# DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY RETAIL STUDY – IMPLICATIONS FOR DUMFRIES

## 1. Reason for Report

To bring to this Committee for its information, the key conclusions from the Halcrow Retail Study Report to Planning and Environment Services Committee on 14 February 2007, as they relate to Dumfries and its catchment.

## 2. Report Summary

2.1 The key findings from the Retail Study including the opportunities identified by the Retail Capacity Model for 2007-2011, 2012-2016 are summarised (see **Appendices 1, 2** and Table 3 of this Report), as they relate to retailing in Dumfries and the Dumfries catchment area.

2.2 The findings of the retail study are the starting point for the production of Supplementary Planning Guidance on this topic, with the aim of providing direction for future retail development and the development industry. The supplementary guidance note is attached at **Appendix 4**. This has been the subject of a separate report to the Planning and Environment Services Committee on 13 February 2007.

## 3. Glossary of Terms

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|---|---|
| Brown Goods: | hard furniture and floor covering, household DIY and other bulky goods. |
| Bulky Goods: | household, DIY and other bulky goods to include White goods, ie household appliances and Brown goods ie hard furniture and floor coverings, which require large showrooms to display and/or customer car-parking on site, for immediate transporting of bulky purchases. |
| Comparison: | to include clothing and footwear, leisure goods, gifts personal and some smaller household and electronic items and so best located primarily in town centre locations where shoppers can benefit from being able to compare style, price and quality. |
| Convenience: | food and drinks, newsagents and confectioners and all items for which convenience to home or work place is more important than comparison of style, price or quality. |
| GLA: | Gretna-Lockerbie-Annan |
| RCM : | Retail Capacity Model |
| RIA: | Retail Impact Assessment |
| SEDG: | Scottish Enterprise Dumfries and Galloway |
| SPP: | Scottish Planning Policy |
| TAE: | Total Available Expenditure |

## 4. Recommendation

Members are asked to note the findings of this study and the associated supplementary retail guidance that will be used to further inform and develop the Town Centre Strategy and associated Urban Design Strategy in support of Dumfries Town Centre Regeneration.

Dumfries & Galloway COUNCIL

**5. Corporate Plan Links and Contribution**
Dumfries Town Centre Regeneration is a high priority project in the Council's Corporate Policy on regeneration. The retail findings provide a contemporary analysis of Retailing in Dumfries and Galloway at both a strategic level and more specifically for Dumfries and its catchment area. By so doing the study provides support for and offers direction on town centre regeneration.

**6. Resources/Value for Money Assessment**
The study cost £50,440. It was jointly funded by SEDG and the Council in their partnership role on regeneration projects.

**7. Risk Assessment**
7.1 It is 10 years since the last Dumfries and Galloway Retail Study was undertaken. This is an area of expertise where most Councils employ consultants due to the technical requirements of building the Retail Capacity Model for the area.

7.2 In the period since the last study was completed, considerable changes in the location and form of the retail offer in Dumfries have occurred. In addition new forms of retailing such as the internet have emerged.

7.3 A study was required to enable the Council to direct the market to fulfil its key strategic aims, without it there is a risk that the siting of retail development could undermine key regeneration projects.

7.4 It is also important that the Council has this study in place should unsuitable retail schemes be refused and go to appeal.

**8. Authorities and Legal Implications**
The study provides supplementary information on retailing to the Council as Planning Authority to undertake its functions under the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997.

**9. Consultations**
The Corporate Director of Planning and Environment Services, Corporate Director of Finance and the Town Centre Regeneration Officer have been consulted and are in agreement with the terms of this report.

**10. Background**
10.1 Since the last retail study was commissioned, significant changes in retail patterns and representation have occurred within Dumfries. Two retail parks which had been granted on appeal by the Scottish Executive, prior to the last retail study, have become operational. Although each is restricted to the sale of bulky and DIY goods there has been recent pressure through the planning application process, to revise this position at one retail park. Agreement to the sale of comparison goods was sought.

10.2 Dumfries' original out of town retail park, known as the Peel Centre has been reformatted and now sells comparison goods instead of DIY and bulky goods.

10.3 In addition a 24hour Tesco superstore has opened at Cuckoo Bridge. Although subject to some trading restrictions, a proportion of the floorspace can, and is, utilised for the sale of comparison goods.

10.4 The former convenience stores, Somerfield, the Co-Op and the Lochfield Road Tesco store are no longer trading, whilst Lidl has developed an edge of centre store at Brooms Road. Barbours at Home has relocated from the Peel Centre to an edge of centre site opposite their existing store retailing furniture and household accessories.

10.5 The results of these changes is a significant net increase in out of centre retail floorspace for Dumfries.

10.6 The findings of the previous study were used to inform policy development in the Structure and Local Plans. However, as evidenced above the face of retailing in Dumfries has changed. This was one of the key factors highlighting the need for updated analysis of local retailing and focussing on the future with a view to supporting and taking forward existing policy.

10.7 Another crucial factor in Dumfries was the emergent town centre regeneration plans. Dumfries Town Centre Strategy and Action Plan seeks to reinvigorate the town centre and retailing is a key element.

10.8 Matters specific to Dumfries were not the sole driver for undertaking a retail study, nor can retailing in the town be viewed in isolation from the rest of Dumfries and Galloway, or from outside influences. Crucial changes across the region with new demands, pressures and emerging regeneration projects were integral to the decision to commission a study. It was intended this would provide a snapshot of the wider retailing position, consider objectively how retailing in the region is faring and offer key pointers for the future including identification of market opportunities.

10.9 It was against this background that at their meeting on 6 February 2006 Planning and Environment Services Committee agreed in principle to the appointment of consultants to undertake a comprehensive retail study. This work is now complete.

## 11 Policy Context Background

11.1 Dumfries and Galloway now has full Development Plan coverage through its approved Structure Plan (1999) and four adopted local plans (2006). However, the evolving nature of planning and changes to the legislative context through the emerging Planning etc(Scotland) Bill 2006 will require the Council in future to prepare a Local Development Plan. The Act is not yet fully implemented and secondary legislation and regulations will be issued in 2007/2008.

11.2 Any Local Development Plan intended to replace the Structure Plan and four local plans will require to be updated on a five year rolling programme.

11.3 The Retail Study provides the Council with up to date retail information and commentary on the future of retailing in the Dumfries catchment area to 2016.

11.4 In August 2006, the Scottish Executive published SPP8: Town Centres and Retailing.

11.5 Key Policy Principles in SPP8 include:
- identifying and promoting town centres as part of a network of centres;

- focusing development in existing town centres by using a sequential approach to development; and
- maintaining, improving and developing town centres.

11.6 The sequential approach requires that locations for new retail development are considered in the following order:
- town centre;
- edge of centre;
- other commercial centres identified within the development plan; and
- out of centre locations that are, or can be made assessable by a choice of modes of transport.

11.7 There has been an opportunity for the Consultants to consider SPP 8 in the context of their recommendations to the Council.

11.8 Taking account of the Retail Study and the new requirements of SPP8 it is necessary for the Council to prepare Supplementary Planning Guidance in advance of a Local Development Plan.

**12. Key Issues**
The purpose of the Retail Study was to:
- build on previous analysis and research, and update the 1996 Retail Study
- provide a comprehensive overview and analysis of shopping patterns throughout Dumfries and Galloway;
- to provide a commentary on the future of retailing in the Region up to 2016;
- establish connections with ongoing regeneration work and define the role retailing might play in those contexts;
- provide a tool to help evaluate future development proposals; and
- inform policy development for the Development Plan review.

