


Oxford Core Strategy Examination Statement of Oxford City Council		
C/M3/4	<b>Matter 3 – Retailing and the hierarchy of centres</b> <b>Issue 4 – Local centres</b>	

**i) How sustainable is intended growth in the local centres?**

Oxford is a relatively compact city, which already has a number of well-established local centres that serve a small resident population. These centres provide a good mix of uses, which are still underpinned by retail uses. The local centres are therefore very sustainable in reducing the need to travel for local residents to obtain their daily needs. A number of local centres are situated within housing estates and their importance in meeting social and community needs is also recognised in Policy CS3 (Regeneration CS3).

However, whilst the Core Strategy identifies the location of these centres the precise mix of uses and the scope for growth in individual centres will be examined further through the Development Management DPD.

**ii) Are the centres supported by appropriate and achievable access arrangements?**

Oxford is a very sustainable city, which is well served by public transport, and has a good network of cycle paths and footways.

The neighbourhood centres are intended to serve the local resident population and given their number and distribution are all easily accessible by walking or cycling. Many are also located on or adjacent to established bus routes.

**iii) Should the plan give an indication of appropriate or upper levels of new floorspace in local centres?**

The Core Strategy has not included an upper limit for local centres since historically the main pressure has come from the potential loss of retail uses rather than new development wishing to move into these centres. It is considered unlikely that this trend would change significantly in the future. Furthermore there are in practise only limited opportunities to accommodate additional floorspace in many of these local centres. PPS6 (CD11/5) does however provide some guidance on this matter, Paragraph 2.41-2.43 emphasises the need to identify the appropriate scale of development for a particular centre. This should “relate to the role and function of the centre within the hierarchy and the catchments served.” The aim being “to

locate the appropriate type and scale of development in the right type of centre, to ensure that it fits into the centre and that it complements its role and function.”

The Development Management DPD will investigate in detail what level of growth is appropriate to the individual centres. However if the Inspector considers that it would be preferable to include a generic threshold in the Core Strategy the Local Planning Authority would consider a maximum limit of 500 sqm would be appropriate for a local centre. This threshold would appear to be reasonable, and allow for new smaller shops to be provided of this size that would be able to serve a local catchment area.

**iv) Does the terminology sit comfortably with that of PPS6?**

The term ‘Neighbourhood Shopping centres’ is currently used in the adopted Oxford Local Plan 2016 (CD7/6) to refer to these centres that serve a local catchment area, and is therefore familiar to local organisations and individuals involved in the planning process. The Local Planning Authority does not however object in principle to a change in the proposed title for these centres, to ‘local centres’ if the Inspector feels it would add clarity and ensure the description fully complies with the definitions used in PPS6.