% of units within any retail only frontage in non A1 use as well as seeking to ensure agglomerations of these uses to not occur to the detriment of the shopping character of the area.

15.42 Most of the existing town centres are characterised by small shop units in older properties and these form the mainstay of the retail trade. The Council recognises the need

#### Areas Outside Retail-Only Frontages

**R6 Planning proposals for retail A1, A2 and A3 uses within the defined town centre shopping areas but outside the retail-only frontages will be acceptable in principle.**

for a mix of retail and associated use appropriate to the functions of a town centre in order to promote and sustain its vitality and viability. Changes between different uses are essential to avoid long-term vacancies occurring and to encourage buoyancy and confidence in the town centre. Large areas of the defined town centre will remain outside

the retail-only frontage area and, in these areas, a mix of uses will be encouraged.

15.43 B1 business use class includes offices, research and development, studios, laboratories, high tech and light industry. They are best described as processes which could exist within a residential area, without

#### B1 Business Use in Town Centres

**R7 Planning applications for B1 business class uses within defined town centre shopping boundaries will be approved providing:**

- a the proposal occupies an upper floor; or**
- b it occupies the ground floor and:**
  - 1 involves the upgrading or refurbishment of a Listed Building;**
  - 2 is outside the retail-only frontage areas, unless it does not involve the loss of an existing A1, A2 or A3 use;**
  - 3 a level of vacancy exists which threatens the towns vitality and viability.**

detriment to its amenity by way of noise, vibration, fumes etc. Many of the properties outside the core retailing areas of the town are in office use. This is particularly true in Newport where Quay Street, Pyle Street, Lugley Street and Crocker Street provide accommodation for a wide range of business uses and as such, have given these areas a particular appearance and character. In the smaller towns, such as Shanklin, Sandown and Ventnor, office uses often occupy the upper floors of shops along with a mixture of retail and storage space. The Council wishes to see this mix of uses retained, but it is

considered that B1 uses in the ground floor of properties within the core retail area may seriously affect the streetscape and retail function of the town centre.

15.44 Only in exceptional circumstances, therefore, will B1 uses be considered in retail areas, and then only if the street-scape is not harmed and the Council's shop front policy is adhered to. B1 use may be acceptable if it would guarantee the protection or restoration of a Listed Building.

15.45 The Council is keen to encourage

vitality back to town centres and to promote a mix of uses which will assist the general function of these areas as places to live, work, shop and play. The Government has

#### Residential Use of Upper Floors in Town Centres

*R8 Planning applications for the residential use of upper floors of buildings within town centre locations will be approved provided:*

- a the change of use does not prejudice the operation of the ground floor unit*
- b works of conversion, including access, are acceptable;*
- c they do not create conflict with other town centre uses which may operate outside normal shopping hours.*

recently given permitted development rights for a single residential use above shops. However, the conversion into more than one unit needs to be considered in terms of circulation and access, particularly where rear access is difficult and a new entrance has to be created in the shop front.

at unsocial hours, and the effect on the security of ground floor shops. However, reuse of vacant buildings is a desirable aim and residential development will be encouraged provided parking guidelines can be complied with.

15.46 Residential uses can also cause problems because of potential conflict between existing town centre operations, such as pubs and clubs, which may operate

15.47 The essence of any town centre is the mix of functions that occur within it and the mutual support they give to each other in

#### Recreation and Leisure Uses in Town Centres

*R11 Planning applications which involve the loss of key recreation and leisure uses in town centres which are benefiting their vitality and viability, will only be approved where:*

- a the proposal is considered to provide for a need not currently met within the centre and is necessary to promote its vitality and viability;*
- b no alternative sites are available or viable within the town centre.*

providing for a range of community needs. In accordance with government guidance the Council is keen to pursue the development of mixed uses in town centres, and is acutely aware of the role played by the other key uses such as public houses, cinemas, museums, art galleries, leisure use, open space, etc. These not only play an important role during normal shopping hours, but can also provide vitality in the town during the evening for entertainment and leisure pursuits

to promote the town centre. However, if the proposed use or development is considered equally important and not currently provided for, the Council may determine that it is appropriate, particularly if possible alternative sites are unavailable or unsuitable. In all cases the Council will need to balance the promotion of town centres with the need to maintain facilities which have a community benefit or provide alternative, equally accessible facilities.