**13. Retail Study - Key Elements**
13.1 The Key Elements of the Retail Study 2006 were:
- Household and Business Surveys;
- Regional catchment and zonal divides for the Study (see Map 1-**Appendix 3**);
- Social Trends - Factors effecting retail trends;
- Qualitative health Check review of centre by Halcrow;
- Retail Capacity Model;
- Scenario testing;
- Current and future retail opportunities;
- Guidelines to inform retail planning strategy; and
- Key findings and conclusions.

13.2 The Retail Study provides greater detail on all these elements whilst this report focuses on certain aspects.

13.3 **Household and Business Surveys - key findings**
NEMS Market Research undertook a Household Interview Survey, aimed at gathering behavioural and attitudinal data from the main shopper from 1000 households throughout the region. For the purpose of the survey, the area was split into 8 zones with a further zone covering the marginal postcodes beyond the border.

The conclusions illustrate not only how Dumfries is trading but gives an insight to its retail influence on the region's other towns.

13.4 **Main Food Shopping**
The following table summarises the existing retail characteristics for main food shopping by zone (see Map1 - **Appendix 3**):

**Table 1: Existing Retail Characteristics - Main Food Shopping**

| Zone | Shopping pattern for main food shopping |
|---|---|
| Zone 1: Dumfries | Essentially self sufficient retaining 97.9% of main food trips within the zone, 56.5% going to Tesco at Cuckoo Bridge 34.8% to Morrisons |
| Zone 2: Moffat/ Lockerbie | Zone 2 retains about a third, spends about half in Dumfries and exports about £1 in £8 to Carlisle |
| Zone 3: Annan | Retains just over a third and is anchored on Carlisle where it exports over 40% with about 20% favouring Dumfries |
| Zone 4: Langholm | Little affiliation to Dumfries |
| Zone 5: Thornhill | 8% of main food spend is retained within this rural zone with most (50.5%) going to Cuckoo Bridge, Dumfries and the rest being spread about |
| Zone 6: Castle Douglas/ Dalbeattie/Kirkcudbright | Respondents of Zone 6 split main food shop between own zone (66%) and Dumfries (30%) with CD Tesco attracting 32% and CD Co-op attracting only 17.5% compared to 19.5% attracted to Tesco at Cuckoo Bridge |
| Zone 7: Newton Stewart/ Wigtown | Zone 7 retains just over half main food shopping and exports a third to Stranraer with 6.6% going to Tesco at Cuckoo Bridge, Dumfries |
| Zone 7: Newton Stewart/ Wigtown | Zone 7 retains just over half main food shopping and exports a third to Stranraer with 6.6% going to Tesco at Cuckoo Bridge, Dumfries |
| Zone 8: Stranraer | N/A |
| NB: These retail characteristics are headline results from NEMS Household Survey | |

13.5 **Comparison Shopping**
The following table summarises the existing retail characteristics for comparison shopping:

**Table 2: Existing Retail Characteristics - Comparison Shopping**

| Zone | Shopping pattern for Comparison Goods |
|---|---|
| Zone 1: Dumfries | Only 55.6% of respondents from Zone 1 buy most of their non-food shopping in Dumfries town centre, with 15.6% buying most at Cuckoo Bride and 7.9% buying most in Carlisle. |
| Zone 2: Moffat/ Lockerbie | Dumfries Town Centre (33.5%) Carlisle (22.8%) and Cuckoo Bridge (11.3%) are also the favoured locations for non-food shopping for Zone 2 households but with a marked increase in preference for Carlisle. |
| Zone 3: Annan | Only 15% of respondents from Zone 3 do most of their non-food shopping in Dumfries Town Centre compared to 14.9% who do most in Annan, 49.6% in Carlisle and 6.9% |

| Zone | Shopping pattern for Comparison Goods |
|---|---|
| | at Cuckoo Bridge. Gretna Gateway only moderately significant as a second destination for fashion shopping for this zone (11.6%). |
| Zone 3: Annan | Only 15% of respondents from Zone 3 do most of their non-food shopping in Dumfries Town Centre compared to 14.9% who do most in Annan, 49.6% in Carlisle and 6.9% at Cuckoo Bridge. Gretna Gateway only moderately significant as a second destination for fashion shopping for this zone (11.6%). |
| Zone 4: Langholm | In Zone 4 Langholm is the main non-food shopping destination for 13.3% of respondents, but 71.8% of respondents do most non-food shopping in Carlisle. Only 5.5% of households in this zone do most clothes shopping at Gretna Gateway. |
| Zone 5: Thornhill | Zone 5 preferences are split equally between Dumfries Town Centre (33%) and at Cuckoo Bridge and Dumfries Retail Park (33.2% combined) with 12.2% of respondents citing Ayr as the main destination of non-food spend. |
| Zone 6: Castle Douglas/ Dalbeattie/Kirkcudbright | Castle Douglas is notable in that, despite its proximity to Dumfries, it retains 25% of Zone 6 respondents who do most non-food shopping locally with 41.3% favouring Dumfries Town Centre for most of their non-food shop. |
| Zone 7: Newton Stewart/ Wigtown | 22% of respondents choose to do most non-food spend locally in Newton Stewart with other preferences split 31.5% to Dumfries Town Centre, 17% to Stranraer, 8.5% to Cuckoo Bridge and 7.1% to Ayr. |
| Zone 8: Stranraer | 55.8% of respondents said they do most non-food shopping in Stranraer with 25.3% going to Ayr. |
| NB: These retail characteristics are headline results from NEMS Household Survey | |

13.6 **Town Centre User Surveys**
Town centre surveys were conducted in four of the Region's main towns including Dumfries as the regional capital.

13.7 The results from these surveys indicated a major decline in popularity of Dumfries Town Centre itself. In terms of retail parks results showed a general increase in frequency of visits compared with 5 years ago.

13.8 The conclusion drawn from this is that whilst Dumfries remains the primary shopping destination in the region, the town centre is not competing effectively with out of centre retail opportunities.

13.9 There was also a general perception, regionwide and including Dumfries, of a lack of quality shops and services. A significant number of respondents also identified a lack of large department stores.

13.10 The main retail competitors for Dumfries and Galloway were Glasgow, Carlisle and Ayr. Each centre was identified as offering choice in comparison shopping, particularly in mainstream fashion labels and fascias.

13.11 **Conclusions from Surveys**

The major changes since the 1996 Retail Study include:

- emergence of internet shopping, particularly amongst the younger age groups and in non food items;
- another key trend is the growing influence of comparison shopping in superstores such as Tesco, which now appears to take a substantial proportion of the traditional town centre comparison goods market;
- growing popularity of retail parks;
- decline in the frequency of visits to Dumfries Town Centre. A major cause of this has been a perceived lack of quality and choice of retail within the town centre; and
- the most popular destinations outwith Dumfries and Galloway tend to be Glasgow, Carlisle and Ayr with Belfast beginning to emerge as a competitor, to the west of the region.

13.12 **Qualitative Health Checks Review** – Included in the retail study was a qualitative review of Dumfries and the main towns which fall within its catchment area. The primary purpose of such a review was to identify any significant changes that may have occurred in function and prosperity since the last study was conducted. For Dumfries it was concluded that:

- Dumfries businesses have to work hard to maintain a strong profile in their regional capital because of the fragmented topography and infrastructure that draws shoppers from the east to Carlisle, and those from the northwest to Ayr;
- less than half of the comparison shopping floorpsace in Dumfries is now in the town centre. The focus of comparison shopping is at risk of fragmentation;
- stores in the town centre are increasingly characterised by the "value" label and survey returns suggest there is a growing perception that there is a lack of quality and choice;
- Bank Street and Friars Vennel, both key pedestrian access points to the town centre have a higher than healthy vacancy rate, and a need for further restoration of both private property and public realm with the potential to become "charming pedestrian friendly thoroughfares of traditional vernacular style";
- in general the town suffers from pockets of physical decay and neglect which is not conducive to a satisfying visitor experience;
- the defined town centre area is almost entirely without convenience shopping; and
- convenience shopping is now a choice between the edge of centre Morrisons or out of centre Tescos.

