

SR6 Local centres

With the aim of maintaining and enhancing the following local centres:

Mill Lane, Portslade; Portland Road, Hove; 'The Grenadier', Hangleton Road; Richardson Road, Hove; Eldred Avenue, Withdean; Old London Road, Patcham; Ladies Mile Road, Patcham; Seven Dials; Fiveways; Hollingbury Place, Hollingdean; Beaconsfield Road, Preston Park; St George's Road, Kemp Town; Warren Way, Woodingdean; Whitehawk Road, Whitehawk; High Street, Rottingdean; Lustrells Vale, Saltdean; and Longridge Avenue, Saltdean;

the change of use of existing Class A1 use shops to Class A2, A3, A4 or A5 uses will be permitted, provided that all of the criteria, a) to e), are met:

- a. it would not result in either the number of non-retail units or the proportion of frontages exceeding 35% of the centre;
- b. it has been adequately demonstrated that a Class A1 retail use is no longer economically viable in that particular unit or the centre as a whole;
- c. the proposed use would attract pedestrian activity (particularly in the daytime) which would make a positive contribution to the vitality and viability of the centre;
- d. the development would not be significantly detrimental to the amenities of occupiers of nearby residential properties or the general character of the area; and
- e. the location and prominence of the proposed use would not lead to a significant break of more than 10 metres in the frontage.

In addition to Class A2, A3, A4 or A5 uses, some Class D1 community uses (e.g. doctors, dentists) may be permitted provided that a window display is maintained and it can be demonstrated that the proposed use would draw pedestrian activity into the centre.

Changes of use at ground floor to residential will not be permitted in Local Centres.

- 6.27 Local centres are small groupings, usually comprising a newsagent, a general grocery store, a sub-post office and occasionally a pharmacy, a hairdresser and other small shops of a local nature. It is important particularly for the elderly, people with disabilities and the very young who cannot easily travel far, that their convenience retail needs can be met within easy walking distance within their neighbourhood. It is also desirable from a sustainable point of view that people are not dependent on use of the car for their day to day retail needs. Great concern about the decline of local centres and parades was expressed by participants in a focus group on 'Retail and Town Centres' and people who responded to the Local Plan consultation leaflet.

- 6.28 Local centres that retain a good predominance of Class A1 retail uses with low vacancy rates still retain their vitality with a healthy level of pedestrian activity. 65% is considered to represent a good predominance of units and is more realistic in local centres than the higher ratios required by Policy SR5 (Regional Shopping Centre). Most of the local centres do not exceed this ratio (in terms of the proportion of non-A1 uses) and so there is some flexibility within the policy. Policy SR6 will be strictly applied and where the proportion of non-retail units has risen above the threshold already, then the further loss of retail units will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances.
- 6.29 Indicators to be taken account of affecting the economic viability of a unit are:
- the characteristics of the unit;
 - its position in the centre;
 - the pedestrian flow associated with the unit and the centre as a whole;
 - the number of other vacancies in the centre; and
 - the length of time that the unit has been actively marketed on competitive terms.
- 6.30 It is important that the proposed use will still contribute to the activity in the centre particularly in the daytime. For example, a Class A5 use (e.g. selling hot food) with little or no seating which operates mainly as a take-away opening only later in the day, would not, it is considered, fulfil this role. As with the other centres a community use such as that falling within Class D1 (e.g. doctors, dentists), which attracted pedestrian activity and encouraged a combined shopping visit to the centre will be considered provided that a window display is maintained. Residential uses are not considered appropriate for this reason and a residential use would not fulfil criteria (c) of Policy SR6.