

Supplementary Guidance: Hierarchy of Centres

1. Status of Supplementary Guidance

This Supplementary Guidance (SG) forms part of the Development Plan and is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

The SG expands upon the following Aberdeen Local Development Plan policies:

- Policy D3 – Big Buildings
- Policy D1 – Quality Placemaking and Design
- Policy D4 – Historic Environment
- Policy NC1 – City Centre Development – Regional Centre
- Policy NC2 – City Centre Retail Core and Union Street
- Policy NC4 – Sequential Approach and Impact
- Policy NC5 – Out of Centre Proposals
- Policy NC6 – Town, District, Neighbourhood and Commercial Centres

A number of other Local Development Plan policies are also relevant to consider, for example: NC3 – West End Shops and Cafes, NC7 – Local Shop Units, NC8 – Retail Development Serving New Development Areas and NC9 – Beach and Leisure.

2. Introduction to Topic

Scottish Planning Policy states that a sequential approach should be used when selecting locations for all uses which generate significant footfall, including retail and commercial leisure uses, offices, community and cultural facilities and where appropriate public buildings and requires that locations are considered through a hierarchy of centres.

The city's network of centres have been arranged into a hierarchy and the role of each centre in the hierarchy is set out in this SG. This provides a context for the assessment of new development proposals. A sequential approach will be taken in accordance with this hierarchy (unless on sites allocated for that use in this plan) and in line with Scottish Planning Policy.

3. Hierarchy of Centres

Within the hierarchy, the City Centre is identified as being the preferred location for retail, office, hotel, commercial leisure, community, cultural and other significant footfall generating developments serving a city-wide or regional market. The designation and role of other centres within the network and hierarchy is set out below. The City Centre, Retail Core, Town Centres, District Centres, Neighbourhood Centres and Commercial Centres have been mapped on the Aberdeen Local Development Plan - Proposals Map.

Figure 1: Retail Hierarchy and Sequential Approach

Centre Type	Policy Approach		Centre Location	
	Vitality & Viability	New Development and General Principles for Sequential Approach		
City Centre and Retail Core	Protection	Support and preferred location for all retail, office, hotel, commercial leisure, community, cultural and other significant footfall generating developments serving a city-wide or regional market.	City Centre and Retail Core	
Town Centres	Protection	Support and preferred location for all retail, office, hotel, commercial leisure, community, cultural and other significant footfall generating development that markets for, and serves, the town or area but isn't serving a citywide or regional market.	Rosemount	Torry
District Centres	Protection	Support and preferred location for retail, commercial leisure, community and cultural provision where the market area covers the district centre.	Danestone Dyce Middleton Park	Rousay Drive Upper Berryden
Neighbourhood Centres	Protection	Support and preferred location for local retail, commercial leisure, community and cultural provision only.	Refer Figure 3	
Commercial Centres	Protection	Support bulky goods only. Appropriate for bulky goods if a suitable site is unavailable in, or on the edge of city centre/town centre sites i.e. subject to sequential test.	Garthdee Kittybrewster Links Road / Boulevard	Lower Berryden Denmore Road

Figure 2: Sequential Approach Thresholds

	Sequential Approach							Centre	
	Convenience Developments			General Comparison		Bulky Goods			
Development Thresholds (GFA - Gross Floor Area) (sq mt = square metres)	Above 15,000 sq mt	2,000 - 15,000 sq mt	Below 2000 sq mt	Above 5,000 sq mt	Below 5,000 sq mt	Above 5,000 sq mt	Below 5,000 sq mt		
Regional Centre	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	City Centre and Retail Core	
Edge of City Centre	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	City Centre	
Town & District Centres	3	1	1	3	1	3	1	Town Centres Rosemount Torry	District Centres Danestone Dyce Middleton Park Rousay Drive Upper Berryden
Edge of Town / District Centres	4	2	2	4	2	4	2	N/A	
Neighbourhood Centres			1					Please see Figure 3	
Commercial Centres (provided site is easily accessible by public transport)						5	3	Garthdee Kittybrewster Links Road / Boulevard	Lower Berryden Denmore Road
Out of Centre (accessible by public transport)	5	3	3	5	3	6	4	N/A	

Figure 3: Neighbourhood Centres

Bielside	Braehead Way	Bucksburn	Byron	Chattan Place
Cornhill	Cove	Cults	Culter	George Street
Hayton	Holburn	Kincorth	Kingswells	Kittybrewster / Clifton
Lang Stracht	Leadside Road	Mastrick	Mannofield	Moir Green
Rosemount NC	Scattlie Park	Scotstown	Seafield	Seaton
Sheddocksley	St Swithin Street	Urquhart Road	Victoria Street, Dyce	Woodside

Notes:-

Threshold Gross Floor Area (GFA) sizes are indicative. The test should also consider what market the development is expected to serve by referring to Figure 1. If a development is serving a city-wide market or is attracting customers from the citywide or wider area, then the City Centre is the preferred location.

The numbers in Figure 2 represent the preferred order in the sequential approach. For example, the City Centre is a first choice location for all forms of retail development. Neighbourhood Centres are first choice locations for convenience developments of under 2,000 square metres, although these would also be acceptable in the City Centre, Town Centres and District Centres.

Development proposals should also consider, as required by Scottish Planning Policy, different built forms to better fit with opportunities which exist within centres in the hierarchy. For example, a retailer seeking 1,000 square metres of single level comparison floorspace may have to consider utilising two levels of 500 square metres or three levels of 333 square metres within the City Centre rather than moving to a Commercial Centre or Out of Centre site.