13.13 **Retail Capacity Model**

A Core feature of the Retail Study 2006 was the development of a Retail Capacity Model (RCM). The objectives of doing so were to:

- determine the 'capacity' of the existing retail system;
- consider the current performance of the retail system;
- identify the relationship of 'balance' between these two positions and what scope there may be to achieve improvements to the current system; and
- construct a framework against which future retail scenarios can be tested and their implications identified, thereby providing guidelines to inform future policies on retail planning.

13.14 The Key Outcomes from this work as they apply to the Dumfries Catchment Area are summarised in this report. Significantly more detail on the above points is contained in the Retail Study Report.

13.15 **Current and Future Retail Opportunity**
In order to determine total Current Opportunity (2007-2011) plus Future Opportunity (2012-2016), a summation of future retail demand has been compiled and is presented in Table 3.

**Table 3: Indicative Retail Scope in Dumfries Catchment Area(sq m net)**

| | **Shorter Term 2007-2011** | **Longer Term 2012-2016** |
|---|---|---|
| | DCA | DCA |
| Convenience | 2950 | 800 |
| Comparison | 13700 | 6100 |
| Bulky goods | 1900 | 700 |

13.16 Perhaps the most important point to emerge from this analysis is the identification of an opportunity for additional comparison shopping floorspace in Dumfries. A floor area of up to 13,700sqm in the period 2007-2011 with a further 6100sqm highlighted in the longer period could have a significant effect on Dumfries as the region's capital and its retail role. For general comparison purposes the existing Loreburn Centre has a floor area of 9,290sqm. This is a positive opportunity which should be pursued. Clearly, any such increase in floorspace should focus on the town centre. This would go some way to directly redressing the survey findings which showed a reduction in usage of the town centre, and increase in usage of retail parks.

13.17 The identification of these opportunities should act as an incentive to potential investors and help to generate confidence in the potential that could be realised in Dumfries. Development sited in the town centre could present a direct and very visible regeneration impetus supporting the ongoing work that is taking place.

13.18 The corollary to these conclusions – as has already been demonstrated by the survey findings - is that if additional retail space, particularly comparison shopping, goes outwith the town centre it can have a further damaging effect. This is not just limited to the retail offer in Dumfries but to confidence in its economic base which in turns affects the very fabric of the town.

13.19 The findings also identify limited opportunities to increase convenience floorspace. Interestingly the Council's retail study almost coincided with an independent study produced by Roger Tym and Partners on behalf of the Federation of Small Businesses. This was undertaken to assess the impact of large modern supermarket development on the vitality and viability of town centres with a particular focus on existing retailers. Dumfries was one of the case study areas.

13.20 The findings of this study offer support to the broad view that large supermarket developments impact adversely on the retail structure of the traditional town centre. Through the analysis of the three case studies undertaken, evidence was uncovered that demonstrates the following trends post-supermarket development:

- a decrease in the number of convenience retailers operating in the town centre;

- an increase in the number of vacant units and corresponding floorspace;
- a broad shift in convenience expenditure away from the existing town centre retailers to those operating the new supermarket development;
- a significant decline in the level of business activities undertaken by existing retailers. This is attributable in the main to competition from the supermarket; and
- a general acknowledgment in respect of a decline in the overall number of shoppers frequenting the traditional town centre.

13.21 The Halcrow recommendations in respect of Guidelines for the Dumfries Catchment Area, and General Guidelines are attached as **Appendix 1**

13.22 The key findings and conclusions from the Retail Study are attached as **Appendix 2.**

**14. Implications for the Council as Planning Authority**

14.1 The retail study will be a material consideration for the Council as Planning Authority when determining planning applications.

14.2 The study also provides retail guidance to the Council in its regeneration role on key projects and particularly Dumfries Town Centre.

14.3 With specific regard to Dumfries Town Centre it is vital that the Council seeks to control the identified comparison retail opportunity that has been identified and directs this opportunity to the centre in the period to 2011, as well as accommodating future growth to 2016. To achieve this it is important:

- the existing restrictive conditions at Cuckoo Bridge and Dumfries Retail Park are retained. If they are not then, this has the potential to damage a significant new retail development in Dumfries Town Centre to exploit the identified opportunity;
- that careful consideration occurs of all significant new retail developments in the Dumfries catchment given the interrelationship of retail spending patterns;
- that Retail Impact Assessments (RIAs) are prepared for all significant retail proposals within the Dumfries catchment, to examine their impact on the Town Centre Proposals which would detract from the role of Town Centre should be resisted; and
- that Supplementary Planning Guidance provides direction to the market in terms of how Dumfries and Galloway wishes to address the opportunities identified in the Dumfries Catchment.

14.4 With regard to the last of these points the council has now prepared Supplementary Retail Planning Guidance based on the study findings. A copy is included at **Appendix 4**. Amongst other things this makes clear the council's commitment to Dumfries town centre in realising the vision of a regenerated core area of which retailing is a key part.

14.5 Neither the Retail Study nor the supplementary guidance conflict with the Council's existing development plan policies. (However, guideline D13 in **Appendix 1** is a strategic matter and is best addressed in the future Local Development Plan). Each has been the subject of separate committee reports to Planning and Environment Services. On 16 January 2007, the conclusions of the Retail Study were reported to Planning and Environment Services Committee when it was agreed that this would inform Supplementary Planning Guidance to be prepared. A subsequent report detailing the Supplementary Guidance was reported to Planning and Environment Services Committee on 13 February 2007.

14.6 In addition to using the study findings to guide future development objectives, commitment must be given to monitoring the ongoing retail position. This is necessary if guidance and advice is to be kept up to date and provide the Council with a sound policy basis for future decision making. This is appropriate not only in respect of Dumfries Town Centre but recognising the ripple effect of retailing and the interrelationship between the retail roles of region's various towns and that of higher order centres outwith the region.

## 15. Financial Implications

15.1 The funding of this Study was agreed previously in the Report to March 2006 Planning and Environment Services Committee - it has been jointly met by the Council and SEDG. The forward implications in financial terms are in monitoring changes in retailing in the region.

15.2 The Dumfries and Galloway Retail Study (2006) can be viewed at www.dgcommunity.net/planning Hard copies of the report and Volume 2 Appendices are available at a cost of £50 from the Local Plan Co-ordinator.


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**APPENDICES - 4**

## Guidelines to inform future retail planning strategy

6.8.10 The planning strategy has been informed by the results of the scenario testing and appraisal. It seeks a closer fit between demand and supply commensurate with the principles of environmental sustainability and social inclusion and economic development. It refers to general issues relevant across the area as a whole and makes reference to the two individual catchment areas offering specific guidance where appropriate. Guidelines are presented in the following format:

- Dumfries Catchment Area
- General Guildelines

## Dumfries Catchment Area (DCA)

D1 The market will determine how much consented convenience floorspace will be developed in the short term.