15.48 The loss of one or a number of these key uses could compromise the Council's aim

#### Markets and Car Boot Sales

*R12 Planning applications for markets, car boot sales and other temporary retail uses will be approved provided they:*

- a do not prejudice permanent development proposals;*
- b have restrictions imposed on them to ensure that the proposal remains temporary and does not set a precedent for permanent retail use;*

- c *in respect of markets, are within or adjoining the town centre;*
- d *are located near main traffic and public transport routes;*
- e *provide satisfactory vehicular and pedestrian access, highway safety and parking.*

15.49 Recent years have seen a dramatic growth of car boot sales and specialist markets dealing with a huge variety of goods. These have proved immensely popular with the public, but often take place on different sites in ad hoc locations under the 14 day rule. This allows for the use to occur up to 14 times a year without the need for planning permission. While they often cause few problems, in some cases problems do occur as a result of illegal parking, traffic congestion

and nuisance to nearby residences.

15.50 Identified sites with planning approval could avoid some of these problems. Any approvals should not suggest the possibility of future development, particularly on sites in or adjoining town centres, and only temporary approvals will be given.

15.51 Amusement centres are those which provide facilities such as fruit machines, pin

#### Amusement Centres

*R13 Planning applications for amusement centres will only be approved where:*

- a *they are located in a defined town centre outside the retail-only frontage and any Conservation Area; or*
- b *they are within a built-up, tourist, sea front location, where complementary entertainment and tourist uses exist, and where the proposal would not result in an over proliferation of the use; or*
- c *they are part of a tourism or leisure development; and*
- d *there is no loss of amenity to adjoining areas and properties.*

ball machines, video games, and games of a sessional nature etc. The considerations for determining a planning application are the type of centre proposed, and the impact on the surrounding area in respect of noise, disturbance, vehicular and pedestrian movement and the location and visual appearance. In addition to planning powers, the Council is also the licencing authority. Any moral issues concerning such uses will be considered by the licencing authority independently from the planning considerations, although it is hoped that they will be made aware of any likely planning problems.

been developed in a garish or commercial way. However, there is always a need to provide facilities for visitors normally associated with seaside holidays. Consideration will therefore need to be given to the level of existing amusement and tourist facilities already provided and the additional impact created by any proposed new development.

15.52 Amusement arcades on the Island are normally associated with beach front locations and are also found in town centres. Many of the Island's esplanades have not

15.53 In towns, it will be necessary to avoid particularly sensitive areas, such as Conservation Areas, to consider up to date shop front guidance and to have regard to the amenity of adjoining areas.

15.54 The Council will encourage the

#### Cultural or Leisure Developments Within Towns

*R14 Planning applications for new cultural or leisure developments such as theatres, cinemas and museums, will be approved in town centre locations outside the retail-only frontages. Where no suitable town centre sites are available, sites on the edge of centre will be considered as a first preference. Where no centre or edge of centre sites are available the Council may exceptionally approve out of centre proposals where it can be clearly demonstrated that all other options have been considered and the proposal will not harm the vitality and viability of the town and it accords with the Council's overall strategy for sustainable development.*

development of arts and other entertainments facilities which are used by both local people and tourists. The best location for these are the town centres, enabling a mix of shops, entertainment and associated parking to promote the vitality and viability of town centre areas in line with current government

guidance. It is considered that investment in these facilities outside the town centres should be resisted unless no suitable alternative site can be found.

15.55 Garden centres are defined as retail outlets selling plants, some of which will not

#### Garden Centres

*R15 Proposals for extensions to existing garden centres outside existing retail areas will be acceptable in principle provided that they have no significantly harmful effects on the landscape, traffic generation, or the amenities of those living nearby.*

be grown on the premises, and a range of other garden products such as greenhouses, garden furniture, tools and paving. There are already a significant number of garden centres, many of which have evolved from commercial greenhouses and some have diversified even further into tourist attractions.

would not be consistent with the need to protect the rural environment and promote major retailing needs within town centres. Applications seeking to extend an existing garden centre may be considered provided appropriate landscaping can be agreed to reduce any impact on the landscape.

15.55 There are considered to be a sufficient number of garden centres in countryside locations and further proposals

