



# Retail and the Town Centre (2) (Policy 8 in NP 1)

Policy 8 of the previous version of the Blandford+ Neighbourhood Plan B+NP(1) has been reviewed in light of examination and of recent studies, and the following updates for B+NP(2) have been recommended:

**The examiner issued ‘No comment’ on this policy.**

**Consultation: 92% of residents who participated in the poll were in favour of our identification of the Town centre boundary and shopping frontages; 8% were opposed**

**What B+NP(1) said:**

*‘The Neighbourhood Plan defines the Town Centre Area and the Primary and Secondary Shopping Frontages in the Area, as shown on the Policies Map, for the purpose of managing proposals for retail, leisure and other commercial developments in accordance with the development plan.*

*Proposals that will result in the net loss of public car parking spaces in the Town Centre Area will be refused unless the community benefit outweighs the net loss of public car parking spaces.’*

**What B+NP(1) sought to do:**

To re-establish the social and economic value and importance of the town centre; designate a town centre boundary and identify primary and secondary shopping frontages.

**What the National Planning Policy Framework says: (July 2018)**

86g) *‘support diversification and changes of use where town centres are in decline, as part of a clear strategy for their future, while avoiding the unnecessary loss of facilities that are important for meeting the community’s day-to-day needs.’*

**And ‘respond to rapid changes in the retail and leisure industries’**

The requirement to identify both Primary and Secondary shopping frontages has been withdrawn from previous iterations of the NPPF. The requirement now is to identify the main or primary shopping area within the town centre boundary.

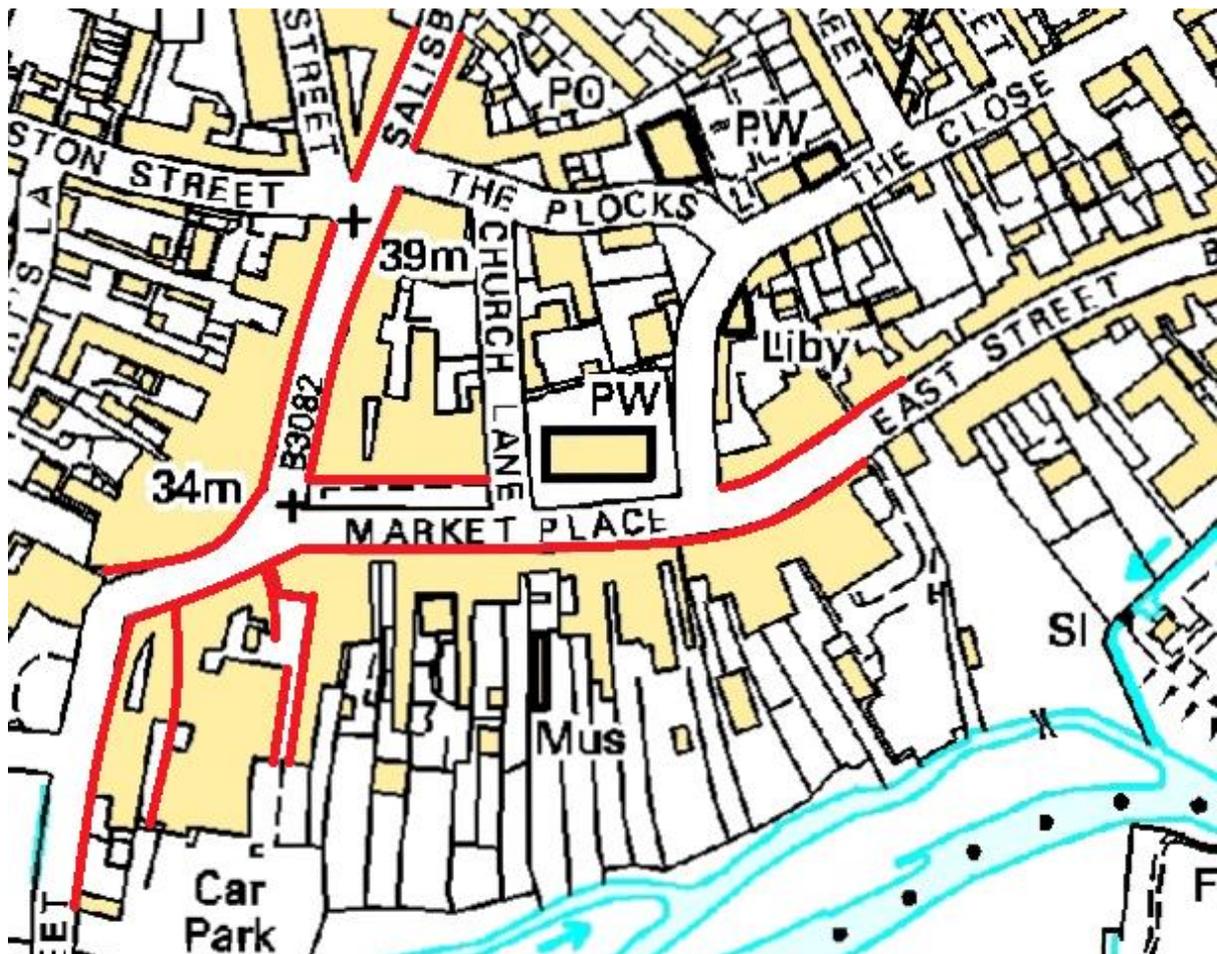
The Grimsey review (2017). States that town centres should be: *‘gathering points for the whole community’...with a mix in the (previously identified shopping areas) of ‘health, entertainment, education, leisure, business, other spaces and shops at the heart of a thriving community hub.’*

**Carter Jonas retail survey, (2017) Key findings for Blandford:** (see fig 1)

Blandford is: ‘Healthy’ compared with other places locally and nationally.

- Largest centre in ND and 4<sup>th</sup> largest in Tri-council area
- Blandford has 15% of the market share for comparison goods in ND
- 12% convenience goods (TC only) rising to 22% with Tesco’s (Lidl’s will obviously change this figure so perhaps will a re-vitalised market.
- 14 convenience outlets (Town only ) led by Morrison’s and M&S
- 186 Comparison outlets





Map of Blandford centre showing the principal shopping area (red lines)

The existing mix of uses of the Town Centre has been attached as Appendix A. The B+ Neighbourhood Plan proposes to introduce a more dynamic and flexible approach in relation to uses within shopping areas, to more accurately reflect changing uses within these areas and to maintain the general health of the Town centre identified by Carter Jonas. This acknowledges that retail can benefit from having diverse, non-retail neighbours, creating a richer mix of footfall. It allows the town to maintain a shopping function in the defined TC boundary whilst allowing other A1-A5 with some B1 uses, particularly outside the defined shopping area, which can also add to the attractiveness and vitality within the town centre. Whilst some residential accommodation exists in the shopping frontage and can lead to increased footfall and vitality, B+ believes that future policy should encourage accommodation on second and third floors rather than ground floors, and adopt the Grimsey review's statement that shopping frontages should offer: *'a mix (of) health, entertainment, education, leisure, business, other spaces and shops at the heart of a thriving community hub.'*