D2 Likelihood is that the balance of consents will be build out by 2011. Limited quantitative convenience demand beyond that. Qualitative improvements should be encouraged through redevelopment of existing convenience floorspace across area. To reverse local leakage an opportunity exists in the DCA for up to 4,000 sqm in total over the period to 2016, of which some 80% may occur in the near term in 2011.

D3 Former supermarkets currently surplus to requirements and in out-of-centre locations, to be re-developed for other uses such as housing, distribution or leisure (former Co-op site on Hoods Loaning in Dumfries which is being developed as a leisure centre). Similarly, while evidence suggest there is limited immediate demand for new bulky goods floorspace, active regeneration of the more marginal existing sites to be encouraged by planning policy in discussion with site owners and their agents.

D4 DGC should formally state its active support for Dumfries Town Centre as the main focus for the region's comparison shopping, which is the only sector showing signs of significant growth in both the shorter and longer term.

D5 There should be no relaxation of trading restrictions at Cuckoo Bridge in the near term as it would inhibit the potential to attract comparison investment not only in new floorspace in the town centre, but also dilute incentive for refurbishment and upgrading of existing building fabric, which is essential to maintaining the attractiveness of Dumfries as both a shopping and tourism destination.

D6 Evidence shows substantial and increasing leakage of comparison spend suggesting an immediate opportunity to redress some of the retail balance (with some of this demand addressed by way of comparison elements of recent consented or new superstores). DGC should engage with the private sector re Dumfries town centre to promote a project in a configuration that would be attractive to modern trading practice and national multiple operators, with a view to implementation during the first part of the planning period.

D7 The total retail balance for comparison goods in the DCA amounts to some £50m which converts into approximately 13,700 sqm of floorspace by 2011. Some 20% can be expected to be taken up in superstores with the majority of the remaining 11,000 sqm creating an opportunity for a major commercial development in the town centre.

D8 Pedestrian routes linking town centre and Whitesands to be improved eg through public realm and building fabric improvements on Friars Vennel and Bank Street where active frontagers should be protected and private investment encouraged.

D9 Clawback of some 15% of current comparison leakage should be targeted during the first part of the planning period; much of this could be by improved quality potentially leading to increased sales densities and through re-occupation of Dumfries town centre vacancies with this uplift of existing offer.

D10 Household growth (at approximately 5%) indicates retail opportunity for brown and white goods, DIY and garden supplies in areas where substantial new housing is permitted eg Marchfield.

D11 On current forecasts, there appears to be a case for a modest increase in convenience floorspace in the near term ie by 2011. In order to respond to evidence of leakage, this should be located towards the east of the catchment area in Annan or Gretna. It is unlikely that there will be a quantitative case for substantial additional convenience floorspace during the second part of the plan period. To achieve more sustainable travel behaviour, and a better range of choice, a wider spread of smaller convenience or discount stores may be supported eg in Kirkcudbright and Dalbeattie. However some adverse consequences and resultant closures of independents should be anticipated if new entrants are permitted. Implications of this should be considered and addressed on a case by case basis.

D12 Growth in potential comparison spend is expected to continue, necessitating active consideration by DGC of town centre and other sites during second part of the plan period. In this regard DGC to target further reduction in comparison leakage to 30 % or less. In addition possible further opportunity to address forecast new demand over the plan period should be targeted in the form of a further phase to a major town centre comparison scheme and/or in the longer term, the development of selected established commercial areas.

D13 Triggered by current demographic trends and economic regeneration imperatives in the east of the region (Chapelcross improved links to England, GLA triangle) consider the case for a pro-active comprehensive Growth Strategy. This could take the form of consideration of future options including a new settlement or urban expansion of Dumfries (Inverness East and A96 Corridor) which would raise the areas profile amongst housing developers, traders and investors, utility providers and incoming population.

**General Guidelines**

 APPENDIX 1

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|---|---|
| G1 | Explicit policy support should be reiterated in Development Plan for development of any convenience stores for which a case can be made in existing centres only and, even then, where proposals are compliant with the sequential test and SPP8. |
| G2 | DGC to bring forward Supplementary Planning Guidance to prioritise town centre regeneration and commitment to work in partnership with private sector where possible. |
| G3 | Need for DGC to use and improve on existing information and systems to maintain accurate and current data base of retail intelligence eg floorspace changes, occupier movements, trader requirements, profile of competitor centres, (Ayr, Carlisle etc.) commercial property market intelligence and user surveys to monitor preferences and internet sales. |
| G4 | DGC should consider retail applications against a comprehensive review of policy, retail impact and wider implications. Where necessary supporting material can/should be reviewed against the retail data base in regard to type/size of use, location and timeframe. |
| G5 | Probable that leakage through special forms of trading especially the internet will continue over the longer term and possibly increase. Thus it is essential that DGC be alert to retailer and investor initiatives and requirements, and that SEDG collaborate with the business community to develop on-line promotion of local specialist businesses. |
| G6 | DGC in combination with SEDG to establish cross sector stakeholder groups including trader and investors to promote collaborative initiatives between public and private sector to consider and review retail policy, related economic/tourism initiatives, BIDs, events and marketing programmes. |
| G7 | DGC (perhaps in conjunction with other like-minded Councils) to make representation to Scottish Executive re joint working with key traders/service providers (eg Post Office, Co-operative movement) to devise methods of support for vulnerable traders in rural and remote communities. |
| G8 | Market interest in developing floorspace targeted primarily as non DGC visitor/tourist sped should be examined on a different basis from that designed to serve domestic needs. Specifically, Gretna Gateway and its possible expansion, and Stranraer Waterfront should be considered and supported as economic and tourism development initiatives rather than market driven conventional retail planning matters. Similarly economic/ business initiatives in smaller centres such as Wigtown, Castle Douglas, Kirkcudbright, Thornhill and Moffat should be supported. In the event that such proposed development contained retail floorspace, their scale and location should be scrutinised. However, assuming they were primarily targeted at the tourist/visitor market, it seems unlikely they would substantially adversely affect resident shopping patterns. |

## 7.1 Summary of Key Findings and Conclusions

7.1.1 The populations of the Dumfries and Galloway (DGC) study area in 2006 amounted to 148,800. By the end of the plan period, the population in 2016 is forecast decline to be 147,300.

7.1.2 Despite this, evidence from a number of sources suggests an increase in household formation from some 67,000 in 2006 to 70,600, a healthy 5.5%. It is probable that this factor could have significant implications for certain types of retailing in the area.

7.1.3 As part of the retail study, a number of surveys were undertaken the main results are reported in Appendix C:

- Household Interview Survey: of some 1,000 households was carried out across the 8 zones of the catchment area to establish shopping patterns in both behavioural and attitudinal terms;
- Town Centre User Survey: was carried out in the area with some 1,000 interviews undertaken in Dumfries, Stranraer, Castle Douglas and Annan. Over half of those questions were food shoppers and that sector showing comparative buoyancy. Regarding comparison shopping trips evidence suggests that while well over half of available spend is spent locally, the main retail competitors are Ayr, Glasgow, and Carlisle who between them seem to attract over 40% of expenditure in this category from DGC. A third of respondents perceived there to be a lack of quality shops and services in the region with some 20% noting the lack of a large department store.
- Business surveys: over 150 businesses based in DGC were interviewed with most of these being long established retail, farm and food and beverage businesses, with owner occupation status amounting to some two thirds. The majority appear to be content with both their premises and their commercial performance with most believing this had improved in the last three years. There is not a strong presence of national multiples in the area; and
- The principal centres across the region were visited to record their function in the retail hierarchy. This was a subjective appraisal of their performance in terms of their retail offer.

