



## Calderdale LDF Evidence Base Summary



**Evidence: Retail Needs Assessment (RNA)**

**Date of publication: September 2009**

### **Purpose of the Evidence:**

The RNA helps to inform the District's current and future needs for retail development. It does not set council policy for retailing, this is the role of the LDF itself, however it does report on 3 key outputs:

- Projected retail needs for the district over the short-term (to 2014), medium-term (to 2019) and long-term (to 2026) periods;
- The general health of the district's six main town centres (Halifax, Brighouse, Elland, Sowerby Bridge, Hebden Bridge and Todmorden) through detailed health check assessments; and
- Areas of retail frontages that will require review of their designations in any future development plan.

### **Main Issues Raised:**

#### Retail Requirements / Needs

In terms of retail need, key findings for the town centres over the long term period to 2026 include:

- **Halifax** – significant need for both convenience and comparison goods floorspace. Specifically a site is required for a new food superstore and significant comparison goods floorspace (44,455sqm) – this equates to a doubling of the size of the current retail provision in Halifax;
- **Brighouse** – need for both convenience (a small to medium sized foodstore) and comparison goods floorspace (4,505sqm);
- **Todmorden** – need for a second foodstore that would enhance competition and choice as well as further comparison goods floorspace (2,610sqm);
- **Hebden Bridge, Elland and Sowerby Bridge** – limited need and scope for either new convenience or comparison goods floorspace. Particularly important in these towns is the need for development or re-development at an appropriate scale so as not to undermine the current role and function of the centres – unless that is proposed to be changed within the LDF.

The above requirements are all based upon the six town centre's retaining their current market share of retail expenditure, and retention of the existing retail hierarchy within the borough. If there is to be a significant shift planned in the role of centres as part of the LDF then the retail needs identified within the study would change. The RNA also identifies a need to improve the qualitative provision of existing retail in parts of the borough.

### Town Centre Health Checks

Updated (August 2009) health check assessments are provided for the six town centres which demonstrate their current vitality and viability. The health check assessments demonstrate the total retail provision of each centre, together with the range of uses including vacancy rates. Detailed results from the original market research surveys (business surveys) are also provided by centre.

Within the UK retail hierarchy, Calderdale town centres are demonstrated to have fallen significantly in ranking between 2004 and 2009; Halifax from 174th to 204th; Brighouse from 575th to 754th; and Todmorden from 1,348th to 1,950th; falls of 17%, 31% and 45% respectively. Sowerby Bridge, Elland and Hebden Bridge were not surveyed in 2004, therefore comparison is not possible.

### Retail Frontages

A review of the existing retail frontages in town centres recommends minor alterations to the primary and secondary frontages in Halifax, Brighouse, Hebden Bridge and Todmorden. The existing tertiary frontages identified in the UDP are recommended to be carried forward as secondary frontages in the LDF due to national policy (former PPS6) not making provision for tertiary frontages.

### Local shopping centres and other retail areas

In addition to the six main town centres, there are a number of local shopping centres around the borough<sup>1</sup>, together with numerous smaller parades of shops, which provide essential local services and facilities closer to people's homes. These retail locations, together with the out of town retail parks, such as Pellon Lane in Halifax, form an integral part of the local retailing economy.

### **Recommendations/ Conclusions:**

The RNA sets out the identified needs for new retail provision in the borough. Future need is identified within the context of the health check assessments that demonstrate some declining centres in Calderdale, in terms of the national retail rankings.

The overall strategy of the LDF will therefore have to clearly set out the desired future retail hierarchy of the district, together with aspirations for the future of each of Calderdale's town centres. The LDF should help to prevent the further decline and leakage of expenditure to other centres outside of Calderdale.

Although there is brief discussion in parts of the study about specific sites that could help to meet the identified needs, determining which sites could actually be included in LDF documents can only take place at the formal plan making stages, which will be subject to statutory consultation. Only strategic sites will be considered in the Core Strategy, with smaller sites considered through the Land Allocations DPD.

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<sup>1</sup> Hipperholme; King Cross; Mytholmroyd; Queens Road; Ripponden; West Vale

## **Further Work Required:**

### Update of retail need / scenario

As stated, the RNA is based on the retention of the existing market share of expenditure in each of the town centres. Therefore if the Council would wish to change the role of any centres within the existing retail hierarchy through the developing LDF, this will impact upon the local need identified in the report. However, regardless of any potential strategic changes such as this, an update of the needs assessment will be required in light of new population projections, and any updated expenditure forecasts that are published as the LDF progresses.

### Qualitative assessments

The health check assessments demonstrate the total retail provision of each centre, together with the range of uses, including vacancy rates. Detailed results from the original market research surveys undertaken for the RNA (shopper survey, on-street survey and business survey) are also provided by centre. Qualitative assessments will analyse and present this data to provide a summary report to meet the requirements of PPS4 (Planning for Economic Growth) around qualitative issues and form further evidence base documents to inform the LDF.