7.1.4 The key findings from the shopping review drew out the rural characteristics of the area, the dependency on the larger towns for convenience goods and the predominance of Dumfries and to a lesser extent Stranraer for comparison and bulky goods items. 'Travel to shop' and multi-purpose tripping, seemed to be the accepted norm amongst younger more mobile families, while the older less mobile sectors depended on a depleting range of local facilities.

7.1.5 A retail capacity was built to represent the demand for and supply of retail floorspace plus the resulting retail balance in 2006. This was then deployed to forecast forward to 2011 and 2016. In this way, estimates were made of the scope for retail change throughout the period.

7.1.6 A series of scenarios was then developed to illustrate different approaches to future retail planning strategy (eg market driven, centre focused and area wide distribution). Their respective performance against key criteria was appraised and used to inform strategic guidelines for future retail planning.

7.1.7 Informed by the results of the above and by applying other reasonable assumption on sales densities, clawback etc, forecasts were then made of likely future demand for floorspace by type and broad geographical area. Table 6.9 and related guidelines provided the results. Table 7.1 summarises the combined scope both for improvements to the existing retail offer and for new floorspace by the two main catchment areas.

Table 7.1: Summary of Retail Scope by Catchment Area and timeframes (Sqm)

| ITEM | Retail Type | Shorter Term 2007-2011 | | | Longer Term 2012-2016 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | DCA | SCA | Total | DCA | SCA | Total |
| Convenience | | 2950 | 800 | 3700 | 800 | 200 | 1000 |
| Comparison | | 13700 | 3100 | 16800 | 6100 | 1150 | 7250 |
| Bulky Goods | | 1900 | 500 | 2400 | 700 | 200 | 900 |
| DCA: Dumfries Catchment Area | | | | | | | |
| SCA: Stranraer Catchment Area | | | | | | | |

7.1.8 In the near term, there is some limited capacity for new convenience floorspace, primarily in the east of the Dumfries catchment area, but only very limited quantitative opportunity even in the larger term. These general findings are mirrored in respect of bulky goods floorspace. The main opportunity lies in comparison goods floorspace with a policy preference for Dumfries town centre immediately and in the near term up to 2011 plus scope in Stranraer. There also appears to be scope between 2012-2016

7.1.9 DGC should be aware of the social economic and demographic factors, beyond the variables in any predictive retail model, that can influence spending habits and shopping behaviour. The strength of the local economy, shifts in population, property values, the price of travel and access to the internet, all need to be monitored in order to keep retail policies up to date.

7.1.10 The retail network and function of centres is summarised below:

**Retail Network and Functional Guidelines**

| **Dumfries Catchment Area** | **Retail Function/Guidelines** |
|---|---|
| Dumfries | Will remain a highly accessible regional capital main shopping centre for resident community. Active focus for the region's administration, health and education and cultural services; opportunity exists for major in-centre developments related to cultural academic and business initiatives. A development of this type should be priority over the first part of the planning period ie 2007-2011, and only after this has been established should off centre development be supported |
| Annan | Is at District Centre easily accessible from A75 and characterised by a heritage harbour and High Street. Some leakage of spend is inevitable but there is an opportunity to clawback, some convenience spend and to develop a more focused tourism offer. |
| Lockerbie | Local service centre, fairly self sufficient with a modest range of convenience specialists and independent businesses. The effect of a new supermarket consent to be monitored and mitigated if necessary. |
| Moffat | Due to its proximity to the M74/M6, its important tourist and bus tripper day visitor stop-over likely to continue supplementing its primary local functions. Possibility of improving offer by selective re-development and improvement of Moffat Woollen Mill and Co-op precinct and thereby improving traffic management of bus parking and pedestrian links to the park and the town centre. |
| Kirkcudbright | Should remain as a thriving local service centre and visitor attraction as the Artists Town, well served for convenience top-up shopping and a well-developed specialist arts-related comparison sector. |
| Castle Douglas | Should remain as a local service centre and Food Town and a good variety of independent specialist food producer/ retailers and some arts and fashion comparison shopping. It serves a relatively wealthy catchment and should be marketed to continue to attract a strong day-visitor market. |
| Creetown | It is likely to provide basic local services but a specialist visitor attraction based on the gem museum. This will attract tourism footfall which will also support local services. |
| Gretna | This is providing a basic convenience shopping and services centre losing much resident spend to Carlisle. An opportunity exists to clawback convenience spend to a new convenience store. Gretna is also a tourism honeypot based on the wedding industry, and The Gretna Gateway Retail Village who's expansion as an economic initiative (as opposed to conventional local retail facility) should be encouraged. Relaxation of English Sunday Trading laws and competition |

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| | |
|---|---|
| | from Reghed in Penrith may dilute the attraction of this retail park in future and some changes may be necessary to retain competitive edge through development of a distinctive tourist oriented attraction. |
| Wanlockhead/ Leadhills | Visitor attraction as highest village in Scotland offering an attractive and 'unusual' access route from the north into the region. Historic mining and gold panning activities, may have specialist tourism or craft retail opportunities if supported by on-line presence and marketing. |
| Sanquhar | Basic services in remote community but considerable potential to be exploited for green tourism using rail halt and position of Southern Upland Way coupled with redundant but attractive built heritage and to exploit 'comfort-stop' location mid-way between Dumfries and the Clyde coast. |
| Glenkens | Remote communities that support Rural Tourism and need protection for basic services and distribution of essential convenience goods. |

| **Stranraer Catchment Area** | **Retail Function/Guidelines** |
|---|---|
| Stranraer | Will remain sub regional service centre for the western part of the region, self sufficient in convenience shopping; should continue to provide a wide range of every day comparison and bulky goods shopping needs. The move towards a changed function to serve an emerging market as a tourism destination, focussing on water sports, should be strongly supported by public and private stakeholders. |
| Whithorn | Should continue as a local service centre, anchored by the Archaeological visitor attraction. |
| Newton Stewart | Should continue as the Local District Centre providing convenience shopping, personal, financial and entertainment sources for the wider Machars area. |
| Wigtown | The Former County Town now a lively Book Town. Although local service function now diminished, it has been supplemented by seasonal tourism specialist interest in books, literature, good fayre events, wildlife and tourism. Interest in provision of specialist food retailing to be encouraged and its recent success built upon. |

**Closing Comment**

7.1.11 The purpose of a RCM is to represent, in the form of an excel spreadsheet, the scale and dynamics of the retail systems in any defined geographical area and to use this output, in conjunction with estimates of certain key variables, to consider future retail patterns and opportunities.

7.1.12 The RCM for Dumfries and Galloway uses existing data and future forecasts of population, spend, floorspace, turnover, and trade flows. It provides a broad assessment of capacity and therefore scope for future change; and, in conjunction with other guidance, forms the basis for DGC to formulate

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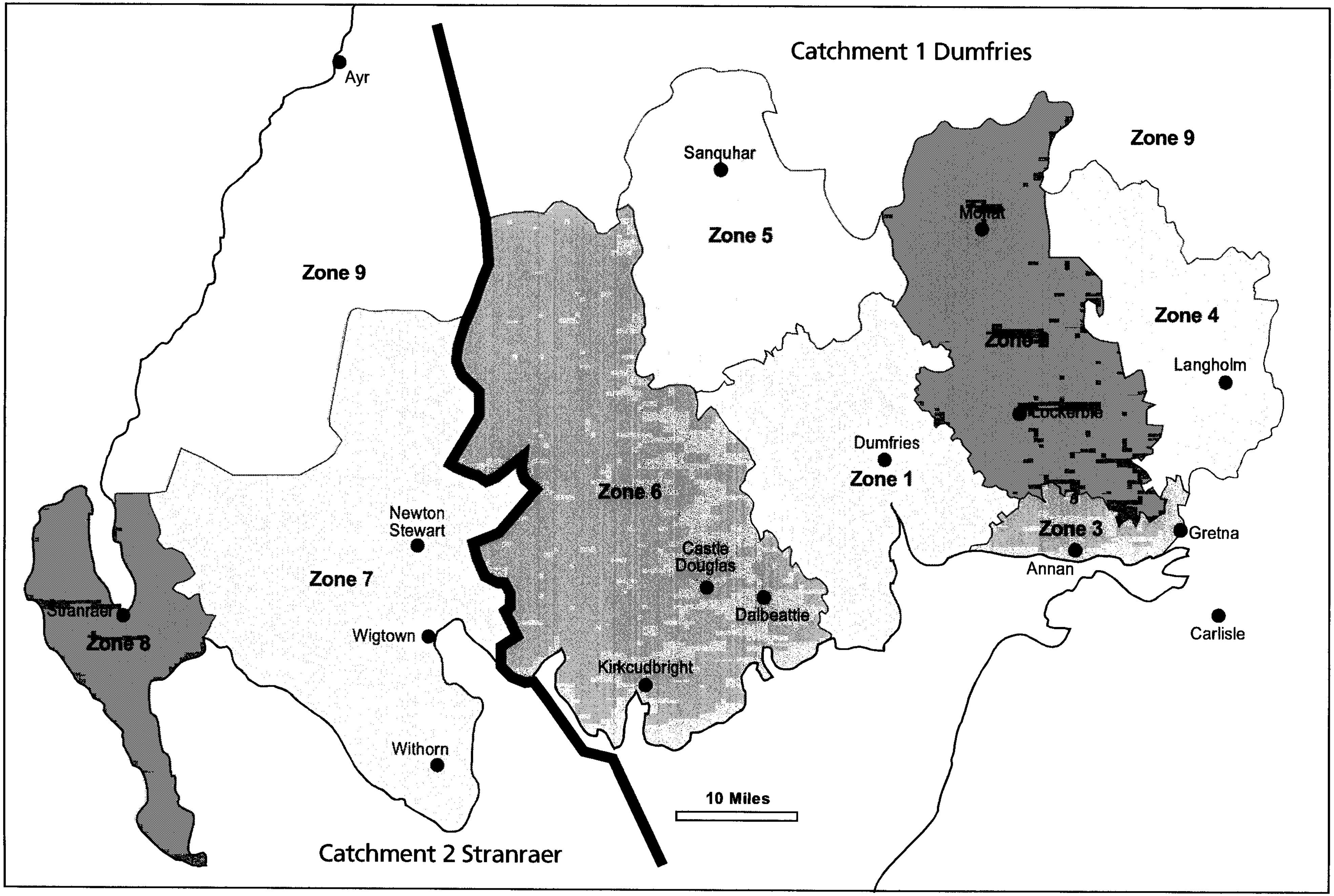
their future retail policy. It is not designed to measure the quantum or implications of a particular planning proposal. However, that is the function of a retail impact analysis, which DGC should continue to request in support of all future retail planning applications. Indeed such RIA's should be supplemented when necessary, by a cumulative retail impact study in situations where more than one development might be proposed.

7.1.13 Accordingly, informed by the outputs of this study, DGC should formulate their future retail planning policy and incorporate this, as Supplementary Planning Guidance, into the forthcoming Development Plan. This can then be expected to offer guidance to prospective traders, developers and investors and provide the basis for DGC decision making on future planning applications.

Map 1. Zonal and Catchment Breakdown of Study Area

# APPENDIX 3



APPENDIX 4

# Dumfries & Galloway Supplementary Retail Guidance (February 2007)

## 1. Introduction

1.1 As detailed in SPP1 supplementary guidance can provide a means of support for statutory development plans. It may also be produced where an emerging matter merits a prompt policy response.

1.2 This guidance aims to provide further information and direction on the policy position for retailing in Dumfries and Galloway. It has been developed to take account of research carried out on the Council's behalf and detailed in the Dumfries & Galloway Retail Study 2006. This publication post dates the Development Plan. However the guidance is in accord with the existing statutory development plan framework contained in the Dumfries & Galloway Structure Plan and the adopted Local Plans.

1.3 It is acknowledged that elements of the Retail Study have significant policy implications, including suggested urban expansion through a new settlement; alterations to policy and e-retailing comments. The only proper route to address these matters is as part of the future Local Development Plan.

1.4 The Retail Study was commissioned against a background of continuing concern about the future of local retailing and the retail offer in the region's town centres. There was, and is, pressure for retail development in out of centre locations and a need to consider evolving patterns of retail growth. The previous research on retailing in Dumfries & Galloway was in urgent need of updating.
The 2006 Study seeks to address these matters. Its conclusions are being used to supplement existing Development Plan policy and to present contemporary findings which take account of the most recent Scottish Executive Publication SPP8 Town Centres and Retailing, and, through a retail capacity model, provide direction for the future.

1.5 This guidance is aimed at those with an existing or potential retail interest in Dumfries and Galloway, particularly where that interest may result in involvement with the local planning system through the planning applications process.

1.6 The development of stakeholder groups may provide a means to promote initiatives between the public and private sector and to review retail policy and economic and technological initiatives.

1.7 Locational matters in relation to retailing are adequately addressed in the Structure Plan and Local Plans with additional guidance in the Dumfries Town Centre Strategy & Action Plan. Similar guidance in Stranraer is being developed in response to the Waterfront Regeneration project.

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1.8 This supplementary guidance note focuses on the future of local retailing, its economic aspects as a land use, its location and the relationship with town centres.

**Part 2** of this note details the supplementary guidance.

**Part 3** provides the background and context for retailing in Dumfries & Galloway.

## Part 2
## Supplementary Guidance & Retail Study Findings

2.1 This supplementary guidance has been informed by the conclusions of the Dumfries & Galloway Retail Study 2006. The guidance also takes account of the national and local policy framework that exists and associated documents relevant to this topic. These are summarised at Part 2 of this note.

2.2 In devising this guidance there is an awareness that factors presently influencing retailing patterns could alter in the future and consequently affect retail habits. This matter will need to be monitored and kept under review.

2.3 The Retail Study findings have highlighted that within existing retail premises there may be an opportunity to intensify the trading densities. The study also concludes that potential comparison spend is expected to continue.

2.4 There is recognition that for reasons of critical mass, mobility and the evolution of shopping as a leisure pursuit, Dumfries & Galloway and Dumfries as regional centre can never fully compete with higher order centres such as Glasgow. However, positive action can stem leakage of comparison spending from the regional centre.

2.5 In addition, centres such as Stranraer may be able to raise their profile through tourism which could have a spin off effect for retailing and support of the town centre. The interrelationship between Stranraer Town centre and the evolving waterfront project will have to be monitored. Achievement of the regeneration objectives may result in a review of how the town centre is represented in any future Local Development Plan. On 30 January 2007 Stranraer was successful in obtaining agreement to a permit for a small casino.

2.6 Lesser centres, in terms of population and size still have a role to play in serving the everyday needs of their population and the hinterland of each settlement.

2.7 Overall the Retail Study highlights that positive action needs to be taken. The study identifies a target clawback of 15% of the comparison spend leakage from the region by 2011, and a 50% clawback of convenience goods leakage during the longer period to 2016.

## Dumfries & Galloway

***(Applicable national, strategic and local planning policies are summarised at the end of this guidance note. Any intending developer should refer in full to the documents containing these policies)***

### *Primary Aims*

2.8 To provide conveniently accessible goods and services, through a retailing offer focused on the town centres of the Dumfries & Galloway's settlements. This compliments and reflects the existing hierarchy of centres outlined in the Structure Plan.

2.9 That support of existing town centres remain a priority for retail development, and working in partnership with the private sector to integrate such an objective with town centre regeneration.

2.10 To maintain the vitality and viability of the region's principal shopping centres at Dumfries and Stranraer.

### *General Guidance*

2.11 To resist development where it may be considered to be premature or which would have adverse implications on wider economic regeneration policy.

2.12 The sequential test and compliance with SPP8 will remain material considerations when proposals for new retail development, significant retail expansions or changes of use to retailing are proposed.

2.13 Retail Impact Assessments will be necessary for all significant retail proposals, as a mechanism to assess the development impact either individually or as part of a cumulative effect, on adjacent town centres or the identified hierarchy of town centres.

2.14 Proposals for new convenience stores will only be supported in existing centres. They should satisfy the sequential test and comply with SPP8.

2.15 The re-use of vacant out of centre premises with good transport links and warehouse facilities as depots for "e-tailing" will be supported where there would be no direct public sales.

2.16 Retailing initiatives of a themed or tourism related nature in locations including Gretna Gateway and Gretna Green, Stranraer Waterfront, Wigtown, Langholm, Castle Douglas, Kirkcudbright, Sanquhar, Thornhill and Moffat should be supported by a supplementary statement defining the target market and an examination of how the proposals fits with the sequential test of SPP8.

## Dumfries Catchment Area

***(Applicable national, strategic and local planning policies are summarised at the end of this guidance note. Any intending developer should refer in full to the documents containing these policies)***

***Primary Aim***

2.17 Dumfries town centre will continue to be supported as the focus for the region's comparison shopping, with potential developers encouraged to invest in sites or assemble town centre sites that will accelerate the regeneration of the town and broaden the comparison goods offer available to Dumfries & Galloway shoppers.

***Guidance***

2.18 There is an opportunity for a major comparison goods retail development in Dumfries town centre during the period to 2011 with a floorspace of up to 13700sqm. A single large development could have greater impact in stemming leakage from the Dumfries catchment area than smaller individual units. However the latter have a significant role in supporting the town's regeneration by filling smaller vacant floorplates existing in the town centre.
In the longer time period 2102-2016, an opportunity for 6100sqm is highlighted.

2.19 Town centre expansion in Dumfries should be anchored by department store and fashion retailers in order to claim back leakage in comparison retailing with possible re-occupation of vacant units. This would provide a better range and choice of shops to redress the highlighted concerns.

2.20 The opportunity site identified at the Whitesands in the Nithsdale Local Plan has the potential to create additional comparison shopping in Dumfries and form a gateway to and link with the town centre. This site has been the subject of extensive consultation through the Dumfries Town Centre and Strategic Action Plan. Accessibility and linkages to the existing prime shopping area are key to the integration of any development with the town centre and economically a mutually beneficial scheme.

2.21 There should be no relaxation of trading restrictions at Cuckoo Bridge or Dumfries Retail Park in the period to 2011. To do so would run contrary to maintaining, enhancing and growing Dumfries Town Centre. This is key to strengthening the role of the town as the Region's principal shopping centre and as a tourist destination.

2.22 There are opportunities for additional bulky goods retailing in the Dumfries catchment area with floorspace of 1900sqm in the period 2007-2011 and 700sqm in the period 2012-2016. Further sales opportunities will be created by the formation of new households.
There is latent space in vacant purpose built units at Dumfries which should be safeguarded for this purpose. Retention of existing leakage may present

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opportunities to the east of the catchment area, however any realisation of new retail floorspace for this purpose should focus on existing town centres and satisfy the sequential test.

2.23 The former Tesco store at Lochfield Road will not be safeguarded for future retail use. Alternative uses will be considered on their merits.

2.24 Existing out of town and out of centre, retail or commercial centres are located at Cuckoo Bridge, Dumfries Retail Park and the Peel Centre. Cuckoo Bridge and Dumfries Retail Parks provide a location for the marketing of bulky and DIY goods. Cuckoo Bridge in conjunction with the adjacent convenience superstore represents a commercial centre. The collective floorspace would if freed of restrictive trading conditions be of a size to compete with and threaten the future viability and vitality of Dumfries town centre. Policy guidance on their interrelationship will be incorporated into a future Local Development Plan.

2.25 During the period 2007-2011 there may be opportunities for 2950sqm convenience floorspace and in the longer period 2012-2016, 800sqm. Convenience leakage should be captured by modest increase in floorspace to the east of the region, particularly Annan or Gretna. Any realisation of new retail floorspace for this purpose should focus on existing town centres and satisfy the sequential test.

## Stranraer Catchment Area

***(Applicable national, strategic and local planning policies are summarised at the end of this guidance note. Any intending developer should refer in full to the documents containing these policies)***

### *Primary Aim*

2.27 To support the retail functions of Stranraer town centre particularly as a venue for comparison shopping and ensure that any development on the Waterfront is complimentary to this by targeting an expansion of tourist spending.

### *Guidance*

2.28 There is an opportunity for additional comparison shopping of up to 3700sqm in the period to 2011, and potential for a further 1200sqm in the period 2011-2016. During the first time period this should be directed to Stranraer Town Centre. This principle will also underpin the second time period however progress on expanding the retail offer should be reviewed prior to the 2012.

2.29 There will be resistance to any out of centre comparison retail floorspace, with the possible exception of a garden centre or other venture that has a specific requirement for extensive outdoor display. Any permission should restrict the scope of goods to be sold.

2.30 There are opportunities for additional bulky goods retailing in the Stranraer Catchment Area with floorspace of 500sqm in the period 2007-2011 and 200sqm in the period 2012-2016. Any realisation of new retail floorspace for this purpose should focus on existing town centres and satisfy the sequential test.

2.31 The balance of development uses at Stranraer Waterfront should be further refined to determine the potential of any retail use and its format. A mechanism to do so exists through the regeneration initiative. Any development should incorporate a mix of uses and primarily support Stranraer's transformation to a tourist and leisure destination.

## Local & District Centres

***(Applicable national, strategic and local planning policies are summarised at the end of this guidance note. Any intending developer should refer in full to the documents containing these policies)***

**Annan & Gretna**

2.32 Support will be given for additional convenience floorspace where the location satisfies the sequential test and specifically targets a reduction in the present leakage of convenience spending from the local area.

**Castle Douglas**

2.33 There will continue to be support for retailing in the town centre. There may be expansion of the towns' specialist retailing niche as food town and the attraction of additional visitor and tourist spending.

**Creetown**

2.34 A specialist visitor attraction based on the Gem Rock Museum could attract tourism footfall which would also support local services.

**Dalbeattie**

2.35 The town should continue to function as a local service centre to provide for residents needs. However, to achieve more sustainable travel behaviour would be supported by a wider spread of smaller convenience stores and discount stores contained within the town centre.

**Kirkcudbright**

2.36 The local service role is unlikely to alter significantly. There may be some opportunity for limited additional convenience floorspace. However, any expansion should be contained within the town centre. Development of facilities in support of Kirkcudbright as an art town may draw in additional visitor and tourist spending and create opportunities for niche retailing.

**Langholm**

2.38 The town should continue to function as a local service centre to provide for residents needs.

**Lockerbie**

2.39 The town should continue to function as a local service centre to provide for residents needs however, the new supermarket consent may alter the town's role from local to district centre.

**Moffat**

2.40 A dual retail role exists, Moffat operates as a local service centre for residents and a tourist/visitor market created by strategic transport links. There may be opportunities for the improvement of the Moffat Woolen Mill and Co-op precinct enhancing local traffic management and circulation.

**Newton Stewart**

2.41 The town should continue to function as a local service centre to provide for residents needs.

**Sanquhar**
2.42 A refocused tourist and visitor campaign as a location for green tourism could increase local retail revenue.

**Whithorn**
2.43 Promotion of the town as the birth place of Scottish Christianity could raise its profile and increase local retail revenue.

**Wigtown**
2.44 The role as Scotland's book town is evidenced by a number of specialist and general bookshops. Continued expansion of this role will be supported. There is recognition that the tourists and visitors attracted to Wigtown as the book town, need to be retained with other events and a diversification of attractions. Books and literature are strong elements in the e-retailing market and support may be required for website development and greater internet exposure.

# Part 3

## 3.1 National Policy

Any local retail strategy in Dumfries and Galloway must take account of the national guidance offered the Scottish Executive.
The points of reference below are summarised from SPP8 Town Centres and Retailing. Although SPP8 has a wider remit than retailing it is a relevant contextual document and its contents a potential material consideration in the determination of planning applications. It also establishes an approach for development proposals outside town centres.

**Key Points: SPP8**

- Issued in August 2006 SPP8 post dates the policy formulation and content of Dumfries and Galloway's Development Plan including the four local plans adopted in 2006.
- Development should be focused in existing town centres by using a sequential approach to development.
- Planning authorities should assess how centres might accommodate new development and identify appropriate sites having regard to other policies of the development plan eg transport and design. They should indicate whether as part of the sequential approach development may be appropriate outwith existing centres.
- SPP8 and the policies of the Development Plan, including the sequential test, have relevance whether assessing new development, redevelopment, or extensions to existing facilities, changes of use, renewal of planning permission and applications to vary or remove existing planning conditions concerned with the scale and or character of the development.
- Planning authorities should identify sequentially suitable and viable sites within a reasonable time period – 5 years.
- It is a primary objective to promote distinct, competitive town centres and encourage regeneration
- Create a climate that enables all sectors of the community to have access to a wide choice of shopping, leisure and other services and for gaps and deficiencies to be remedied.
- Identify and promote town centres as part of a network of centres that includes commercial centres and out of centre shopping areas, and where the role of each supports and is supported by the role of other centres.
- The scope for accommodating development may be to adjust the built form including the possibility of subdividing large proposals.
- Where development for town centre uses is proposed within a town centre, assessment of its impact on the viability of similar uses in that centre will not be necessary.
- Development should not give rise to unacceptable, individual or cumulative impact, on the vitality or viability of networks of centres.

## 3.2 Strategic Policy

***Dumfries & Galloway Structure Plan 1999***

***Policies:***

***D14: Town Centres; D15: Development in Town Centres; D16: Dumfries Shopping Centre; D17:Stranraer Shopping Centre; D18: District Shopping Centres; D19: Local Centres; D20:Small Shops; D21:Out of Centre Development; D22: Factory Outlets***

In summary these policies favour town centres as the location for retail development. A hierarchy of centres is established with Dumfries as the regional shopping centre and Stranraer the main centre for the west. Smaller towns nestle within this hierarchical framework and are described as district or local shopping centres.

There is a policy thrust to direct retail development to existing town centres in order to support and enhance their role and protect their viability and vitality. Within Dumfries and Stranraer prime and secondary shopping areas are identified.

When faced with proposals for out of centre development a sequential approach is advocated, in conjunction with an assessment on the vitality and viability of the adjacent or affected town centres.

## 3.3 Local Policy

***Wigtown; Stewartry; Nithsdale; Annandale and Eskdale Local Plans 2006***

***Policies:***

***GP26: Development in Prime Shopping Frontages; GP27: Non Retail Development in Prime Shopping Frontages; GP28 Secondary Shopping Areas; GP29:Retail Development in District & Local Centres; GP30: Non retail Development in District and Local Centres; GP31: Food Retail Developments; GP32: Village Shops and Services***

General Policies 26-28 apply to Dumfries & Stranraer. These policies support the retail function of the respective town centres and define prime and secondary shopping areas within each.

General Policies 29-30 relate to the lower order District and Local Centres, throughout Dumfries and Gallloway. In essence there is a presumption in favour of retail development in town centres, and agreement to non retail development where it would not undermine the function and character of the town centre.

General Policy 31 provides advice on food retailing whilst 32 relates to village shops.

Within the Community sections of the Local Plans specific Opportunity sites have been highlighted which may offer redevelopment options.

## 3.4 Associated Documents

### Dumfries Town Centre Strategy & Action Plan

A specific strategy for Dumfries Town Centre 2004-2014, the primary aim of this document was to regenerate the town centre cutting across a number of interrelated issues. Identified were actions that would strengthen Dumfries as a competitive location and a quality environment.

Five strategic objectives were highlighted for the town centre:

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- Promoting Living & Working
- Doing Business & Trading
- Improving the Environment & Public Realm
- Accessing & Circulating
- Marketing & Visiting

The strategy has implications for town centre retailing through priority projects including, site development opportunities, key zones for regeneration, themed retail/tourism initiative, attracting quality retailers and assisting independents. In identifying regeneration opportunities a site is highlighted at the Whitesands which has redevelopment potential for retailing.

**Stranraer and Loch Ryan Waterfront – development framework**
The impending relocation of Stena ferry line from Stranraer will result in a substantial vacant brownfield site within the town. The underlying aim is to create a leisure oriented sector related to the Loch. The development concept is of a new marina anchoring new business, housing, leisure and retail with strong links to the existing town centre.
Associated with this framework is a retail study for Stranraer carried out by James Barr. This stated that there was a continued need to protect Stranraer Town centre. However, a surplus of comparison spend was identified. The study conclusions suggested that an opportunity existed for additional comparison shopping which might be developed in conjunction with a reworking of an existing convenience retail site.

## Glossary

***Edge of town centre***, generally can be interpreted as adjacent to the boundary of the town centre but consideration must also be given to the local context, including function character and accessibility.
***Commercial centres*** focussed on particular uses eg shopping or leisure and are identified in the development plan as part of the network
***Out of centre*** should be considered only if it can be demonstrated that all town centre edge of town centre and al other commercial centre options have been thoroughly assessed.

**References**

SPP1 The Planning System (www.scotland.gov.uk)

SPP8 Town Centres & Retailing (www.scotland.gov.uk)

PAN59 Improving Town Centres (www.scotland.gov.uk)

Dumfries & Galloway Retail Study; Halcrow Group, November 2006 (www.dgcommunity.net/miniwebs Planning Portal)

Dumfries & Galloway Structure Plan 1999 (www.dgcommunity.net/miniwebs Planning Portal)

Local Pans (www.dgcommunity.net/miniwebs Planning Portal)
Annandale & Eskdale Local Plan 2006
Nithsdale Local Plan 2006
Stewartry Local Plan 2006
Wigtwon Local Plan 2006

Dumfries Town Centre Strategy and Action Plan (2004-2014) (www.dgcommunity.net Documents)

Dumfries Urban Design Strategy Nov 2006 (www.dgcommunity.net Documents)

Stranraer Waterfront Document (www.dgcommunity.net Documents)

Stranraer Retail Study James Barr

**Associated Reading**

The Effects of Supermarkets on Existing Retailers December 2006
Roger Tym & Partners